

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing

ANNUAL REPORT 2011–2012



Rev. Charles J. Stephens

Within the circles of our lives
we dance the circles of the years,
the circles of the seasons
within the circles of the years,
the cycles of the moon
within the circles of the seasons,
the circles of our reasons
within the cycles of the moon.

Again, again we come and go,
changed, changing. Hands
join, unjoin in love and fear,
grief and joy. The circles turn,
each giving into each, into all...

- *Wendell Berry*

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Director, Music Ministry	Caryl Tipton
Office Administrator	Susan Irgang
Accompanist	Wendy Feaver

Board of Trustees 2011–2012

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Vice President	Holly Bussey
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MINISTER'S REPORT

This has been an unusual year for me as a minister and for UUCWC. At the beginning of the year, I announced that at the end of this Church Year I would retire after fifteen years as the minister of UUCWC. My fear of quickly becoming “Lame Duck Minister” turned out to be unfounded. As I look back at my ministry during the past year, it has been a full and gratifying year.

I am grateful that our congregation has such a large number of qualified and committed members who undertake the many and varied leadership roles at UUCWC. True, there are times when the Nominating Committee has had a difficult time filling the slate of elected positions, but not many congregations (including other UU congregations) are as fortunate as UUCWC in the depth of qualified leadership potential. Our Board officers and members, the Committee and Task Force Chairs and members, each one of our Religious Education teachers and Choir members all exhibit great talent and commitment.

Our congregation's mission and vision affirms that we strive to become a dynamic and recognized force for justice in our community(s). With such a mission I have felt empowered over the years to speak out and act for justice, compassion and equity in the name of UUCWC. As such, I have had the honor of officiating at hundreds of weddings, both opposite sex couples and same sex couples. This year, it was my privilege once again to attend and testify at hearings for the legalizing of same sex marriage in New Jersey. Both the Senate and Assembly voted affirmative. Unfortunately, Gov. Christie vetoed the bill. But progress has been made and the cultural tide is turning.

When I have gone to the State House to testify at hearings, meet with legislators, attend rallies or protests, I see other clergy colleagues; many are Unitarian Universalists, but others are from a whole variety of religious persuasions. We know each other either by name or facial recognition. This interfaith cadre of clergy and even more non-clergy (again many Unitarian Universalists) are working together for the common good.

This past year, UUCWC targeted 50% of our plate offering (excluding pledges) for social justice efforts. That is up from 40% in past years. This increase makes a big difference for our social justice outreach work, while at the same time the congregational income from the plate has grown.

This year, I have slowly removed myself from community boards and working groups because I am retiring. I did agree to take on the role of being a Chapter Good Offices person this year for the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association. In that position I have met several times with ministers and congregants to assist in conflict situations.

There have been several areas where I have not worked closely with UUCWC leadership this year. One, of course, was the process of obtaining a Transitional Minister for UUCWC after my retirement. The Rev. Jennifer Brooks was chosen, and she is expected to arrive on August 1. I took only an initial role with the Five Year Strategic Plan Task Force. These two areas are

clearly ones where I as the retiring minister need to step aside because they deal with how UUCWC will shape itself in the months and years ahead when I become a Minister Emeritus.

Many members of the congregation were involved in the wonderful weekend (April 14 & 15) of celebrations in honor of my ministry. I thank the many people who worked so hard to make the weekend so very special. I can only imagine the amount of hours that were put into the planning and implementing of the “Let It Be a Dance” party on Saturday evening at the Union Fire Company and the fabulous Service of Worship on Sunday at the Center for Performing Arts at the Hopewell high school. UUCWC really ROCKS, both literally and figuratively.

There are many shared memories and feelings that Alison and I will take with us. What a joy it was to have our children and our siblings with us, not only to celebrate my retirement from full time ministry, but also to enjoy and witness our wonderful congregation celebrate what together as congregation and minister we have accomplished. They were so very impressed by the love expressed by the members of our congregation.

Much of my life has been devoted to the ministry. I rejoice in the many blessings of concluding my ministry here at the UU Church at Washington Crossing. I cannot find enough positive words to say about the UUCWC community and all of you who were involved in making the best ever retirement weekend not only in UU history but in church history.

Alison and I will soon move to Maine. We bought property up in Blue Hill, Maine back in 1982 when I was serving the UU Congregation in Ellsworth, ME. Alison and I met there, Bronson and Charlotte were both born there, and Heather identifies Maine as her childhood state. Alison will seek employment in the secretarial field when we arrive. Interestingly, when she was looking for potential employment options in Maine, she ran across information about the “Good Life Center” in Harborside, ME. They were seeking a part time Steward(s) for the summer. I applied, and we have been invited to be the part time Stewards at the Scott and Helen Nearing “Good Life Center,” where we will live this summer.

Scott Nearing was a social activist working for child labor laws and many other progressive concerns back in the very early 1900’s. He taught economics at the Wharton School but was fired because he spoke outside of the classroom in favor of child labor regulations and other social justice issues. He was blackballed from teaching posts, and in 1932 he and Helen moved to Vermont to live off the land. In 1952 they moved to Harborside, ME (he was in his 70’s and she in her 50’s) to do the same in a less populated area. Scott and Helen became the great-grandparents of the back-to-the-land movement. They inspired many people to consider going back to nature as homesteaders and organic gardeners. They wrote “The Good Life” about their sixty years of self-sufficient living as well as many other books.

The reality is that I am concluding my tenure as the minister of UUCWC and it is understood in our UU Minister’s professional guidelines that when I as the minister leave this congregation I need to allow distance to develop between the congregation and myself so that a new solid relationship can develop between the members of the congregation and the transitional minister and then the newly settled minister.

I am excited about the possibilities that await me in retirement. At the same time, I am having mixed feelings about leaving UUCWC and the wonderful people I have gotten to know and love as your minister. It was not easy to make my decision to retire. It is said that there is no right time for a minister to retire, but that we either retire too soon or too late. I have spent time seriously contemplating when that would be. I think this is a good time personally for me to retire. I also think that UUCWC is in a very strong place and will thrive during the coming transition and search for its new settled minister. I look forward to seeing great things happening here at UUCWC during the coming years.

During this time of major transition in my life and in the life of UUCWC, I find meaning and reassurance in the words from a poem by one of my favorite poets, Wendell Berry.

Within the circles of our lives
we dance the circles of the years,
the circles of the seasons
within the circles of the years,
the cycles of the moon
within the circles of the seasons,
the circles of our reasons
within the cycles of the moon.

Again, again we come and go,
changed, changing. Hands
join, unjoin in love and fear,
grief and joy. The circles turn,
each giving into each, into all...

*With Love and Warmth,
Rev. Charles J. Stephens*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This has been quite a year for all of us at UUCWC. The Board has worked hard to keep this congregation informed, connected and moving forward in a caring and responsible way as you have entrusted your Board to do. We, like you, are part of this beloved community and we take our responsibility seriously.

The Board holds an annual retreat in August to develop Goals and Objectives for the current year. Following is a brief update of those goals and the current status.

Goal – *Following UUA guidelines, hire a transitional minister for UUCWC.*

Immediately upon hearing the news that our beloved minister, Charles Stephens was retiring, your Board started to learn the transition implementation process. We met with our District Executive, Andrea Lerner, to get a better understanding of the current UUA process for hiring a Transitional Minister. This information was initially communicated to the congregation in the November *Crossings*. There were ongoing updates in *Crossings*, Committee updates and a video.

The transition doesn't start this summer. It's been ongoing for the past year. As individuals, we sighed in sadness, and reflected on all of the wonderful years that Charles, Alison, and their family have spent with us. As individuals and as a congregation, we expressed thanks for all of the gifts that Charles has brought to this congregation. We celebrated and this has been good for all of us, and we continued to do so through June 10, Charles' last service and the Flower Communion.

We learned the difference between a transitional and a settled minister. The formation of a search committee for the settled minister and the search process itself will not begin until the first quarter of 2013. A congregational meeting was held in February to update our bylaws so we would be ready to move forward. The Board appointed a subgroup to apply for a transitional minister, and to evaluate transitional minister applicants. We consulted with the strategic planning task force. We listened to you. We kept you informed in many ways - bulletin board, *Crossings*, inserts, and blogs.

