

UCM Midyear Reports from Committees and Ministry Areas

December 2015

Executive Team

Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, convener; Judith Hinds reporting.

Members: Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Judith Hinds, Tina Ruth (and Joanna Meyer through November).

Issues the ET has worked on since summer:

- balancing workload efficiently with staff members as part of a larger Management Team;
- balancing responsibilities and enhancing communication between ET and Board;
- collaborating with the choir to determine the best tangible way to recognize Catherine Orr's long music ministry;
- meeting with Community Lunch reps to establish management procedures and provide support for this new UCM ministry;
- reviewing recommended changes to personnel and safe congregation policies;
- developing parameters for the Personnel Ctee to use in creating hiring guidelines;
- filling leadership positions;
- helping the Committee of Chairs get their current-year programs started;
- working with the Social Responsibility Ctee and Board to approve UCM becoming a member of Vermont Interfaith Power & Light;
- monitoring completion of the major accessibility and capital projects undertaken this summer and fall;
- exploring with the Board the feasibility of creating a Legacy Research Task Force;
- setting our priorities for the year and developing a monitoring schedule.

ET priorities include developing fruitful working relationships with/among our new Minister and the whole Management Team; providing direct support to the Community Lunch, Communications, Finance, Leadership Development, Living Lighter, and Social Responsibility Committees. We are also very interested in the work of the Board's 2020 Vision Task Force.

Accessibility Committee

Chair vacant; report based on notes from committee's last visit to the ET.

The past six months have seen major improvements to accessibility of our church building: replacement of doorknobs with levers; construction of a fully ADA-compliant accessible bathroom, with associated changes to storage space in the vestry; six new stair railings; improvements to the School Street entrance; and re-striping of the parking lot to include one accessible space. Signage and storage space remain to be completed. Work continues on raising awareness of hidden and invisible disabilities. Further physical improvements will be discussed as part of the 2020 Vision effort.

NOTE: The ET thanks and commends Sam Clark for these remarkable successes in the year he served as Chair of the Accessibility Committee.

Administration Committee

John Poeton, Chair

The Administration Committee meets this year irregularly on an “as needed” basis. We have established a focus team format centering our work around technology, communications, finances and office services. Each member of our committee heads a specific team: Ron Marion, Communications, Jason Boyd, Technology, John Poeton, Finances and Norma Raymond, office services. Anyone interested in assisting with our team work is encouraged to contact the team leader.

During our Committee meeting, usually held for one hour from 11:30 until 12:30 on the third Friday of the month, we receive updates from the Church Administrator and the Office Assistant. Our major focus this year has been on ways to improve the telephone system within the church and also ways that we can improve the wi-fi network throughout the building. We are presently investigating two possible ways that the connection of electronic devices can be established on a regular basis in every room at UCM. The committee hopes that this plan can be implemented before the end of this church year.

Adult Religious Education Committee

Kristin Glaser, Chair

Members: Kristin Glaser, Paul Ohlson, Kathleen Bryant, Sally Armstrong, Mara Iverson.

The Adult Religious Education Committee formed this year to try to provide more energy and structure to the effort of creating RE opportunities for adults. Some members of the committee had been involved in the broader Religious Education committee in the past. The current committee members are still determining whether this should be a separate committee or a sub-committee of the RE Committee. The group has organized several programs since its inception. Fall 2015 Paul Ohlson co-facilitated the first half of “The Wi\$dom Path,” a series devoted to exploring the connection between spirituality and money. Kristin Glaser offered the first half of “Principled Commitments,” a series that explores relationships and spirituality for partnered people. Decisions are forthcoming as to whether both of those series will continue into the Spring. The committee is also discussing other programming for Winter and Spring. Those possible programs include the January spiritual retreat, a book discussion group for one of Kate Braestrup’s works, a book discussion of either *Just Mercy* (the UU common read) or another text about racial justice or religious fundamentalism, and a version of OWL designed for older adults. We continue to research options like the Tapestry of Faith programs and increasing multigenerational learning opportunities that address issues across the lifespan.

