**President’s Report to the UUCC Annual Meeting**
June 3, 2018

When we completed last year’s Annual Meeting exactly 364 days ago, we entered the summer with great excitement and optimism. We were close to selecting a contractor to perform our long-awaited building renovations. We were finishing a successful two-year interim ministry period and were preparing to call our next settled minister, which we did a few weeks later. I took on the role of Board President on July 1st expecting a smooth transition and an easy year of continued successes. What could go wrong? What did go wrong?

I cannot tell you. I have lived each day for months in the middle of this storm and I still do not understand everything that has happened. But each day I gain a little more insight and I understand a little more of this puzzle. As Unitarian Universalists we aspire to high ideals, but we are still human beings with human failings. Human beings are complicated creatures. And so, relationships between human beings are complicated. And when we fail, and we lose trust in one another and have broken relationships, they are not easy things to fix. Every one of us has been hurt. We have lost members and that bothers me tremendously and I fear others may still depart. The pain I feel personally will not go away for a very long time, if ever.

The Board, as the employer of UUCC staff, is restricted from discussing personnel matters. Because many of the issues are personnel issues, we are very limited in what we can say because of the confidentiality required. This has been very difficult on each and every Board member, but they have persevered and carried on with dedication to the role to which they were elected and the congregation we all love. I have served on many different Boards over the last few decades, but this has been the best collection of individuals I could have hoped to have with me in this difficult year. It has been an honor to serve with them.

While there are restrictions on what we as the Board can say, we have actively sought to make ways to engage the congregation, but each time we thought we had a plan for that the situation changed again. But today we have scheduled an hour-long facilitated conversation that we hope will be the first step in healing some of these broken relationships. I hope you will all be able to be here for that.

Now that that is out of the way, I want to address highlights from this year. Yes, we did have a lot of good stuff that happened this year. I am not going to include every item from every committee report, there are far too many; please see the committee reports if you are interested.

After many years of wanting to have a paid Music Coordinator to increase the quality and appeal of our worship services you, the Congregation, one year ago approved a budget which included funds to create that part-time staff position. Richard McLeod was selected to serve temporarily in the position until the search could be completed. When it was, Anna Hamilton was selected. The difference she has made in our worship experience has been remarkable. Thank you Anna.

The Board created an ad hoc Kitchen Committee with Linda McLeod as Chair. The difference Linda and her dedicated committee have made to the condition of our kitchen and the success of our events which use the kitchen has been wonderful. We also have them to thank for today’s pre-meeting snacks. Thank you, Linda and committee.

Kevin McKinney stepped forward to re-activate and chair the long-dormant Green Sanctuary Committee (aka Green Team). Already they have:

--accrued a 22-member email list of members & supporters

--held 4 meetings to date

--made contacts with UUA Green Sanctuary officials

--pursued contacts with other stakeholders within UUCC

--actively worked to implement onsite composting at UUCC (being piloted now)

--actively worked to restart the 'upcycle table' (being piloted now)

--participated in one worship service so far

Moving forward they are:

--working toward a Green Sanctuary Committee webpage

--investigating energy efficiency at UUCC

--considering opportunities for possible Green Team congregational events

--considering & investigating opportunities to work with other UUCC stakeholders

--considering & investigating UUCC practices on multiple fronts in order to find ways in which we can lower our community's environmental footprint

Thank you, Kevin and committee.

After many delays the building renovations finally got started, but have dragged on much longer than anyone wanted. Still, we see the improvements around us and see the that great progress is being made on the final item, the new women’s restroom. Thanks go to Phil Turner and the Building Renovation Cmte and Carolyn West and the Building & Grounds Cmte.

The Partner Church Committee hosted Rev. Zsolt Solymosi from our partner church in Romania for a week of events.

Thanks to a special contribution from a member, we have a new hearing assist system to assist those with hearing difficulties to enjoy worship services. Thank you.