Outcome - A Transitional Minister, Rev. Jennifer Brooks, has been hired. Her starting date is August 1.

Goal – *Work with the Finance, Stewardship, and Endowment Committees to strengthen the financial stewardship of UUCWC.*

The Board worked with Finance by having ongoing discussions and setting priorities for the next fiscal year. We worked with Stewardship by attending training by the UUA and participating in Stewardship activities. For the first time in over four years, UUCWC conducted a face-to-face canvas process connecting with members not only about pledging, but finding out what each member was thinking about our beloved community.

Outcome - The current fiscal year finished with a balanced budget. However, the budget for 2012 – 2013 starts with a deficit. It is clear to the Board and congregation that this is a work in progress. The Board will communicate frequently to the congregation as we work towards balancing our budget in the upcoming fiscal year.

Goal – *Support the development of a five-year strategic plan for UUCWC.*

The Strategic Plan Task Force was established in May 2011. The Board has had ongoing communications with them, and two members of the Board, Lynn Hanson and Bud Johnson, were on the task force. The task force's work is ongoing and they have just completed a congregational survey. These results will be used to write the five-year plan.

Outcome - The Strategic Plan Task Force has progressed very well and has done an excellent job in ensuring that all parties, members of the congregation, committees, chairs, and staff are all included in the process. The Board eagerly awaits the recommendations of the task force, due in the fall of 2012.

Goal – *Review the governance structure at UUCWC and make the necessary changes that will enable UUCWC to operate more effectively*

A subcommittee of the Board, comprised of Steve Fishbein, Jon Holcombe, and Holly Bussey, outlined a process for revising the bylaws over the course of two to three years. This is necessary to ensure consistency in the bylaws with governance. Forums were held to obtain input from the congregation.

Outcome – At a congregational meeting that was held in February, the proposed changes were approved.

Other Initiatives

A subcommittee of the Board, comprised of Bernice Husk, Bud Johnson, and myself has been working on a Policies and Procedures manual. The Board would like to express our gratitude to Susan Irgang, the Office Administrator, for her guidance and knowledge in working on this project. To date, we have completed fifteen procedures, with another ten in process. The Board has worked closely with our committees to help bring clarity on how things should be done. This will allow us to more easily accomplish the things that mean so much to our community. We anticipate that we will have the manual available on our website in September.

In November 2011, the Board approved the creation of a Facilities Task Force. Their goal was to consider if UUCWC should combine Building, Grounds, and other related committees into one larger committee that will have oversight over the physical space at UUCWC, or determine if there are better ways to coordinate their efforts. This task force has completed its work and has prepared its report for the Board, which is under review at this time. One of their recommendations was to hire a sexton. This position has been approved and the Personnel Committee is currently writing a job description.

In April, the Board approved the creation of a Safe Congregation Task Force. Their goal is to develop and implement Safe Congregation policies, with the initial focus being the Religious Education program for children and youth. Also, the task force should set in place a process for educating the congregation about the policies and their impact. This task force has scheduled its first meeting in late August. Their work will continue during the upcoming Church year.

In June, the Board approved the creation of a Mortgage Refinancing Task Force. Their goal is to secure a new mortgage loan for UUCWC. (Our current loan is due in full in 2013.)

The Board wishes to thank all committee chairs and their committees in working with us. We thank our staff, and most importantly YOU. With each of you speaking with each other and your Board in covenant, we move caringly forward. It will be a new year of adventure and we will walk the path together.

The Board wishes to recognize and thank the members who are leaving the Board, Bud Johnson, Maria Baratta, and Lynn Hanson. Their hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm will be missed.

With gratitude to all who work to support UUCWC in meeting its mission.

Jerry Scheick
President, Board of Trustees

ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT (EDUCATION)

Adult Religious Enrichment (Education) - ARE - is a committee whose primary purpose and mission is to “support the vision of UUCWC by offering programs that encourage individual members, and the community-at-large, to explore their religious and spiritual odysseys”.

Program offerings by Adult RE, both alone and in cooperation with other committees and/or groups in the church community, allow individual members and friends to increase their knowledge of UU history and theology, to deepen their spiritual development, to be empowered to be leaders of the community and to put their faith into action. Under the direction of the Director of Lifespan Religious Education, this committee creates programming, initiates partnerships with other UUCWC entities, and assures the quality of the Adult RE program through training, oversight, and solicitation and reporting of participant and facilitator feedback.

Goals/Accomplishments 2011-2012

- Returned committee membership to eight.
- Produced a Fall ARE brochure, a Winter/Spring brochure, and various flyers to publicize program offerings.
- Continued the partnership with Standing on the Side of Love to deliver the *Living the Welcoming Congregation* program and completed the two-year LWC process.
- Continued to offer weekly Yoga sessions led by Annamieke Hermans.

- Held our own off-site ARE “Workshop”, a day of team- building, goal-setting, and group task work.
- Worked closely with the Membership Committee to obtain frequent visitor and new membership lists.
- Communicated with frequent visitors and new members to create awareness of ARE offerings.
- Continued planning of the Samstone Lecture Inaugural Event to be held in November.
- Held two Facilitator Training Workshops, all-day Saturday events to support current and former facilitators as well as to increase our list of future facilitators.
- Continued to collect suggested donations of \$10 members, \$15 non-members (\$20 for year-long courses) to support ARE programs.
- Was a “pilot” congregation for the ten-month UUWellspring© Program with ten participants in the pilot group.
- Developed ARE policies and procedures regarding: our biennial ARE survey, registering for ARE courses/workshops, approval of facilitators, evaluation of workshop applications and facilitator qualifications.
- Created (Michelina) an internal ARE Committee website where anything related to ARE can be shared and members can access and give input to ongoing policy creation.
- Sent out an all-church email with the upcoming semester’s ARE offerings and registration procedures to insure that all members and friends had the opportunity to register for courses.
- Created a liability waiver to be used for yoga participants.
- Initiated a congregational Common Read (Eboo Patel’s *An Act of Faith*).
- Held several information sessions on UUWellspring at UUCWC and opened registration for the 2012-2013 program to the entire congregation.
- Created a revised Participant Feedback Form to be used in 2012-2013 as a pilot test.
- During the fall semester, offered a fall semester Sitting Meditation led by Rev. Stephens with drop-in participation and no set donation.
- During the course of the church year and in addition to weekly yoga and the UUWellspring pilot, ran the following courses/workshops: Living the Welcoming Congregation Series A, Living the Welcoming Congregation Series B (4 sections), a year-long course on *The Artist’s Way* (2 sections), *Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, Biblical Literacy for UUs, The Bible and Homosexuality, UU201, Exploring Big History, and *Some Day Melissa* film/discussion.

Goals and Future Strategies (2012-2013)

- Continue to explore opportunities to coordinate ARE and the Religious Education Committee for Children and Youth (multi-generational).
- Develop “core” of courses for each of the four threads of the ARE curriculum.
- Continue to encourage people to be facilitators, especially for UUA curricula.
- Continue to reach out to new members and frequent visitors to encourage participation in ARE offerings.
- Seek still better methods of involving the congregation with ARE.
- Find better methods of reaching out to the community beyond our walls when appropriate.

- Conduct an interest survey of non-attendees of ARE offerings.
- Conduct an analysis of course cancellations and seek solutions.
- Continue to work with the Communications Committee to make the UUCWC website more user-friendly for ARE registration and ARE Workshop Applications.
- Present the Inaugural Samstone Lecture Event on November 2 and 3 and evaluate same.
- Rework portfolios as necessary for the 2012-2013 ARE Committee.
- Create a Leadership Development subcommittee.
- Develop the UU Leadership Training Module through the Leadership Development subcommittee of ARE.
- Maintain and continue to create working relationships with Standing on the Side of Love, Denominational Affairs, Council for Faith in Action and other UUCWC entities, as well as with other UU Congregations, to carry out the mission of Adult RE.
- Implement the UUWellspring I© curriculum as a regular part of the ARE program.
- Conduct an evaluation of the UUWellspring implementation.
- Investigate the possibility of and plan for the implementation of advanced UUWellspring © curricula for 2013-2014.
- Create, conduct, and analyze our Biennial ARE Survey.
- Use information from the survey to plan for courses for the upcoming church year (2013-2014).