Communications Committee

Susan Koch, Chair

Members: Sally Armstrong, Bettie Barnes, Dalice Costa, Susan Koch, Sam Rossier.

This group is open and encourages new members.

Our Mission Statement:

The Communications Committee (Comm2) facilitates dialogue, action, fellowship and welcoming outreach within our church and the broader community.

Report: The Comm2 has been very busy this summer/fall with the following accomplishments:

1. Construction, Development and Reveal of New Web Site, <http://ucmvt.org/>

2. Set up Twitter account: twitter.com/ucmvt
3. Update and Maintain UCM Facebook Page and UCM Facebook Group
4. Continual Monitoring and Update of Web Site
5. Assist groups with PR for events at UCM, provide training as needed
6. Coordination with Weekly announcements editors
7. Coordination of recording sermons and link to website
8. Seek volunteers for tech support and committee growth
9. Work with web site consultant
10. Attend UUA webinars and trainings

Community Lunch Committee

Chauntelle Eckhaus, CoC rep; Tina Ruth, secretary, reporting.

The Community Lunch is now an official program of UCM. The Women's Alliance gave us money to get started, we found out how to find good, healthy free food, and volunteers signed up to start serving meals to 32 guests on the first Monday in July. UCM has added electric outlets in the basement for additional cold food storage, and hired Dan Wetmore to build a beautiful rodent-proof, locked food pantry. The Hunger Mountain Food Co-op awarded us a grant to buy a freezer. We became a VT Foodbank Network Partner, and we studied and trained volunteers in safe food handling procedures. The Social Responsibility Committee very generously awarded us the Community Pouch proceeds for November, and we have received many other donations in kind and cash. We now have about 45 regular volunteers, about 15 of whom work on any given Monday, serving guests now numbering 80 to over 100 each Monday. Paula Gills and other musicians share their talents. We have sensational chefs in Scott Hess, John Poeton, Ron Marion and Priscilla Fox. The lunches have become a social event, and we are told that the word on the street is that the UCM CL is a favorite in town. Please join us between 11:00 and 12:30 any Monday, including holidays. And we welcome more volunteers. We start at 8, and finish around 2. Many activities only take an hour and a half, and range from set-up to food prep to serving to clean up. Contact our volunteer coordinator Chauntelle Eckhaus, at 456-1230, or chauntelle802@gmail.com, to sign up. You can also sign up online at <http://vols.pt/chFQ5x>.

Finance Committee

Paul Wallace-Brodeur, Chair

Members: Paul Wallace-Brodeur, Chair; John Poeton, Rob Chickering and Dan Groberg; Dave Grundy, Treasurer, Ex-Officio

Our Mission Statement: The Finance Committee assists the Executive Team and Board in overseeing the financial health of the Church, prepares the annual budget for review by the ET and Board, monitors the approved annual budget, oversees the long term invested funds, and ensures that the church is properly insured.

The Committee has had two meetings so far this year. We were pleased that the 2014-15 church year ended in the black, despite the reduction in anticipated income due to changes in the format of the auction.

A new counting procedure was instituted with the beginning of the church year based on the recommendation of staff and chair of the Administration Committee. The system is designed to

make the process shorter and less complicated for the Sunday pouch counters. A training session for counters was held at the beginning of the year.

In October, the Church received the second and final installment of the Jackman bequest which was deposited in the Long Term Invested Funds. In November the Committee met with Rich Pearce from our LTIF manager, The Trust Company of Vermont. Rich had prepared a summary and report of our investments which was discussed and reviewed by the attendees at the meeting.

Lay Pastoral Care Ministry

Patty Crawford, Coordinator

Members: Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Pam Cameron, Patty Crawford, Bill Paine, Leslie Parr, Nancy Read, Theresa White.

Mission: To provide a caring and supportive listening presence for the members and friends of the UCM family in times of distress due to overwhelming life events – joyful ones as well as times of concerns and sorrows. Our goal is to support the work of our minister.

