In our January Soul Matters program, we asked, “What Does it Mean to be a People of Possibility?” UU Minister and Founder of Soul Matters, Scott Taylor reminds us, “… maybe being a people of possibility has more to do with being a people of vulnerability and courage than we’ve thought. The work isn’t just about believing in possibility. It’s about being willing to endure a few wounds along the way. It can hurt to be hopeful. Especially with all that is going on in our world and society right now, we need to make room for that.”

At First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, we are doing more than imagining possibilities – we are creating them, bringing them to fruition. Our mission calls us to this work; inherent in possibility are the challenges, as we are reminded by Scott Taylor. Our core values bring us together and guide us through those challenges, ultimately improving our understanding of each other and our mission.

Our Mission
First Unitarian Church of Wilmington is a beloved community that nourishes minds and spirits, fights injustice, and transforms the world through loving action.

Our Core Values
- Love and compassion,
- Growth and discovery,
- Freedom and Justice,
- Wonder and Joy.

Our Vision:
At First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, people of all ages:
- Feel safe, accepted, and loved – and empowered to be our authentic selves.
- Gain new perspectives and grow as informed, spiritual human beings.
- Act on our shared values and Unitarian Universalist identity to fight for a more just world.
- Experience wonder, inspiration, fulfillment, and joy.

Our Mission through Mission

I
Our bylaws vest authority for Church operations in the Congregation which delegates responsibility and authority for all policy decisions not made by the Congregation to the Board of Trustees and, for day-to-day operating decisions, to the Senior Minister. The governance model that the Board uses requires the Board to create an Annual Vision of Governance (AVG) to guide our work that is governed by clear and written policies to support First Unitarian Church's Values, Mission and Ends. Our AVG this year has been:

Implement the vision for mission-focused facilities and land usage

Our monthly meetings focus on planning and monitoring, the work of three committees – Investment, Governance, and Strategic Planning—whose progress is summarized below:

- **Investment Activities** – we have two types of investments, our Heritage and Maintenance Endowments Funds, and the Capital Campaign Funds. Both types are governed by policy documents. The endowment funds are invested with the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF). Thus far, we are satisfied with their...
performance, especially the emphasis on socially responsible investments. About a year ago we transferred the Capital Campaign Fund into cash equivalents in preparation for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) spending. In doing so we also avoided the wild swings we have seen in the stock market in recent months while earning about $12,000.

- **Governance Activities** - This committee is charged with enabling the Board to continually strive for and achieve greater clarity, efficiency, and productivity in its work and policies. Their yearly review of the bylaws revealed no changes needed; monthly reviews of various policies conducted by individual members of the board determined compliance.

- **Strategic Planning Committee (SPC)** – We continued the planning for and began implementing the work started with the 2017 World Café process that identified a strategic initiative to improve our facilities in a way that supports our vision of being a church where people of all ages feel safe, accepted, and loved – and empowered to be our authentic selves. This includes improving accessibility into and within our building, modernizing audiovisual systems in the sanctuary, improving flexibility in our central gathering spaces, and making the space more attractive and inviting. After congregational approval, the Capital Improvement Plan is proceeding with a completion date set for no later than September 1, 2019.

Finally, an activity has been very much on everyone’s mind - the search for a new settled minister. Our role this year has been to empower the Search Committee to do their work and only to help when asked. We are grateful to this team for devoting the long hours and doing the hard work required for this task that has led us to a call by the congregation. We are planning for a meaningful transition period that continues the energy and enthusiasm that has transformed the congregation through Rev. Finkelstein’s leadership.

As we move into the next church year, we are entering an exciting time for our congregation. We will be

- Actively engaged in welcoming, getting to know, and working with our new minister
- Reveling in our renovated, welcoming, attractive, open, and accessible building
- Continuing to live our mission to be a “beloved community that nourishes minds and spirits, fights injustice and transforms the world through loving action.”