Thank you to the following individuals for their participation and input as we worked together to fulfill our mission this year: Holly Bussey, Terry Caton, Susan Colket, Heidi Dalzell, and Michelina Thornton. A special thank you to Diane Knights and Connie Rafle for agreeing to join the ARE Committee. In addition, our deep appreciation for the facilitators who made our ARE offerings possible, including Rev. Charles Stephens, who facilitated the pilot UUWellspring group and our DLRE Robin Pugh, who facilitated both sections of *The Artist's Way*.

Kathy Frey, Chair

BUILDING COMMITTEE

Andrew Kidd and MJ Hansen made up the Building committee in 2011-2012. The goal of the Building Committee is to keep up with routine maintenance, while responding to congregation requests to smarten the place up and to do whatever major repairs are budgeted.

Routine maintenance means replacing bulbs and fixing the multitude of things that fail or break. It is a continuous task, on which we had help from Jon Holcombe, Farzad Shadzik and Mike Muccioli.

Further smartening of the building in 2011 involved painting all the classrooms. For the much-used upstairs ones, we hired a professional, but the Romeos were kind enough to paint the

downstairs rooms. We replaced the tired, discolored vinyl cover base (baseboard) throughout. Stained ceiling tiles in classrooms and downstairs bathrooms still need replacing.

Because of the large amount of paper products (towel and TP) UUCWC uses and the need to buy products made from recycled material, we changed from getting them at the grocery store to a wholesale supplier and installed dispensers rather than roll holders. This seems to have cut down on usage, made purchasing easier and slightly reduced spending.

Major works

- There was no budget for major work in 2011/2012.
- Roof: The leak in the Sanctuary roof persists, though nothing has been reported recently. We are quite sure that it is coming in through the skylight, but have no idea where. All attempts to find the hole have failed. Jon Holcombe tried covering the skylight with a tarp to see if that would help, but it is very hard to keep it in place, so we really don't know. The leak in the Lobby / Sanctuary party wall or lobby roof persists as well. This is very hard to resolve, since there is no obvious path through which the rain water gets in. It might be getting into the huge Sanctuary heating and cooling appliance up there and under the roof membrane beneath it, but we can't see. If so, we will not fix it until we have to replace that appliance. We plan to "manage" the leak as best we can – but are not sure of the best method. After we do that, we can replace the lobby ceiling tiles yet again.

We are told by the heating and cooling servicer that at least one of our major heating and cooling appliances may be near the end of its life. These are expensive items, so we need to prepare for some significant expenditure in the reasonably near future. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know exactly when, so we need to be ready with the funds.

Andrew Kidd and MJ Hansen, co-chairs

CARING MINISTRY

The mission of the Caring Ministry is to provide support, caring, and outreach to our church community as well as to one another.

Goals

To ensure that people know we are here and wish to be of service during difficult times by providing requested and needed services and support.

Current Members

Co-Chairs Pris Gaver, Nancy Reyes-Svarcbergs, and Janet Hubbard; Jane Friedman, Bobbye Galloway, Bonnie Kubicka, Darleen Wheeler, Nancy Neff, Sandy Manning.

Actions and Activities

- Cards, notes, emails, and calls to offer support

- Transportation to doctors and medical facilities
- Home and hospital visits
- Adult companionship and essential help around the house
- Emergency food shopping and provision of meals
- Doing essential errands as well as providing transportation for essential errands
- Meetings with families to plan and implement receptions following Memorial Services
- Increasing awareness and services for those with emotional and mental health issues
- Facilitating connections and support for members undergoing cancer treatment
- Continuing to coordinate with Kitchen Ministry to provide meals for members in need

A file of church members willing to help with services and a variety of tasks was kept during the year. This has proven very useful in having enough people to maintain services during the year.

Future Plans

- Increase our involvement in mental health issues.
- Reach out to the church community to expand the number of members on the committee.
- Continue to revise and expand the file listing those members available as Caring Ministry Helpers. These individuals are not asked to attend meetings.

Priscilla Gaver, Co-Chair

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mission: The Communications Committee is responsible for external communications and selected internal communications that advance internal and external awareness of UUCWC and its mission. We work to ensure that communications within the church are maintained and disseminated to the congregation in a timely manner, and we publicize UUCWC and its news, events, and activities to the greater community.

Objectives and goals for 2012–2013

Our objective during 2011–2012 was to make our many communications vehicles (website, weekly e-mails, *Crossings*,) work together, with a goal to make internal communication efficient and reduce work.

We know from iContact email data, the SAGE survey, and observation that:

- Fewer than half of those who receive *Crossings* read it
- More than half of the congregation does not visit the website frequently
- About 5% of the congregation use the Facebook page
- About 75% of committee chairs and other church leaders do not place news online, but instead rely on *Crossings* and the weekly e-mail to get word out

The importance of improving on these data cannot be overstated. From a marketing standpoint, we know that, after word of mouth, the primary way visitors find UUCWC is online. A

continually fresh website shows potential visitors that we have an active, vibrant congregation. A lively Facebook page gives them insight into the people who make UUCWC their spiritual home. From an internal standpoint, wider use of these tools would connect the congregation more deeply to the church because the immediate nature of this type of communication encourages people to check the website frequently. Reducing internal reliance on *Crossings* and the weekly e-mail for news reduces the work burdens of the committee and the front office.

Selected tactics

We believe that improvement begins with making the UUCWC website the hub of all communication efforts, with other communications vehicles supporting it. The committee identified ten ways to accomplish this. We presented our plan to church leaders at Church Council on September 21. Some of our subsequent work:

Rich DiGeorgio surveyed people who signed the membership book between January and June 2011. The purpose was to learn how they found us and what drew them here. Rich reached 20 of 23 households who joined the church in the previous 18 months. One fourth of those surveyed found us first through our website and were motivated to try UUCWC on the basis of information they saw on our website.

The inefficiency of office communications is increasingly an issue. The weekly office e-mails have become long (1,500 words) and the frequency of all-church e-mails increased. The result is “communication fatigue” in which office communications are not read carefully or at all. To remedy this, Mike Dalzell and Communications Board Liaison Steve Fishbein worked with Susan Irgang to develop an office policy on guidelines for all-church e-mails; the committee also continued to encourage church leaders to place information on the website and provide links (instead of full write-ups) to Susan for the weekly e-mail.

Mike created website accounts and UUCWC e-mail addresses for all church leaders. Subsequently, Mike and Lynne Quinto hosted website training sessions to show church leaders how to use these tools.

The paper version of *Crossings* was eliminated this year, other than printouts for visitors in the lobby and paper copies that continue to be mailed to 5 members who specifically requested them. Lori O’Neil developed hyperlinks in PDF *Crossings* files, linking people to the website for more information.

Nick Mellis instructed us in the creation and uses of a QR code. The committee will pursue this in 2012–13.

Dan Mulvilhill took over the role of webmaster in the spring. Dan is considering website design and navigation issues, as well as an internal survey to help us understand the congregation’s wants in a website.

Other activities

Media relations

During the year, the committee disseminated information to local news media about: Gini Courter's August 21 sermon at UUCWC; the Kaleidoscope Heart auditions and fundraising show; and Charles's retirement. We also worked with the "Breaking Through the Sound Bites" issues forums group and put considerable effort into these activities to publicize their March and April meetings:

- Drafted and distributed news releases, community calendar notices, and tip sheets for local print, broadcast, and online media, colleges, and political organizations
- Designed fliers for distribution on paper and electronically
- Made use of the UUCWC website and social media to publicize the events
- Developed and launched Facebook ad campaigns (described below)

Facebook advertising

The committee used paid advertising on Facebook as a way to promote the issues forums specifically and UUCWC in general. The bottom line: Facebook advertising results seem to be a mixed bag. Ads that are not highly targeted do not do well - they result in many exposures but few clicks. Targeting our audience, however, yielded far more effective ads with high click-through rates. From these learnings, the committee has identified specific populations for targeting in future Facebook ad campaigns.