Summary of LPCM's work since May 2015

Caregivers continue to provide support and a compassionate presence before and after Sunday services.

Joan and caregivers visited members and friends at home, in the hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Provide support to the family and friends taking care of their loved ones.

Coordinate additional services with the Caring Network for meals and transportation as needed or when requested.

Provide community resources as needed.

Other Relevant Points:

LPCM meets monthly, under the supervision of our minister, to provide support for one another, review the current needs of our congregation, and receive additional training.

Leadership Development Committee

Bill Doelger, Chair

Members: Hedi Ballantyne, Sue Stuke

Our Mission: The Leadership Development Committee encourages church members and friends to participate in shared ministry by finding their true passion. The committee facilitates training opportunities, nominates candidates for church offices, and nurtures lay leadership.

On October 25th more than 20 church committees/groups supported a Service Fair at tables in the vestry during coffee hour. Each had a sign identifying their committee/group and treats to attract church members to the many activities of our church. It is not yet clear how many stepped forward, but the general feeling for this brief event was positive.

In the coming months, the LDC will seek training opportunities offered by NNED. As in past years, the focus of our activities will be to seek individuals willing to assume leadership roles coincident with their passion and desire to help our community thrive.

Living Lighter Committee

Dave Grundy, Chair

The Living Lighter Committee has continued to monitor recycling efforts in the church building. Our efforts in the area of Environmental Justice have been disappointing as to our relationship with the Food As Medicine folks who are trying to establish a garden space at two low-income housing sites in Barre. Because of the transient nature of the tenants, it is difficult to get continuity in the garden effort. Working under the theme of food insecurity, we have done volunteer work with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps which prepares boxes of food for 300 individuals/families who have been identified as food-challenged.

Some of our members have taken active volunteer roles in the new UCM Community Lunch program which also addresses the subject of food insecurity. The LLC effort is two-pronged with the first important area being to provide food for people who may not have access to nutritious food because of lack of income. The efforts mentioned above attack that problem. The second area is to attempt to influence the decisions people of limited means make when they purchase food. This is a side of the Community Lunch we have not begun to address but hope we can start to work on. We have had representatives come in and sign up people for Three Squares, the program that replaced food stamps. This is a step in the right direction, and we hope to be able to educate our guests on ways to improve their food choices in ways that save their precious financial resources.

Looking ahead, the members met to suggest ways in which the Committee could be more active in a variety of energy areas. It was decided that members should attend the Visioning events to make their individual interests known. When the report comes out, the Committee will evaluate what is included that would be appropriate for us to work on.

The chair of the LLC has given notice that, upon the publication of the Visioning project, he will step down and allow for new leadership.

Membership Committee

Dave Peters, Chair

Members: David Peters, Chair, Art Stuke, Vice Chair, Hedi Ballantyne, Abby Colihan, Sue Gilmore, Judith Hinds, Jen Sciarrotta, Colin Tait.

During the fall months the Committee has:

- Arranged for ushers, greeters, coffee makers, and Hospitality Table staffing.
- Conducted a New UU program and welcomed 13 new members to UCM.
- Made plans for the New Member Sunday program scheduled for December 13, 2015.
- Replaced pew cards on a regular basis.
- Made follow-up calls to visitors who can be identified and to new UCM members.
- Met monthly and enjoyed the participation of Rev. Joan.
- Updated the photo board with assistance from Dave Armstrong.
- Begun the process of updating the UCM directory.
- Established committee objectives for 2015-2016.

We believe that these activities are consistent with and supportive of our mission:

The Membership Committee provides welcoming and outreach to newcomers, members and friends of the church with the intention of fostering a sense of belonging in our spiritual home.