In these challenging times, we find comfort in being engaged with a community that believes in striving for these goals and helping each other daily be the best versions of ourselves. Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Board of Trustees and for supporting our church with your time, talents and treasure

In Love and Peace,

*Bill Hardham & Tracy Spinka-Doms (Co-Presidents), Jenny Brown (Secretary), Carmen Bell-Delgado, Leslie Dickerson, Deb Griffin, Dale Megill, Mike McCabe, Phil Krape*
As I conclude my four-year ministry here I am filled with gratitude. Gratitude for the strong and well-defined leadership that has worked with me to move the congregation towards defined goals. Gratitude for an excellent staff that has adapted to the changes needed to achieve those goals. Gratitude for all the members of this congregation who joyfully found their piece of the shared ministry of the congregation and engaged in a growing and learning process in order to fulfill their call.

You have worked hard on the goals you identified when you invited me to minister among you, and for the most part you have achieved those goals or made significant progress toward achievement. Your policy-based governance model has allowed you to become nimble decision makers; this has freed up resources and energy to make huge projects such as the Capital Improvement Project a reality. You have learned how to be a one minister church. By practicing an intentional form of shared ministry, you have been able to support and enhance and adapt the core ministries of the church, and you have been enriched in the process. You have greatly expanded your use of social media and technology, understanding that these are tools that will bring new people into your community. And you have been generous stewards of your beloved community.

The signs of success are all around you. You can see them in the work underway to make this facility more accessible and more attractive. You can see them in the energy and passion of our youth, the enthusiasm of our children, and the consistent commitment of our social justice teams. You can hear them in drum circle and the pop-up choir and the great variety of music on Sunday mornings.

As I prepare for the next stage of my life – aka retirement – I rejoice with you as you prepare for the next stage in your life together in faith. As you walk into your future with your new minister, I walk away knowing that you will always be a robust and energetic Unitarian Universalist congregation.

“In as you walk into your future with your new minister, I walk away knowing that you will always be a robust and energetic Unitarian Universalist congregation.”

~ Rev. Roberta Finkelstein

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I thank you for a wonderful four years. I could not have asked for a deeper and richer and more affirming ministry.

In Faith and Love,

Rev. Roberta
After months of preparation, starting in May of 2018, the Ministerial Search Committee was excited to be considering actual candidates in January. They released First Unitarian’s “Packet” in December, and on January 2, began to receive names of interested candidates and links to their resumés and records. Fourteen ministers expressed a desire to be considered. It was a highly accomplished group, diverse in age, education, experience, gender, theology, career paths, race, and sexual orientation. The Committee had lots of good choices! They evaluated all who expressed interest and conducted video interviews with nine whose material appeared to match our criteria. All seven committee members had an opportunity to see and hear these amazing and talented people.

From the pool of candidates, four were selected for further conversation. Starting with the receipt of names, the search entered its “quiet” period. For the benefit of our candidates and the integrity of the process, everything from January until a candidate was presented to the congregation was confidential. In February and March, the Committee met the four “pre-candidates” in person and observed them conducting a service and preaching at a UU church.

In March, after reviewing the candidates, the Committee selected Rev. Pamela Wat to present to the congregation during candidating week, April 27 to May 5. Rev. Wat preached both Sundays and met with members and groups during the week. A vote was held following the May 5 service, and the congregation elected to call her to be our next Senior Minister.

Rev. Wat served the Denton, Texas, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship from 2010 until 2018. She led her congregation, situated in a northern suburb of Dallas–Fort Worth, through a period of significant growth—and, following a devastating fire, through a time of rebuilding and recovery.

Rev. Wat received a Master of Divinity degree from the San Francisco Theological Seminary in 2005. Following seminary, she served as a hospice chaplain in Delaware and Texas until 2009. She was ordained by Pathways Unitarian Universalist Church in Hurst, Texas, in 2010.

She resigned her position in Denton a year ago to move
Rev. Pamela Wat and husband Eric Goodlett live in the city’s Triangle neighborhood.

Rev. Wat is a graduate of St. Mark’s High School. Her father, second-generation Chinese American born in Hawaii, is a retired DuPont Company chemist. Her mother is a retired Reading Assist tutor whose early European ancestors settled in Delaware and Pennsylvania during colonial times.

Unitarian Universalist ministry is a second career for Rev. Wat. After receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a concentration in dance from Kutztown University in 1994, she moved to California to pursue a Master of Arts in Creative/Interdisciplinary Arts at San Francisco State University—a unique program aimed at using creative arts to promote social justice.