Crossings newsletter

Susan Irgang worked with us to remove dead wood from the *Crossings* distribution list. We now have an idea of the effectiveness of *Crossings* e-mails. Roughly 48% of people open their *Crossings* e-mails —on par with most routine all-church e-mails.

Michele Downie provided valuable assistance this year with the editing of *Crossings* articles.

Bulletin Boards

Sallie Dunner made recommendations for placement and use of bulletin boards around the church. She also worked with committee chairs to improve the content, look, and freshness of their bulletin boards.

Policies and procedures

The committee sent eleven draft policies to the Board of Trustees in March 2011. As of June 30, 2012, four had been approved and five others were under consideration by the board. The committee did not develop new policies this year, though it consulted on two others: a board policy on inclement weather closings, and the aforementioned office policy on communication from the office.

Next year

The committee meets on August 4, 2012, to plan its 2012–2013 goals within the context of its budget and congregational needs. The outcomes of our 2011–2012 efforts were mixed, adding to our belief that we cannot achieve our objectives alone; cross-committee cooperation is an important ingredient in optimizing communication internally and with the public. We also recognize the value of improving our social media presence, and seek volunteers who can help us in this area.

Michael D. Dalzell, Chair

COUNCIL FOR FAITH IN ACTION

Mission: The mission of the Council for Faith in Action is to facilitate and support the commitment of the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing to be a force for justice, equity and compassion. We seek not to be the conscience of this faith community but rather to be the medium that engages and encourages that conscience to manifest change through education, directed giving, social witness, advocacy, and direct action in our communities.

Since its inception, the Council for Faith in Action’s charge has been to: be an “umbrella” for all UUCWC’s groups involved in social justice efforts; increase communication among these groups; and facilitate their efforts. The Council for Faith in Action (CFA) is the fiscal steward of the church's social justice funds and is responsible for the distribution of the UUCWC Sunday plate’s social justice allocation.

We seek to inspire people and to enable people to create a culture of social justice within UUCWC. Please consider putting your faith in action by joining us on our journey to support UUCWC’s efforts to increase justice, equity and compassion in our community.

Social Justice Committee: Many UUCWC members and friends continue to be involved in projects sponsored by the Social Justice Committee. These include Monday night tutoring for HomeFront youth, Loaves and Fishes, providing backpacks to children in need to start the school year, a continuous food drive, participating in the Hike for Hunger, and furnishing UUCWC's room at HomeFront's Family Preservation Center in Ewing.

Standing on the Side of Love at UUCWC: Under the direction of Kathy Frey, Loren McAlister and Heather Edwards, they recently finished a two-year “Living the Welcoming Congregation” program in which 25% of UUCWC’s membership participated. Keep an eye out for future activities.

Living Our Principles: The Boy Scouts Communications Task Group’s purpose was to develop an action plan for communicating UUCWC’s position, concerns and long-term desires for the BSA to become a more welcoming and inclusive organization. In late March Paul Linskey, Bonnie Ruekgauer and Rev. Charles met with two representatives from the Central Jersey Council; Paul and Charles then met with the Scout Executive from the Bucks County Council.

They had positive feelings about both meetings, and followed up with a letter to the BSA organization. Thank you to Paul and the other members of the task group for their continued work on this important issue.

At various times throughout the year, UUCWC members have spoken as to why we light the candles that we do.

JTW Library: The offerings of the JTW library have been the most effective way over the past years of educating the congregation about racism and other oppressions. It is also much appreciated that congregational members recommend or give donations of books and/or videos, as that participation has significantly enhanced our library.

Sustainability Circle and Green Sanctuary are reorganizing and would welcome your participation.

Public Policy Action Team: UUCWC continues to work as part of several coalitions: the UU Legislative Ministry of NJ, the UU PA Legislative Action Network, and the New Jersey Regional Coalition. Of special significance was working for marriage equality in New Jersey with UULMNJ.

Food Ministry: Your support for the Kitchen Ministry has been phenomenal. In addition to preparing a monthly dinner for HomeFront's Motel Meals program, an additional meal every other month has been added. The group is also now preparing a hot lunch at the end of each month for a group of about 30 limited-income seniors at Luther Arms in Trenton. The meal is especially needed at the end of the month, when residents are running low on funds. If you would like to help, keep an out each month for announcements as to what is being served and what donations will be needed.

Creative Connections: Earlier in the spring, UUCWC's Creative Connections group met with two women from Hopewell who founded "Seeds to Sew International", a not-for-profit organization in whose mission is to "improve the lives of women and girls in disadvantaged communities through education and job skills training." They're currently working with a Maasai farming community in Kenya; the products the women and girls create are sold in the US, with all proceeds going back to the girls to pay for things such as food and school fees. Creative Connections invites you to help with this ongoing project by donating fabric and sewing notions.

"Breaking Through the Sound Bites": A group of UUCWC members is coordinating a series of forums, "Breaking Through the Sound Bites", to increase community awareness of critical issues leading up to the elections. The first two forums, in March and April, addressed the state of our democracy, and job creation, with each featuring a high-caliber panel of presenters. Additional forums will be scheduled in the fall.

Thank you for your support through the 50% of the weekly plate designated for social justice efforts, the following funds have been allocated over the past church year:

- **Loaves and Fishes**

Churches and social service organizations in central New Jersey take turns preparing and

serving a hot meal and providing a bag lunch for those who are hungry. Over 800 meals are served on a typical Saturday. UUCWC again partnered with the Princeton UU congregation for our turn in March.

- **Trenton Area Soup Kitchen**
- **Morrisville Food Center**
- **Coalition for Peace Action**
- **Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice**
- **Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office** - Annual Membership
- **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee**
- **Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of New Jersey**
Annual dues for the 2011 – 2012 church year
- **New Jersey Regional Coalition**
Annual dues for the 2011 – 2012 church year.
- **Coalition for Peace Action's** Annual Interfaith Service and Conference for Peace
- **UUCWC's JTW Library** for the purchase of new materials
- **UUCWC's HomeFront Tutoring Program** operating expenses for the church year
- **HomeFront Family Preservation Center** - The Social Justice Committee purchases basic items to furnish a room, which provides a secure place for families in transition. When a family moves out of the center, they take the furnishings and linens with them to get started in their own housing. The room is identified as a being supported by UUCWC.
- **JTW Portrait Project** - A permanent portrait exhibit in the Crossings Room displaying images of significant social justice leaders in UUCWC's history and noting their major accomplishments.
- **Triad House** - to purchase an appropriate vacuum cleaner for their facility.
Triad House is a residential group home program for male and female Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (GLBTQ) and GLBTQ-friendly youth, ages 14-18, who are victims of abuse, neglect and/or homelessness (oftentimes arising from their LBTGQ status).
- **UUCWC Food Ministry** - partial funding for the purchase and installation of a hot water heater for the dishwasher.
- **Anchor House** - On behalf of George Desser's participation in the annual Anchor House Bike Ride for Runaways. Anchor House (www.anchorhousenj.org) was founded in 1978 to provide emergency housing, food, clothing and hope for runaway and homeless youth. The shelter provides for their immediate needs, while seeking to reunite youth with their families, strengthen family relationships and help youth decide on a constructive course of action.
- **Cherry Tree Club** - \$500 for this collaborative effort between HomeFront and the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Princeton Junction to provide a high quality, free and accessible preschool program for homeless and at-risk children of Mercer County.

We would welcome new members to the Council for Faith in Action. Please contact any CFA member, and join us in our journey.

Lynne Quinto, Chair

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The responsibility of Denominational Affairs is to educate and disseminate information to the congregation regarding concerns, initiatives and activities of the Unitarian Universalist faith as a whole. This includes information at the District (NY Metro) and National (UUA) level. Additionally it is a goal to help connect the UUCWC congregation to the larger faith.

I have completed my second year as the chair of Denominational Affairs, and was pleased to have the very able assistance of Jim Sanders as a member of the committee.