Committee on Ministry

Pam Cameron, Chair

Members: Rev. Joan Javier-Duval; Pam Cameron, chair; Danner Friend, vice-chair; Sue Stukey, Brenda Bean, Emily Seifert

Our Mission Statement:

The Committee on Ministry supports and nurtures the shared ministry of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier by:

1. Serving as support and sounding board for the minister.
2. Serving as a resource for individuals and groups in the congregation to:
 - a. foster healthy process, relationships and decision-making
 - b. address conflicts or troubles that negatively impact ministry
 - c. consult with the minister on matters of ministry
3. Making recommendations to the church's governing bodies and other leadership groups to enhance the health and effectiveness of ministries.

The Committee on Ministry meets monthly, working with Rev. Joan, to discuss and reflect on matters helping her settle into the rhythm of her role with regards to her overall work schedule, time allocation, and how relationships with congregants are developing. The CoM's primary purpose continues to be as a sounding board for the minister. We organized a "welcoming reception" after our 2nd church service in Sept.; giving an additional opportunity for congregants to meet Joan and her family, as well as Dick Riley and Eliza Thomas. Because Joan is in her preliminary fellowship period, the CoM will play a role in evaluating her for her annual fellowship renewal with the UUA. In this process, we continue to see how our congregation is growing and moving forward.

Music Committee

Sarah Hooker, Chair

This committee was recently reactivated and therefore was not asked to submit a midyear report.

Personnel Committee

Chair vacant; Jo Romano reporting.

Members: Priscilla Fox, Chris Granda, Jo Romano, and YOU!!! Please join us with your energy and any expertise you can bring the table.

This year the committee is focusing on two agendas:

1. Finalizing current staffing policies in collaboration with the minister and staff; and
2. We are just beginning to research Grievance Procedure policy development.

We are in need of two or more new members who have a passion, interest and/or HR expertise. Please consider joining this very efficient, fun group of people. We meet for 45 min. to 1 hour after church every two months or more if needed.

Property Committee

Paul Ohlson, Chair

Members: Paul Ohlson, Chair; Peter Thoms, Vice Chair; and others as needed with expertise or interest in particular projects.

Property Mission: Protect and maintain the church in keeping with historical integrity and current needs.

These past six months have seen the following projects completed or nearing completion:

1. Two unsound steel fuel tanks (cellar) have been removed and replaced with one larger fiberglass tank.
2. Safety-code-approved handrails have been added in six locations in the Vestry and Bell Tower room.
3. The Children's Chapel and room have been cleaned and painted.
4. A six-unit bike rack (Special Gift) has been fabricated and installed.
5. The accessible bathroom is complete and in service.
6. The accessible power door is installed and operational.
7. The church cellar has been thoroughly cleaned and trash removed and/or given away.
8. Brighter, cheaper lighting (LED technology) has been added to the Nursery, Children's Chapel, Administrator's office, and DRE's office.
9. Shelving and lighting has been added behind the organ and bell tower room for additional storage.
10. Lowered thresholds (added safety and accessibility) in School Street foyer.
11. Miscellaneous painting and sprucing up the School Street Foyer.
12. Insulation has been added above the addition where needed (phase 1 of 2).
13. Kitchen stove has been reconditioned by church volunteers to function satisfactorily.
14. A secure dry foods closet has been constructed in the cellar for UCM's Community Lunch program.
15. A whole-church energy audit has been conducted under the auspices of Efficiency Vermont.

Upcoming projects to be completed in the next six months include:

1. Boxing in the organ bellows fan motor in the cellar for safety reasons.
2. Stripping and refinishing the kitchen tile floor.
3. Installing new coat racks in the Vestry to compensate for the loss of storage due to the new bathroom.
4. Construction and installation of a new picket fence on the river wall (Special Gift).
5. Stripping and refinishing Vestry and Fireplace Room hardwood floors.
6. Installing energy-efficient heat pump water heater or on-demand heaters for domestic water.
7. Fabricating and installing new interior signage to meet ADA requirements.
8. Building cellar pad and mounting large freezer for Community Lunch program.
9. Lowering threshold in main foyer (added safety and accessibility).

Note: All projects to date are on budget or slightly below budget with the notable exception of the insulation work. Insulating over the organ and over the 1982 addition has been broken into two phases with half being done this year (Special Gift) and half next year.

