

President's Report to the Congregation

The state of the UUCC is strong and continues to attract and keep new members. Attendance at worship services and in the Sunday school has remained steady. During the past year there has been an increased manifestation of ownership for a rich variety of activities with an increase in program offerings and in their participation.

During 2014-2015, community-building was boosted through Circle Suppers, a Members' and Friends' annual retreat at The Mt. and another UU Coffeehouse season. A week's visit by Rev. Zsolt of our Partner Church in Transylvania (Beszterce Unitarian church) was a transformative event!

The Board of Trustees continued its efforts to review church policies and created procedures for greater accountability. A Facilities Assessment Task Force was established and a Staff Compensation Study is underway.

It was with surprise and sadness that we learned that Neal, our long-time and much loved minister, had taken a position at a larger congregation in Pennsylvania. In April we began a period of ministerial transition utilizing UUA guidelines to continue with the strength and purpose we have so surely manifested.

Highlights of the year include:

CYRE (Children & Youth Religious Education)

A new Director of Religious Education and a new R.E. Assistant were hired. Multi-generational services including *A UU Dicken's Christmas* and *Old Turtle & the Broken Truth* were thoughtful and creative. Fundraisers such as Santa's Shop, the Chocolate Auction, and the Beltane and Crafters' Fair benefited next year's Boston Heritage trip. An O.W.L. cycle for 4th through 6th grades began in February. There was attendance at CONs at The Mt. and High Schooler's service at Howlmore Animal Sanctuary. The UUCC garden had renewed attention and plans for the return of Hogwarts Summer Camp are underway.

Worship

An inspirational and informative variety of services were offered with special seasonal observances including the Cornbread Communion, a Christmas Eve service and Flower Communion. Music by our three choirs and occasional guest performances were well received.

Membership

Visitor Orientations (and the new Visitor's Packet) are an important offering. There was a Joining Service and new member dinner in the fall. The church-wide photo directory made recognition of members and friends much easier. The committee coordinated with Social Action in its participation in Columbia's Pride Parade. A very successful Opportunity Fair was held to inform members and friends of our numerous programs and committees. There were informal fun events such as the annual holiday party at the Turner's and the end-of-a-successful-canvass picnic sponsored by the Finance Committee.

Social Action

See the upcoming *Unigram* for the complete annual report of this dynamic committee. Highlights include **service projects**: Transitions, Seeds of Hope, Harvest Hope Food Bank, Free Medical Clinic. Participation in **public demonstrations**: Peace Walk against gun violence, King Day at the Dome, NAMI Minds on Main Walk. **Fundraiser**: Guest at your Table. **Share-the-Plate** recipients included: Carolina Wildlife Center, the Women's Shelter, Doctors without Borders, Food Not Bombs, Howlmore

Animal Sanctuary, Congaree River Keeper and the Minister's Discretionary Fund.

Animal Ministry

The year's accomplishments include support of Pawmetto Lifeline, the Blessing of the Animals, Bark to the Park, and sponsorship of the ethical eating film "Planeat."

Caring & Hospitality

The committee faithfully ministered to those with special needs throughout the year. Their more visible and under-sung service was providing refreshments and cleanup at Sunday's coffee hour.

Finance

Fall Flings were a successful fundraising as well as relationship-building activity. In conjunction with the Membership Committee, effort was made to clarify the definition of *Member* with the addition of a pledge payment requirement added to the Bylaws at the January 2015 congregational meeting.

Building & Grounds

The Memorial & Meditation Garden was completed. Building doors were attended to: a replacement door for the library, re-vamping the handicap closing mechanism at the main entrance, and adding a railing at the week-day entrance. Two landscaping work days were held and several shrubs planted. Old signage on the building was removed in preparation for an upgrade. The kitchen project was completed and wall-hung shelves were added to the large storage room. Custodian storage was shifted so that RE materials had their own storage closet on the classroom hall. The rotating art exhibits in the social hall continued into its fifth year.

Technology Services

Routine Sunday services were provided for as well as an investigation of personal wireless microphones to aid the hearing impaired. A comprehensive sound equipment inventory was completed to distinguish between regular UUCB and Coffeehouse equipment. Watch for the launching in the next few weeks of our newly designed website. It will have an elegant and streamlined look that will appeal and make clear our message of a safe and welcoming place to pursue spiritual growth and community.

June 7, 2015

Regina Moody

President UUCB Board of Trustees