Our own UUCWC website as well the UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) website continue to be great sources for UU news and happenings within our faith. I have encouraged all congregants to routinely check both websites to stay connected to UUCWC and our larger faith community. In addition, I have posted information from the UUA, the NY Metro District and news of upcoming events such as workshops, meetings, and retreats on the Denominational Affairs bulletin board.

UUCWC celebrated Association Sunday on October 2. Jim Sanders, Holly Bussey, Mike Hanson, Mary Kay Mitchell and Lori Rahn, who attended General Assembly the previous church year, led the service to share the GA happenings in Charlotte, North Carolina in June 2011. A second collection was taken to support the work of the UUA.

UUCWC participated in the Fall Chalice Campaign for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills in Somerville, NJ who needed funds to make their church building accessible for all. We welcomed Hans Hansen from their congregation.

UUCWC participated in the UU New York Metro District initiative, The Phoenix Witness Project, that collected funds to enable young people to attend the Justice GA in Phoenix on June 20-24.

UUCWC was represented at the Unitarian Universalist New York Metro District meeting (May 4-5) in Stamford, CT, with Jim Sanders, Mary Kay Mitchell and Jim Bicksler in attendance. The Rev. Stefan Jonasson was the keynote speaker. The Rev. Susan Frederick Gray, minister of the UU Congregation of Phoenix, gave an inspiring talk on immigration as a moral issue. A workshop on the Doctrine of Discovery was provided to help get us ready for the vote to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery at Justice GA in Phoenix.

Jim Sanders, Sallie Dunner, Elliott Dunner, Mary Kay Mitchell and Jim Bicksler attended the Justice General assembly in Phoenix, June 20-24, 2012. Holly Bussey agreed to be our first off-site delegate so UUCWC had its full complement of six delegate votes. The General Assembly voted to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, which was the premise, used by Christian European explorers, to seize lands and subdue indigenous peoples. Maria Hinojosa, award-winning documentary filmmaker on immigration, was the Ware Lecturer. The General Assembly chose reproductive justice as a CSAI (Congregational Study/Action Issue). The proceedings of

General Assembly were made available on the UUA website during (through live streaming) and after the meeting.

Bud Johnson will join the Denominational Affairs committee for the 2012-2013 church year.

Jim Bicksler, Chair

Endowment Fund

I am happy to report that the state of the Endowment fund is sound.

While we continue to have a comparatively small endowment, we are proud that we have, over these past 12 years, sustained a fund that continues to grow in value.

Since I last reported in our annual report, June of 2011, we have had several gifts to the fund, held and invested by the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund. In the last year, the fund has realized a 3.8% increase in value.

The Endowment Fund has historically funded special projects through grants over time based on growth of the fund beyond a guaranteed return. Since the market downturn in 2008, we have not made any grants. Our last funded grant was in the form of a loan for the solar panels, which was paid back to the Endowment in August 2010.

I will be leaving the Endowment Committee after ten years, and wish to thank all my predecessor chairs for their foresight and diligence to bring an Endowment to life.

I also thank our able committee, elected by you, the congregation: Janet Hubbard, your incoming chair, Tony Panzetta, Joe Schenk, our Financial Secretary, and Robin Holmes.

Jim Sanders, Chair

FOOD MINISTRY

Mission: It is the mission of the UUCWC Food Ministry to serve safe and nutritional meals to homeless or less privileged members of the general public and UUCWC members in need. This will be done on a regular basis in partnership with organizations whose mission(s) and purpose(s) are congruent with the mission and purpose of the UUCWC.

Goals of the Food Ministry

As an outreach of social justice projects the kitchen is to be used to provide meals for people in need of help in the local community and within our own church community.

- We have provided over 1200 meals in the 2011-2012 church Year. Our first project was to work with HomeFront to provide meals one day a month to families who are homeless and are being sheltered in motel along Route 1. We provided these meals until June when HomeFront stopped providing to the motel residents. We hope that HomeFront will be able to start this service again in September 2012.
- Also this year we have been providing lunch meals one day a month for the poorest residents of Luther Arms in Trenton. Luther Arms is a HUD Housing apartment building, which houses low income people who are over 55. Some of these people live on less than \$500 a month and just run out of money for food by the end of the month. This was brought to the FM's attention by one of our members who works in the managed care business at Luther Arms. To help out, the FM started providing 30 lunches on the last Wednesday of each month. We started this in April.
- Because the meals for motel residents had to stop for the summer, we inquired if HomeFront had any place else that could use cooked meals. They put us in touch with the Kinship program, also sponsored by HomeFront. The Kinship Program helps children who are being raised by members of their family, other than the children's parents. Both the children and the caregiver are brought to the Lawrenceville Community Center every Thursday to share a hot meal. After the meal, adults attend a class on a variety subjects from nutrition to finances, and the children are also involved with different activities. We are providing 30 meals for them two Thursdays a month.
- The Food Ministry has twice provided meals for the District task force on Growth and Vitality. This conference was held at our church with about 24 people attending. These people were members of different congregations from all over the district. By doing this we raised money for the Food Ministry.
- The congregation has been very generous with donations of food, money and help with meals. We currently have over \$3,000 set aside for the support of the Food Ministry for the upcoming 2012-2013 year.

The Food Ministry Committee is made up of the following functions and the people currently filling those functions:

- Chairs - Jon Holcombe and Rollie Rahn
 - Coordinates operations of the Food Ministry
- Treasurer and Coordinator - Bonnie Ruekgauer
 - Keeps track of all finances of the FM and sets up help for preparing the meals
- Secretary - Jackie Thomas
 - Keeps records of meetings, all FM associated documents and building use forms.
- Information Officer - Sue Smith
 - Provides information about FM to committee members, HomeFront (along with other partnering groups), UUCWC Board, church members and the community.
- Food Collections Officer - Mike Muccioli
 - Tracks all food items in stock, donated items and dollar value, keeps current inventory and determines items needed for upcoming food service.
- Purchasing - Elliott Dunner and Bernie Ruekgauer
 - In coordination with food collections officer, shops for necessary food items and delivers items to the church.

- Liaison - Bernie Ruekgauer
 - Coordinates with HomeFront, Social Justice Committee, Kitchen Operations Team, and Caring Ministry

The Food Ministry staffing on food preparation days is as follows:

- Chefs
- Team Scheduler
- Assembly Coordinator
- Food Assembly Team
- Food Delivery Drivers
- Cleanup Team

In the future the Food Ministry will continue to search for more opportunities to serve the needs of the general public by increasing the number of meals that are prepared in partnership with organizations whose mission(s) and purpose(s) are congruent with the mission and purpose of UUCWC.

Rollie Rahn and Jon Holcombe, Co-Chairs

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Fundraising Committee is to plan and implement events, sales and other activities that raise money for the general operation of UUCWC.

This committee has, for the last few years, been made up of a chairperson who provides organization, labor and support and temporary members who lead or contribute their time to individual fund raising events. These are often events for which they have a special talent or mission.

Fundraising events or efforts in 2011-12 included those on the following list in the order in which they occurred during the year. For each, I have listed the leaders and/or the most involved people in planning the fundraiser. It often takes many volunteers to make an event successful and it is impossible to mention everyone. All volunteers and participants are greatly appreciated and I apologize in advance for not being able to list everyone by name. Without the outstanding work and dedication of so many people, fund raising at UUCWC would not be possible.

- Tastefully Simple Tasting Party - Kristen Spilatore, Connie Schofer
- UUCWC Cookbook - Barbara Drew, Jayme Trott and many others
- UUCWC Calendar- Bonnie Ruekgauer, Bert Wolfe
- Holiday Plant Sale - Donna Miller
- Karaoke - Mary Ann Sprengle, Connie Schofer, Barbara Drew
- Kaleidoscope - Wendy Feaver and Sheila Ernst, Holly Bussey
- Spring Plant Sale - Donna Miller
- UUCWC Auction - June and Roy Vogel, Connie Schofer and an army of others

- Yard Sale - Connie Schofer, 13 dedicated volunteers
- iGive.com Payments
- Airport Transport - Bernie Ruekgauer and friends- over 20 trips

Connie Schofer, Chair

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee supports the mission of the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing by:

- Recognizing the importance of each person entering our congregation.
- Being a gentle presence, guiding newcomers and welcoming them as they transition into our liberal religious community.
- Acknowledging and celebrating the commitment that membership implies.
- Supporting members by helping to develop connections within our caring community.
- Respecting and encouraging the development of personal spirituality, realizing that each individual's spiritual quest is different.