Religious Education Committee

Kairn Kelley, Chair

Members: Sally Armstrong, Deb Van Ness, Theresa White, Beth Merrill, Noah Witke-Mele, Margo Whitcomb.

Mission: The Religious Education Committee, working in community, supports opportunities for transformational learning, faith formation, action, and fellowship across the lifespan within our congregation.

We covenant to: Respect each other's talents and limitations; Recognize the value of our time; Be goal directed and productive in service to our community and our mission; Engage creatively and have fun; Embody the values of forgiveness, honesty, patience, gratitude and kindness.

The REC has supported ongoing programs including:

- Ensuring consistent, high-quality coverage for Sunday RE programs even when Sally is away
- Coverage for High School Youth Group
- Providing feedback and support for RE outreach (e.g., RE Newsletter and RE-to-Go holiday bags)
- Children's Snack Table

New attention has been directed to:

- Experimenting with an RE Welcome Table
- Outreach to build connection between UCM and Burlington youth
- Engaging youth with cultural exchange activities through Planting Hope
- Understanding Nursery usage (needs and barriers to use) to improve our offerings for the youngest members of our congregation and their families
- Improving our approach to coordinating volunteer offers to meet RE needs (e.g., snacks, Sunday "subs," special events)
- Considering RE Team training in January
- Considering roles of RE and Adult RE committees

Safety Committee

Tina Muncy and Lindsay Wade, co-chairs

Members: Tina Muncy (co-chair); Lindsay Wade (co-chair); David Armstrong; Sue Gilmore.

Organized and coordinated fire drill which took place on Sunday towards end of service on May 31st. Montpelier Fire Department was on site for this drill. Went very well. The only change would be that the congregation should gather away from the church building beyond the north lawn rather than on the sidewalk on Main Street in front of sanctuary entrance.

Discussion of the actual sanctuary presently being closed all days (except Sunday). Did small survey of few other active churches on their policies. Bethany and St. Augustine's are open all day and evening everyday. Christ Church (under normal conditions) has fairly open door policy. When no one is in office, church is locked up. Occasional thievery, but very rarely.

Held a seminar on Sept. 20th for staff and church leaders on basic information on possible disruptive situations arising within the church. 15 people attended.

Dave met with the signage work group to establish signs around the church for the safety of the congregation.

Small Group Ministry

Sue Stuke reporting

Coordinating Team and Facilitators: Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Pam Cameron, Mary Jane Ohlson, Sue Stuke, Ron Cameron, Danner Friend, Tina Ruth, Lydia Lowery Busler, Kairn Kelley and Becky Webber.

Our Mission Statement: To provide an opportunity for spiritual reflection, building community and relationships, and service to the church and wider community to all who wish to participate.

Activities: This Fall Rev. Joan Javier-Duval joined our coordinating team. She has provided wise leadership and support for Facilitators and Coordinators at monthly meetings. The Coordinating Team, including the minister, create Session Plans for each Small Group gathering. Groups meet twice a month in four-month semesters. Our current semester runs from October through January and has three groups with a total of 28 participants, including 6 facilitators. A second semester will begin in mid-February and meet through mid-June, allowing for additional members and friends to participate.

Members enjoy getting to know each other in a confidential and facilitated time together. These groups provide time and space for reflection on our spiritual lives, and a place to share what we have discovered. Members of each group also agree to provide service to the church and community in a variety of ways. Past groups have helped weed and clean out the church gardens; packed food for the Vermont Foodbank; cleaned up after church-wide events; and provided lunch for various smaller church gatherings.

SGM Groups provide a way to get to know one another more deeply, to form bonds of friendship and caring which weave through-out the church, building a vibrant and connected community.

Social Responsibility Committee

New Co-Chairs: Ginnie Humphreys and Irina Markova. ET liaison Judith Hinds reporting.