From 1997 to 2002, she served as executive assistant for Shelter Network in Burlingame, Calif., a $3.8 million nonprofit homeless service agency. While at Shelter Network, she helped to organize a $10.75 million capital campaign and worked to build and open two new program sites for the homeless.

Since her ordination, Rev. Wat has been active in Unitarian Universalist denominational affairs, interfaith leadership, and social justice work, particularly with the LGBTQ+ community in Texas. She officiated at the first same-sex wedding in Denton County during a public celebration of the 2015 Supreme Court decision. She was a member and coordinator of the Denton Faith Alliance and a frequent guest preacher at other Unitarian Universalist churches in Texas. She led the prayer at the 2018 March for Our Lives and delivered invocations on the Denton County Courthouse steps for five years as part of the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Of her ministry at Denton, she writes: “I found this work very energizing and I deeply appreciated the opportunity for my first experience of congregational ministry to be one where there was so much flexibility and freedom to respond to the needs of the congregation and of the community. It allowed me to be experimental in worship and in our religious education offerings, and it helped us meet the needs of a growing community. It was a whole lot of fun.
Our First Unitarian Church Board of Trustees voted this year to sponsor Antonia and Latifah as ministerial candidates, as required by all candidates preparing for fellowship by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). They are following in the footsteps of ministers who preceded them in sponsorship by First Unitarian, including Reverends Mary T. Higgins (1993), Kathryn Davis Thomas (1996), Paula Annone Maiorano (1996), and Dr. Betty R. Stapleford (1998).

Why require sponsorship? The UUA seeks “to ensure familiarity on the part of new ministers with UU congregational life, and encourage congregations to take a responsible role in the recruitment, preparation and assessment of our future ministers.”* By sponsoring Antonia and Latifah, we are showing our confidence in their potential and suitability for UU ministry as persons who are committed to the Purposes and Principles of the UUA.

Does this mean they are ready for ministry? Not yet. There is much education, training and work to do in preparation for review by the UU Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC), including written materials, evaluations and a personal interview.

What is our role in sponsorship? This depends on the unique needs of each theological school student. In many cases, financial assistance makes the critical difference between staying in school and dropping out. Support can be offered in other ways, as well. Finding ways for candidates to gain experience working with committees and the various aspects of running a church, as well as having leadership roles in church programs or projects, are a few of these ways.

Why does First Unitarian sponsor ministerial candidates? This is our opportunity to play an important role in promoting responsible, well-prepared leaders for our religious communities and Unitarian Universalism. We have been proud to play this role in the past and are enthusiastic about embarking on this path with both Antonia and Latifah this year.

My call to ministry came when I was a young child. I looked up one Sunday morning at the preacher at New Salem Baptist Church and I said to myself, “that is what I want to do.” Then, I remembered that I was a child and there was no way that they were going to let me preach. I pushed it aside and moved on. It would pop up again throughout the years. I started to look at UU seminaries but I wouldn’t allow myself to see myself as a minister. I didn’t see people who looked like me. I decided to check back when I was more mature, more ministerial (which for me meant mainstream). I decided to go into a profession in which I could help people and have interactions that were transformative on a different scale. I decided to go to school to be a social worker.

I was happy as a social worker but there was something that

“Thank you for your sponsorship. Thank you for helping me to live into my tenet that connection is imperative to maintain our spirits.”

- Antonia Bell-Delgado

*https://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/becoming/sponsorship-by-congregation
was missing. Then after a critical medical issue I was laying despondently in my bed and it came to me. I need to be a UU minister. My theology is a theology of connection. From that experience it became clear to me that we as humans need to stay connected for the betterment of each of us and the betterment of the world.

I believe that we live under a covenant of healthy relationships. When we acknowledge this we will bring about the peace that we seek; not a free-from-conflict peace, but a peace that holds us and brings us back to each other and our divinity—the divinity of interdependence. When I decided to seek out a seminary, I knew that it had to be Meadville Lombard, just as I knew that I needed to be a minister. My call to ministry and to Meadville were just the first steps. I needed to be sponsored and First Unitarian was there for me. Thank you.

This school year has been a busy year for me. Since I preached in September, I have nearly completed my first year of seminary. I am teaching women from Yemen how to read and speak English as a part of my community studies class. At the end of this school year, I will apply to become a Candidate for Ministry within the UUA.