The Membership Committee is committed to facilitating the growth of this Liberal Faith Community and to the care and nurturing of new members to help foster their commitment to the church in order to retain membership. The committee does not do this alone, but in concert with the leaders of the church and the membership at large and encourages all to be friendly and welcoming to visitors and new members.

Committee Activities and Goals for the past year:

- The Committee Members work on making people feel comfortable on Sundays by having a responsible team of Greeters and Ushers. (Coordinated by Paul Tuerff and Rollie Rahn)
- We encourage the help of the congregation to be welcoming during the coffee hour and do our best to ensure visitors are not standing alone.
- We send letters to new visitors who sign the Welcome Register. (Nancy Cox does this weekly)
- The New Visitors are put on a list for Returning Visitors. We have a sign in log for them so we can track visitors' activity with us. (Bonnie Ruekgauer keeps the file up.)
- The Returning Visitors list is invited to join Charles at UU101 on the fourth Sunday of each month. (An email is sent to each of the returning visitors)
- Membership helps Charles with UU101 each month for anywhere from one to eight persons (Sparky Morrison and Colin Unsworth coordinate)
- On the First Sunday of each month, the Committee Members offer information about our church and the denomination at a table during coffee hour after each service. (First Encounters, coordinated by Linda and Denis Jensen)

- In the fall of 2011, Lori Rahn, Co-Chair and Bonnie Ruekgauer assisted in facilitating UU 201 (formerly known as UU Basics) with Adult RE. This is a five week course to introduce those considering membership, or new members, to Unitarian Universalism and UUCWC. Rev. Stephens, Robin Pugh and leaders of the congregation also participate.
- Membership provides information in the form of brochures from the UUA dealing with a variety of issues that offer the UU views on them, (i.e. Interfaith Marriage, Jesus, The Bible, God and Gay & Lesbian issues to name a few) which Andrew Conrad has overseen.
- There was a formal welcome and recognition of new members in December and April at a service and with a luncheon hosted by Charles and Alison and the Membership Committee at the Stephens home.
- We followed up on new members at three months, six months and after the first year to determine their involvement in the church community. (Bonnie Ruekgauer does the follow-up.)
- We survey members who leave to gather information to help us determine how we might better meet the needs of the congregation. (Also done by Bonnie.)
- Keep name tags up to date. The work is done with the assistance of software of the Communications Committee and Rollie Rahn.
- The committee sends membership updates to the UUA (additions and deletions).
- Reports quarterly to the church leaders as to the additions and deletions of members.
- Packets are given to New Members when they sign the Membership Book, which provides them with information on our church community. This packet was updated this year with materials from UUA and additional information about UUCWC specifically regarding the Council for Faith in Action (Debs Couch makes up the packets.)
- The Membership Committee Chairs have witnessed the signing of the Membership Book in Charles' absence.
- Monthly articles are submitted to *Crossings* to keep the congregation informed about new members and needs of the committee.
- Updated information on "The Path to Membership" and "Ways to get involved at UUCWC", which are available at the guest registry table and handed out at First Encounters and UU 101.
- Pictures of new members are posted on the Bulletin Board and members reaching their one year anniversary. Colin Unsworth is working to ensure all new members have their photo taken and posted, Bonnie makes sure those with a one-year anniversary are posted.
- Committee Chairs have attended all Church Council meetings.
- The Ushers and Greeters assisted at the Service for the Celebration of Charles's Years of Ministry to UUCWC.
- The Committee has worked more closely than ever with the chair of the Stewardship Committee this past year to track those who have not pledged, or who have not honored their pledge. The goal is to contact those people in order to determine if the reason they are not pledging is due to a hardship, or if they wish to be moved to friend status or simply removed from membership.
- A goal for the coming year is to update the membership packet into a more professional looking packet, with more pertinent information. Another is to look at the information that is given to visitors (other than UUA brochures) as to its relevance to giving a good snapshot of UUCWC.

- Policies and procedures were completed for the Ushers and Greeters (completed by Rollie Rahn).
- A goal for the coming year is to complete membership policies and procedures (Lori Rahn will remain as an ad hoc member to work on this).

Rollie and Lori Rahn will complete their 4th year (2nd term) as co-chairs in June of 2012 and are very pleased with the new incoming co-chairs Roger and Lynda Shapiro. We currently have on the Committee (in addition to the co-chairs): Arlene Naber, Richard Knight, Debs Couch, George Desser, Bonnie Ruekgauer, Paul Tuerff, Frank Holstein, Sparky Morrison, Colin Unsworth and Penny Gardner as full time members. Nancy Cox sends welcome notes to first-time visitors, Linda and Denis Jensen will participate on the committee for the months they are in New Jersey.

As of this writing our membership number is 265 and we have had as many as 273. There have been 22 new members since June 2012. We lose members for many reasons; moves, deaths, too theist, not spiritual enough, and many more. As we continue to engage our new by-laws, our membership will definitely have temporary declines, however, our goal remains strong to promote the growth and maintain the membership of this congregation.

Lori and Rollie Rahn, Co-Chairs

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

The Office Administrator is a part time (25 hours per week) position reporting to the minister and responsible for weekly production of the Crossings II, Orders of Service, church-wide emails, maintenance of office and website calendars, maintenance of membership database, and supporting the work of the Minister, Board and various committees and groups in their mission, particularly Rentals, Building and Communications. This year saw two additional major projects completed: the lease of a new copier at a cost savings to the church, and the changeover to a new online membership database.

The church year of 2011-2012 began with the lease of a new copier/printer. The previous copier's five year lease was due to expire in December 2011, but the search for new equipment began in late Spring of 2011. Three providers presented their proposal for new equipment leasing, as well as the option to buy out the existing lease. After reviewing all the proposals and negotiating with the vendors, we selected Saxon Office Technologies as our new supplier. Our old lease was bought out, allowing us to realize savings sooner than December 2011, and the new Kyocera Task Alpha 3500 was installed in September 2011. In addition to a faster machine with scanning and better finishing capacities, our newly negotiated lease included a significant reduction in per month costs and a savings on per copy costs. Additionally, Saxon provided the first 50,000 copies free as a signing bonus. This bonus equated to six months of copying at no charge, and the new lease will realize an annual savings. Thanks to Melo Holstein for her invaluable help meeting with vendors and evaluating copiers and leases.

In late fall of 2011, the church began using ICON, an online church database system for Membership, Stewardship and Finance needs. This new system allows Stewardship and Finance Chairs access to the database from any location, direct email to members and friends, and other features. Due to difficulties in formatting and extra costs of file conversion, all of our information on 265 members and their families, as well as over 100 friends was manually input, with each record containing 10-15 fields. Many thanks to Lynne Quinto for the many hours spent inputting records, and to Lynne, George Faulkner, Rollie Rahn and Jim Sanders for input on how to customize the fields in the database to meet our needs. The conversion was completed by early 2012. Subsequent discussions with ICON has resulted in the creation of a directory not previously offered from their standard menu that better suits our needs. Draft copies of the directory were sent in spring, and final copies were released in June. Sending electronic versions of the directories will also realize a cost savings over printing paper copies for members and friends.

Susan Irgang, Administrator

Religious Education Committee for Children and Youth

Membership: Robin Pugh (DLRE), Scott Umlauf (chair), Paul Linskey (secretary), Jennifer Rehbein, Georganne D'Angelo, Mike Muccioli, Barbara Schroeder-Jensen

The Sunday Children's RE program was well-attended this year, with 96 children registered. An all-ages class was taught at 9:15am, and pre-K through 9th grade was taught at 11:00am. In addition 43 adults and youth volunteered to teach classes, including 22 lead teachers, which is an excellent level of involvement. This was a Coming of Age year with eleven 8-9th graders completing the program. As always, the level of thoughtfulness and individuality expressed in the credos was inspiring to the congregation.