Core members include Hedi Ballantyne, Mary Alice Bisbee, Rhoda Chickering, Dave Grundy, Ginnie Humphreys, Fran Krushenick, Beth Merrill, Sue Rigger, Sasha Thayer, Harris Webster. The mailing list includes twice that many.

The following projects are current or under development (listed with the point person for each):

Community Pouch – Ginnie

Heifer Project liaison – Hedi

SRC Library – Mary Alice and Fran

Pea Soup Freeze-in – Rhoda

Food Pantry collections – Harris

UUSC liaison – no point person yet

Planting Hope liaison – Beth

Climate Justice – Sue [includes liaison with VT IPL and 350VT]

Funeral Consumers Alliance liaison – Mary Alice

Compassion & Choices liaison – Judith

The committee met once in October. Members voted to expand the scope for a possible community legacy research group to recruit from the whole church. The Board has approved UCM membership in Vermont Interfaith Power & Light (VT IPL). We decided to make a token donation this year of \$50 from the SRC budget. In future years, we will request a separate line item in the budget for VT IPL.

Stewardship Committee

Dan Groberg, Chair

The Stewardship Committee fosters a spirit of generosity and shared financial responsibility in our church community. It develops ways of raising the revenue necessary to carry out the church's mission. Committee members include Dan Groberg, Scott Hess, John Poeton, Paul Ohlson, Peter Thoms, Brenda Bean, Corey Chase, and Paula Gills. This spring, we led a very successful pledge drive, increasing the median gift and involving members of the congregation in more deeply understanding the financial needs of the church. A main emphasis of the committee for this coming year is to look at stewardship in a more holistic manner. In this vein, we have reorganized the committee to consider various stewardship activities, including the annual pledge drive, special fundraising events, the "special gifts" campaign, and planned giving. The new planned giving subcommittee will educate members and friends on opportunities to leave a financial legacy with the church. We all look forward to hosting a celebration meal to kick off the pledge drive this spring.

Vermont Interfaith Action Committee

Harris Webster, Chair

Members: Hedi Ballantyne, Kim Beyer, Margaret Blanchard, Lou Cherry, Ginnie Humphreys, AnnaRose Jenisch, Nancy Potak, Sue Rikken, Julie Tessler, Harris Webster (Chair), Anthony Zarriello.

2015-16 UCM VIA Committee meetings. Three meetings were held, one in August, October and November. The August meeting featured summarizing decisions made in our last church year. Our UCM VIA issue would continue to be Divestment of Fossil Fuels and we would partner with 350VT in that regard. Our UCM VIA would continue to support the state-wide Clergy Caucus' campaign "Building Vermont's Moral Economy" and Central Vermont's issues on housing and homelessness. Our October meeting focused on discussing and selecting specific proposals to work on and in November we further spelled out and confirmed, delayed, or rejected some general proposals brought up in October. The big decision in November was for our UCM VIA to play the role of citizen lobbyist in the Vermont State Legislature and a smaller decision was to encourage the City of Montpelier to divest from fossil fuels when they invest the Senior Center's Jackman bequest. Details about the Bell Ringing Vigil 11/28 were provided. Sue Rikken and Harris Webster played major roles in carrying out this event where about 50 people gathered to hear bells, hear thoughts, and be silent. All meetings included training from Melissa Battah, our VIA Community Organizer, and helpful comments from our Minister, Rev. Joan Javier-Duval. Many individual members of our committee participated in various events throughout the past year planned by our partners, 350VT's state and local groups, Vermont Interfaith Power and Light, the state-wide VIA Clergy Caucus, and the Central Vermont VIA. These included at least three events held at UCM.

Welcoming Congregation Committee

Nancy Schulz, Chair

Members: Liz Benjamin, Anne Ferguson, Tina Muncy, Ellie Peters, Nancy Schulz (chair).

The Welcoming Congregation Committee exists to guide UCM to become ever more welcoming to individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning. We explore ways in which all those connected to the church (minister, staff, church members and friends), as well as all policies and programs, can become friendlier to the LGBTQ community.