The Social Action Committee this year continued the relationships with sister organizations and hosted or participated in events that we are used to being a part of:

Our Share the Plate Program, Seeds of Hope Farmer's Market, Hiroshima & Nagasaki Anniversary, Harvest Hope Food Bank, Pride Parade, Families Helping Families, Homeless Helping Homeless, the Family Shelter, the MLK Day Parade, the NAMI walk, the Ramadan presentation and dinner, Transitions, and the Inclement Weather Center.

But thanks to Laura Hartwig and Rev Jeff our activity has multiplied tremendously:

The Health Care Rally, Black Lives Matter and the Black Lives Matter banner out on our front wall, Peace Day at the Statehouse, Love They Neighbor Rally, Rally for Dreamers to support DACA and the Clean Dream Act Now Rally, Moms Demand Action, March for Our Lives, Walk A Mile In Their Shoes, the Sasha Wall Vigil, and the Palmetto State Progressive Summit. They had showings of the movies “Corridor of Shame” and “Whose Streets” participated in the Poor People's Campaign that involved 6 weeks of action and civil disobedience.

Thank you, Laura Hartwig, Rev Jeff, and Committee.

Animal Ministry continued it’s good work the with the BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS, a VEGAN POTLUCK AND SPEAKER ON PLANT BASED LIFESTYLE, and a MOVIE NIGHT WITH VEGAN SNACKS.

Thank you Anita Grossman and Committee

The Worship Committee

The Worship Committee worked with the new minister and the new Music Coordinator to increase the quality and appeal of services. We now offer opportunities for singers in four separate choirs, have three pianists who provide accompaniment, and have had at least 23 volunteer members and friends who have shared their talents to provide music for services. And there is a variety of diverse styles of music represented in the services.

The Worship Cmte also established the BILL MOODY PERFORMANCE FUND in honor of UUCC choral director, Bill Moody. The fund will provide payments to guest musicians from USC and other colleges/universities who play in services. The first performer will visit this month, June 2018.

In addition to worship, there were 8 CONCERTS AND MUSIC EVENTS and 9 performances in services of the Junior Choir or Youth Singers

Since our last annual congregation meeting, we had over twenty guest speakers share their messages during our hour of worship. We also had the honor of learning from some of our own who led service designed to inspire our members and friends.

This summer, we plan a series of six services led by woman who will share their words and wisdom on a variety of topics.

The Membership Committee this year offered 7 Visitor Orientations during the year, Planned and implemented both a New Member Dinner and New Member Service, Shared responsibility of planning and implementing Fellowship Luncheons, Organized volunteers as front door greeters and at the Welcome Table every Sunday, wrote over 50 “Welcome Letters to the UUCC” to first time visitors, and sponsored the Annual Picnic at Suzi and Shelly’s home.

At the August Board Retreat we developed 10 goals to accomplish during the year.

* 2017-18 Board Goals
* Retention of members
* Examine Mission and Vision
* Compile a Board Manual and a Committee Manual
* Identify $500,000 in planned gifts via Shelter Rock Endowment Program
* Create position of Volunteer Coordinator
* Continue evaluation of restructuring effort from Governance Cmte Report
* Campus Ministry outreach
* Ministerial Installation
* Proselytize, evangelize, outreach, publicize who we are
* Enhance leadership involvement; a path to leadership

Some of these we accomplished or at least started to work on; others we did not. One goal in particular needs mentioning; that is the evaluation of restructuring effort from Governance Cmte Report.

After a year of study the UUCC Governance and Structure Ad Hoc Committee had recommended we try to adjust our Board and Committee organization to something more efficient. The Board studied the recommendation and agreed to experiment with the change. At the time this appeared the be a reasonable thing to do. The problem was not necessarily with the change, but was with the timing and the rollout. Making this change at the same time we were breaking in a new minister lead to confusion and miscommunication and potentially situations that may not have occurred otherwise. Hindsight is 20/20 they say. We look back and see where things might have been done better.

The recent events have totally consumed the Board and other leadership. We are all volunteers after all and have only so much time we can to devote to the church in any given week. There are still issues that need to be addressed. We have a list and we have dedicated ourselves to addressing these issues.