The Youth Group continued to be a small but strong program under the direction of Sallie Dunner and Colin Campbell. Youth Group met every other Sunday through most of the year and was well-attended, including a bike ride through a sudden downpour at the end of the year! The year ended with a Bridging Ceremony for seven of our high school graduates.

In addition to regular classes, several Special Sundays were held in which classes were combined. Service projects were carried out during some of these classes including preparing fleece blankets for Project Linus and making bag lunches for the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen.

Outside of regular programming, several events were held. These included:

- Family Game Night where board and card games were played
- Dinner with Charles where Mike and Charles prepared dinner and kids and parents went to separate rooms for after-dinner activities
- HomeFront Holiday Craft Fair
- Christmas Pageant

- Teacher Appreciation Brunch
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Sundaes with Charles to bid farewell to Rev. Charles Stephens

In addition to these programs, the collection of Boxtops for Education for children in the HomeFront program continued. Adjunct activities of the committee included the initiation of a Safe Congregation Task Group and starting a Children's collection box during coffee hour.

All in all, the Children's RE program had an active year and continues to be a draw for families attending UUCWC.

Scott Umlauf, Chair

RENTAL

The rental of our facilities, which comes under the Finance Committee, is coordinated by Mike Muccioli and Jane Shafer. As an income activity the policies and procedures are developed and reviewed by the Finance Committee. The rates for rental of the facilities, including the kitchen, were approved during the 2010-11 budget year and recommendations were made to leave those unchanged for 2011-12. In addition to weddings and occasional affairs that use the kitchen and Crossings Room, we have three year-round groups who rent on a regular basis. There is a webpage about rentals on the UUCWC website.

- **Concerts at the Crossings** -Scott Cullen continues to book concerts throughout the year. These are well attended and new people who attend our church for the first time will often tell us that their first time at this church was at one of our concerts.
- **Hopewell Valley Chorus** – This group of 80 voices uses the Sanctuary on a regular basis for some rehearsals and concerts.
- **The New Jersey Support Group** (Transgender support and education group) meets at the church on a monthly basis.
- **Several outside groups** have rented classrooms and the Crossings Room for all day meetings and training sessions. Though the kitchen is available for rental, we have not had many requests for that. The Sanctuary was also rented by outside groups for concerts.

The Board has suggested that we create a marketing plan for advertising the availability of our building for rentals. This will be explored during the 2012-13 year with the understanding that increased rentals will not impact on the availability of the building for use for UUCWC meetings and events.

Mike Muccioli and Jane Shafer

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

The Social Justice Committee (SJC) organizes and implements social justice projects to enable the UUCWC community to serve to the larger community. In addition, we offer assistance to others to implement their own projects. We also recommend to the Council for Faith in Action (CFA), deserving organizations for support from the 50% of the Sunday Collection.

Our projects and donations help UUCWC to become a dynamic recognized force in our community by assisting those in need.

The SJC is one of a number of social justice action groups at UUCWC including the Green Sanctuary, Journey Toward Wholeness and the Food Ministry. You'll see reports from most of these groups elsewhere in the Annual Report.

Loaves and Fishes

Working with the Princeton congregation, we prepared 800 lunches for Loaves & Fishes on Friday night, and prepared and served 800 meals on Saturday at St. Mary's Cathedral in Trenton the last weekend in March.

In a switch, this year the lunches were prepared at the UU Church in Princeton instead of the Crossings Room. We prepared the lunches without a hitch.

The Loaves and Fishes project is the largest SJC undertaking each year. This year 85 members volunteered to help in some way. Tasks ranged from making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to serving food at St. Mary's Cathedral in Trenton.

HomeFront Programs

Back to School Drive: We again increased the number of children who benefited from the HomeFront Back to school drive. Twenty children were able to start school with new clothing, shoes, school supplies and backpacks purchased by UUCWC sponsors.

Holiday Program: UUCWC also collected funds for the Holiday Wishes program that ensures holiday gifts for all of our HomeFront children.

Mitten Tree: The annual Mitten Tree was again decorated with hats, scarves and gloves for HomeFront children and their families.

The three above programs are funded by those donating the items.

Preservation Center: Susan Irgang Juliet Marlier and Ronnie Dobrowolski did the shopping this year and the CFA provided the funding.

UUCWC sponsors a room at the HomeFront Family Preservation Center. Twice a year, we provide home furnishing such as linens, towels, lamps and other items. The family takes these items with them when they are placed in permanent housing. The Family Preservation Center

provides safe haven with private family rooms. A comprehensive regimen of programs and services helps homeless families break the cycle of poverty.

Morrisville Food Center

The food center, housed in the Morrisville Presbyterian Church, supplies bags of groceries to the disadvantaged in Morrisville and Trenton. We are one of the center's largest cash donors with our annual contribution of \$1000 from the Sunday collection.

In addition to our cash contribution, a contingent from UUCWC contributes time each week working at the Food Center taking on tasks that range from coordinating volunteers to loading shopping bags with food.

Many members of the congregation donated generous amounts of food to the "Don't Come to Church Empty Handed" Food Drive for the benefit of the Morrisville Food Center. Every week, Darleen Wheeler transported the bags of food left in the lobby to the food center.

Finally, a few members also participated in the Food Center's "Hike Against Hunger", donating pledged funds.

Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK)

This year we more than doubled the number of frozen turkeys donated by delivering over 25 turkeys to the TASK facility. Our total cash contribution to TASK was \$1000.

Recommended Donations

UUCWC generously earmarks 50% of the Sunday collection Social Justice causes. In addition to the contributions to TASK and the Morrisville Food Center the SJC recommended and the CFA approved donations to the Coalition for Peace Action and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

Food Ministry

The Social Justice Committee sponsors the Food Ministry. The Food Ministry prepares and delivers meals in cooperation with organizations such as HomeFront. Their activities are covered elsewhere in the Annual Report.

Social Action Committee Transitions

After four years, Ronnie and Ed Dobrowolski are stepping down as Co-Chairs of the Social Justice Committee. We are handing the reins to Mary Kay Mitchell who has been active in social justice causes for many years, particularly Journey Toward Wholeness. We plan to continue to be active in Social Justice causes. We would like to express appreciation to dedicated committee members, and to the many members and friends of the congregation who have supported UUCWC social justice projects. Current members of this committee are Bernie Ruekgauer, Richard Knight, Debbie West and Juliet Marlier.

Ronnie and Ed Dobrowolski, Co-Chairs

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer is an officer of the church, Board member, and member of the Finance Committee. While the treasurer does not develop the budget, s/he essentially implements it by logging income by category (e.g., pledges, plate, and fundraising), paying expenses, and providing monthly reports and commentary to the Board and Finance Committees.

Breaking Even for the 2011-12 Year

Thanks to fulfilled pledges, and moving some unused reserve dollars back to income, we finished the church's fiscal year on June 30, 2012 with a \$0 balance. As noted in the July *Crossings*, while pledges were below projections for 2011-12, expenses were also down significantly, especially office-related expenses and utilities.

At our annual meeting one year ago, the congregation approved a budget with a projected deficit. However, later in July, 2011, once all bills were paid and pledges for the year were booked, we actually finished with a surplus. The Board rolled over a portion of that as income to help balance this year's budget.

Our Sunday plate income, which now allocates 50% to our Council for Faith in Action (to distribute to social action causes) and 50% to operating income, almost reached our target. Pledge income, and fundraising were all up from 2010-11, though pledge income was below our ambitious target for 2011-12. Fundraising exceeded expectations thanks in particular to strong results for the auction and the Kaleidoscope Musicale. Bravo to Connie Schofer, Fundraising chairperson, June and Roy Vogel's annual auction leadership, and all the rest of you who stepped forward to help with these fundraising events and who attended and donated to them.

A few staff professional expenses, budgeted for 2011-12 will be paid in this current year. However, these will be mostly offset from a refund from PSE&G in July due to their misreading of our electric meters.