On the first Sunday of the church year, our committee mobilized a group of UCMers to march in the Burlington Pride parade. Eighteen, including Rev. Joan, made the trip to Burlington to walk behind the UCM banner. Most wore "Standing on the Side of Love" t-shirts. We waved a number of rainbow flags, too. One of the best things about this outing was that our group ranged in age from teenagers to octogenarians.

In October, our committee helped to publicize a Coming Out Day dance that was organized by Rainbow Umbrella of Central Vermont (RUCVT). RUCVT is an LGBT adult group, which was launched in mid-March.

In recent weeks, we've been putting together a brochure that explains the work of our committee to the congregation as well as to the larger community. We've been through several drafts and hope to complete the piece by the end of the calendar year. Rev. Joan attended our November meeting and provided helpful feedback on the draft brochure.

For the third consecutive year, the committee is partnering with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library to organize a series of discussions about LGBT books and films. In September, we showed a documentary entitled "Growing Up Trans" about the challenges faced by transgender children and their families. In November, we showed a documentary entitled "Gen Silent" about LGBT seniors who are going back into the closet out of fear that they'll be discriminated against, bullied, or abused in assisted-living facilities and nursing homes.

Members of the Welcoming Congregation Committee worked with Rainbow Umbrella of Central Vermont to organize a march to draw attention to International Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20. The march attracted over 50 participants who carried signs and walked around the intersection of State and Main Streets in Montpelier during lunch hour. Both VPR and the Times Argus covered the march. The Welcoming Congregation Committee is grateful to UCM for providing a gathering space for the participants prior to the march and to Rev. Joan for marching with us.

Women's Alliance

Hedi Ballantyne, President

The Women's Alliance began work on Sept. 1st, before the beginning of church services. We organized one of our major fund raisers, hosting an I-89 coffee break. Jane Osgatharp organized the bakers and workers. Treasurer Abby Colihan needed us to approve the budget for the year so the audit could be done. The 150th Anniversary Committee, with Sandal Cate and Barbara Thompson co-chairing, reported on plans for celebrating the anniversary of the founding of the church this year and into 2016. Rhoda Chickering asked for volunteers from Alliance to "adopt" certain areas of the kitchen to keep clean. The Program Committee, headed by Ginnie Humphreys, with assistant Mary Alice Bisbee, reported on tentatively planned programs.

Janet Poeton explained the situation of the former Stone Soup lunches, hosted by Washington County Mental Health/Green Mountain Work Force, now being served by UCM volunteers. She also gave us the dates of the Fall Rummage Sale, October 23 and 24 , and the Holiday Fair, Saturday, Dec. 5th. Under the leadership of the Reception Committee, the Alliance hosted two receptions following memorial services. One was for long-time Alliance and UCM member Muriel Bianchi. The fall rummage sale was very successful, and the "Community Lunches" are now being helped by contributions from Alliance as well as other sources. Our program in October was by the 2020 Vision Task Force and the November program was by Susan Weber and Leslie Parr, telling about their trip to Alaska staying at UU homes. Both programs were open to others in the congregation. Board members were invited to our pot luck dinners. We welcome all the women who have just begun attending our meetings.

Worship and Arts Committee

Bill Paine, Chair

Committee members: Leslie Parr, Brooke Pearson, Sarah Hooker, MaryJean McKelvy (vice-chair), Ginny Sassaman, Ron Cameron, Bill Paine (chair). Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Settled Minister, Sally Armstrong, Director of Religious Education, and Dick Riley, Music Director ex-officio.

Mission statement: "The Worship & Arts committee is the steward of the Sunday service. In collaboration with the minister, music director and religious education director, we strive to ensure that elements of the service -- music, meditation and prayer, joys and concerns, readings, announcements, the sermon -- nurture each person's spiritual journey. The committee is responsible for assuring the pulpit is full on Sundays when the minister is away, whether by guests or with special services led by members of the church. We coordinate service elements such as flowers, candles, and multimedia offerings with a dedicated budget."