Speaking of utility costs, an ROI (return-on-investment) analysis I prepared and reviewed with Finance, the Board, and others shows that we have likely now broken even on the investment we made to purchase solar panels for the roof. As part of us qualifying as a UUA-certified Green Sanctuary, we had the panels installed in October 2008, at a net cost of about \$27,200 (i.e., net of credits from the state of New Jersey which covered half the cost).

After almost 4 years of operation, we've made \$20,200 selling solar credits back to the electric grid, and saved perhaps an average of \$1,800 per year on electric bills. Going forward, the solar panels will be generating savings for us.

We've made other improvements to save energy costs too, including replacing the double doors by the office, repairs to the exterior wall between those doors and classroom 201, and reduced excessive operation of the dehumidifiers in some downstairs classrooms. Our natural gas bills have also dropped in each of the last three years, though in part due to declining natural gas prices and warmer winters. But we should all feel good that we have been doing more to reduce utility bills and improve energy efficiency.

As a result of a new five-year lease agreement for our copier-printer, we are realizing a significant savings per year, thanks to our office administrator Susan Irgang's efforts. We have also modified our Verizon and Vonage contracts giving us a faster internet connection and a lower cost per year going forward, though the changes just started late last month. A major project for Susan and several of us was an upgrade to a web- or cloud-based software system to manage the data on all of our members, friends, and visitors, plus pledges, and other contributions, as well as to generate PDF directories we can send out by e-mail. The system provides constant back-up, "anywhere" access for those of us authorized to use it, and much greater use of e-mail for communications like pledge statements, saving a couple hundred dollars a year on mailing costs.

In addition to our operating budget, we have several reserve funds. This includes a reserve for major expenses related to the facility, a modest cash reserve, funds collected through the plate and other contributions for the Council for Faith in Action, funds for the Food Ministry, and other smaller funds.

The 2012-13 Budget

We approved a budget with an initial projected deficit at the annual meeting in May. But the Finance Committee and Board have now identified ways we hope will bring that to close to a balanced budget to present to the Congregation sometime this fall. For example, we now feel more comfortable increasing our projections for future pledge and fundraising income a little, and see prudent cuts, which together reduce our deficit by more than half. We will be contacting various committees on these ideas and their additional suggestions to be sure we all collaborate on meeting this challenge for the whole congregation. We encourage each of us to reflect on the importance this community means to us, and we encourage you to give the Finance Committee your input and suggestions. It meets the 2nd Monday of the month. We will meet this challenge. But – not just the Board or the Finance Committee – all of us need find ways to help.

George Faulkner, Treasurer

WORSHIP ASSOCIATES COMMITTEE

Mission and vision: It is the mission of the Worship Associate Committee of UUCWC to facilitate and create worship services that support and enhance the vision and mission of this liberal faith community and of UUism. We work with the minister or guest speaker to plan and / or conduct worship services. It is the vision of the Worship Associate Committee of UUCWC to create and support communal worship that promotes our UU principles values and history.

Members: Eric Roberts and Bill Cox each finished their terms at the end of the summer of 2011. Bonnie Gilbert returned Mar 2010 to become the WA chair July 2010 after having been a regular member for 3 ½ years then being out for one year. Margaret DeAngelis ended her third year but elected to continue for a fourth year. Beginning their third year in September 2011 were Andrew Conrad, Ronnie Dobrowolski, and Nina Todor. Chris Piatek began her third year in January

2012. Beginning their second year in September 2011 were George Desser, MJ Hansen, and Ben Thornton. Kyle Roberts joined us in the spring of 2011 and gave a commitment of one year (as a Youth member). Beginning as new WAs in September 2011 were Rich DiGeorgio, Penny Gardner and Bonnie Ruekgaurer. As of June 2012, we have 3 new members coming aboard (Jim Bicksler, Sara Holcolme-returning and Alex Dovgala-Carr as a youth member [1 year]) and may have one more to commit to the three year term over the summer. I am now finishing my term as WA chairperson June 30, 2012. Margaret DeAngelis and MJ Hansen will be the incoming co-chairs beginning July 1, 2012. Rev. Charles Stephens, our minister; Robin Pugh, DLRE, and Caryl Tipton, DMM, have been regular members of the committee. Rev. Charles Stephens has retired as of June 30, 2012 and a transitional minister will be starting in August, 2012.

- Our WAs continue to assist in producing high quality Sunday morning Services.
- On Sept 10, 2011, we held a new WA training, immediately followed by a voice workshop by Caryl Tipton.
- In Sept 2011, Bonnie discussed with Charles the possibility of setting up a “Pebble Pond” as is suggested during Michael Dowd services. Congregants are encouraged to drop a pebble in a bowl filled with water to commemorate a silent Joy or Concern before the services or during instrumental music or during silent meditation time. The “Pebble Pond” was introduced in October as an addition of a spiritual dimension during regular services.
- In October, during services, we began incorporating a focus on a single Candle of Fellowship once each month having one or two individuals or persons from various groups to talk about what that candle means to them. This occurred in October, November, January, February and March.
- It was suggested that the order of “gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered” be changed in different services to retain the meaning and to not always put one group first.
- Caryl Tipton again did the analysis of the summer service questionnaire /feedback for Summer 2011 - overall very positive.
- There was much discussion about how long to have the prelude, whether or not to allow congregants to come in to the sanctuary during the prelude and discussion about when to give announcements. This discussion continued into Spring 2012 when it was decided to ask congregants to wait in the lobby until the prelude is over; the next time of entry is when the next hymn is sung.
- In mid-October it was discovered that there was mold in the choir room /WA area so we had to find regular locations for our props and equipment while the mold was treated.
- When the equipment was brought back into the WA area after the mold treatment, we rearranged and inventoried WA supplies in the shelf area behind the choir room (candles and Christmas supplies mostly). We would still like to have a better organization to our

supplies – perhaps more permanent shelving or cabinet for a specific area for WA supplies to not mix in with Choir supplies.

- We held a fall retreat at Margaret DeAngelis’s home on December 10 after decorating the sanctuary for the holidays.
- Penny Gardner purchased a number of shiny new decorations for the sanctuary for the holidays.
- Margaret DeAngelis and her husband contributed the battery powered luminaries for Christmas Eve service.
- We continued to have discussion about whether to stay with Yahoo groups for our documents and correspondence or switch to Google groups. For now we will stay with Yahoo groups.
- In the month of January we began to plan for Summer Services and also became aware of the various “celebrate Rev. Charles” services planned and that they would take a lot of work.
- Also in January, Robin requested that next year the intergenerational services be scattered throughout the year rather than clustered around the holidays.
- By March, the Pebble Pond was really catching on with many people dropping pebbles.
- Margaret DeAngelis also contributed new oil candles for our Candles of Fellowship which light much better, the light can be seen better and they stay lit.
- Concerns had been expressed about Charles leaving, especially about the role of Worship Associates so in March we viewed an on-line video about transitional time and ministers.
- Bonnie, MJ and Margaret continued to work on the April 15th Celebrate Charles service committee as well as the 10:00am service on Transitions the same day.
- WAs assisted with a number of special services at the end of the church year including Coming of Age, Bridging, Child Dedications, Charles’ last sermon, and Flower Ceremony including the special white carnation farewell for Charles and Alison.
- We held an end-of-the year social at Margaret DeAngelis’s home on June 16, 2012 attended by many Worship Associates, their family members and Charles and Alison.
- The dates of Summer Services are June 17 – September 2, 2012. The water service on September 9, 2012 begins the new church year when our Transitional Minister, Rev. Jennifer Brooks, will be in the pulpit.

- Requirements for 2012 summer service preparation include securing an accompanist (Bonnie Ruekgauer has put together a list of willing accompanists for the summer), coordinating the service with the Summer Service speaker or group, and sending the Order of Service to Nancy Neff who will type up the OOS. The refreshments for the after service fellowship have not been arranged but if anyone does bring refreshments, they should set them up in the Crossings room.
- WAs look forward to working with our Transitional minister, Jennifer Brooks, as she arrives by mid-August and will begin to work with WAs in September. Margaret DeAngelis and MJ Hansen began their role as co-chairs as of July 1, 2012.

Bonnie T. Gilbert, Chair