We have enthusiastically begun the ministry of our new settled minister, Rev. Joan Javier-Duval. We are providing replacements for the Sundays that Joan will be off-site. On October 4th, Rev. Jeanne Nieuwejaar presented a very well received service on the subject of the fluency of faith. On Nov. 29, Rev. Dr. M'Ellen Kennedy presented a service titled "Prayers from the Parliament of the World's Religions: Reclaiming the Heart of Our Humanity." We are putting together a lay-led service on December 27 featuring a few voices of church members and singing -- among other things. The annual "To Say their Names" service will be on January 3rd, led by Rev. Joan and Dave Grundy with the Hospice Choir participating.

We began the year by streamlining the beginning of the service, focusing announcements for our community and greetings prior to the prelude. We did this in order to keep the focus of the remainder of the service on more effectively nurturing each other's spiritual journey. In cooperation with Rev. Joan, we implemented our new Worship Associates program which involves each of the members of W&A participating in each service. We have received a lot of positive feedback about this program, as well as some constructive critique for those of us less experienced with speaking from the pulpit. We hope to hone our skills through some training sessions and more experience.

Rev. Joan also invited all of us to participate in a service planning session with worship staff. We brainstormed and discussed the monthly themes in more depth. These discussions were designed to bring ideas together for readings, music, and other inspirations for use in upcoming services. More such sessions are being scheduled through the year.

Beth Damon has graciously continued to work on the flower arrangements this year, stretching a very modest budget a long way.

We are enjoying our growing relationship with our new minister and expanding our relationship with our community.

150th Anniversary Steering Committee

Sandal Cate and Barbara Thompson, Co-Chairs

Members: Barbara Thompson and Sandal Cate – co-chairs. Dave Peters, Norma Raymond, Malcolm FitzPatrick, Maggie Rebmann and Ted Schultheis.

Resource consultants: Historian Peter Thoms and archivist Leslie Rowell.

Here is a listing of our activities and accomplishments in the start of this new church year:

- Dave Peters continues to submit “Did You Know?” factoids about our church history to the weekly announcements.

- Dave also spearheaded the production of a single panel “Welcome to the UCM” flyer incorporating a basic timeline of our church history. It is available at the Hospitality Table and for general use. Our committee paid for the printing of the flyer.

- On September 25 we hosted a potluck supper followed by an enlightening talk about the early life of the Reverend J. Edward Wright by Rebecca Noel of Plymouth State College in NH. Her mother, Joanna Meyer, is an active UCM member. About 40 people attended the program.

- We created a new display board about how our church focuses on food!

- We participated in the all church Committee Fair on October 25.

- Norma Raymond, Ted Schultheis and Maggie Rebmann have arranged to do several oral histories of church members. They have experimented with about four to date. They hope to share these in some manner in the future.

- Barbara Thompson, Peter Thoms and Ted Schultheis continue to discuss the prospects for a commemorative history project. The constraints lie in the time required to do a fine job.

- The old church sign from the time of the Reverend Gerald FitzPatrick was restored by a professional painter to the best degree possible. Our committee personally committed \$1100 to this work! Paul Ohlson, Property Cttee. Chair, worked with Dan Wetmore to put up the sign in the stairwell near other historic signs. Barbara Thompson wrote a descriptive caption for the sign and had it mounted for display. Malcolm FitzPatrick contributed a frame for a fine photo of his father which is part of the exhibit. This meets our goal of contributing an historic artifact to the UCM community.

- We will focus between now and the end of January on three church events to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the building of our handsome edifice. On January 24, 2016, we will work with the Worship and Arts cttee. to hold a “building rededication” service and reception. On January 30, we will host a potluck dinner and a Vermont Humanities Council program of Vermont songs of the Civil War era performed by Linda Radtke and Arthur Zorn. To finish up the celebration, we will host the Reverend Mark Harris of Watertown, MA, at the January 31 service. He will address how the history of a church is so closely tied to its congregation. This final “big splash” will involve all ages in creating a meaningful celebration of our long-established liberal church in Montpelier.