I am a Learning Fellow at The Church Of The Larger Fellowship (CLF). At the CLF I am responsible for the Faith Rocket and Covenant Groups. I also organize and deliver worship with the other ministers on the worship team.

I started my Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program at Paoli Hospital. CPE is where I learn about Chaplaincy in a hospital setting.

I have preached in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Indiana!

I have signed the contract for my teaching congregation. I will work as a part-time intern minister at this congregation for two years as a part of my program at Meadville Lombard Theological School.

When First Unitarian chose to sponsor me as an Aspirant for Ministry, they also gave me an opportunity to join the UU Ministers Association. This association helps me to build my ministerial network and stay current with changes in our association that affect me as an aspirant minister. Your sponsorship also allows me to participate in the Ministerial Fellowship Network in which I am provided a vocational advisor. This advisor is an experienced minister.

**LATIFAH GRIFFIN**

I am Latifah Griffin. I am from Chester, Pa. It is a few miles outside of Philadelphia and its claim to fame is that it is the place where William Penn landed when he reached America.

I was originally baptized in the National Baptist tradition on July 20, 2003. I was a member of the American Baptist from 2010 to October 2018 when I became a Unitarian Universalist due to an expansion of my personal theology.

I came to seminary after running from it for a very long time. I received the call at thirteen and I had no idea what that meant. I received confirmation that I should be in seminary in 2012. I was finishing up my Master’s degree in counseling at a Catholic institution. My advisor was a Franciscan sister and she very bluntly told me that I needed to enroll into seminary. After spending $50,000 on a counseling degree, I thought my Franciscan Advisor was nuts! Long story short, I did not enroll when she suggested in 2013, but after a series of serious life events, a
I was laid off on May 23, 2017 and on May 24, I received an email that changed everything for me. Lancaster Theological Seminary (LTS) and I had been playing email tag since 2013. I was surprised to receive their email stating I had been gifted a scholarship and would I like to take it (and finally enroll after running for 4 years)? Absolutely I did! May 24 is the day that changed everything for me and the ultimate reason why I am in seminary.

The core of my calling is my genuine love to help others learn to love and an overall acceptance and appreciation of the differences humans share. I needed to ask myself if this was really a call and was I mature enough for it. I had been affirmed by a few people, but it wasn’t until prompting from my Franciscan academic advisor at Neumann University that I believed it for myself, and after that, it took another five years for me to commit to seminary.

I love the co-creative learning environment at Lancaster Theological Seminary. I find learning from the experiences of others very enriching. I also love that ministry is filled with imagery. Some of the greatest images speak a million words without uttering a sound.

One of the biggest challenges I’ve faced so far is committing myself wholly to the process because I am unable to nurture relationships with those who don’t understand my commitment and don’t support my call to ministry. I feel like all I need is support, but I’ve also been the supporter for most of my life, so those that are still depending on that support are left feeling isolated. I’m also left feeling isolated, so it’s a tough balance.

When asked, “How do you view the proposition, On Being a Minister of Color?”, I wish this proposition wasn’t a thing. I wish that I could just be a minister, not described by the color of my skin. But since it is, I have to acknowledge that everyone experiences things differently regardless of color, culture, geographic location, etc., but being a minister of color means that I am not in the majority. I have a seat at the table possibly because of affirmative action and the people around the table may not respect my opinion. I have learned that when it is my turn to speak, I must speak loudly and boldly and be unafraid of challenging the ways of the past in order to ensure a semblance of a utopian society for all people, of all colors, in the future.

I have a 4-year-old son, Spencer, who has cerebral palsy. My partner and I adopted him in 2017 (three days before my layoff). We’ve had him since he was five months and he’s been a joy to have.
First Unitarian Church joins with all Unitarian Universalists in covenant to affirm and promote seven Principles, starting with “The inherent worth and dignity of every person” and closing with “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” As a historically white, cisgender congregation in a much more diverse community and world we continue to strive to live up to these ideals, as do other UU congregations and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

Following Reverend Finkelstein’s decision to retire in 2019, a Ministerial Search Committee was selected from recommendations received from a survey of the congregation. The Committee asked challenging questions of First Unitarian members and friends in a series of Cottage Meetings to understand how we viewed our First Unitarian culture and how we can best support a minister of color or from other historically marginalized groups, among other aspects of selecting our next settled minister. After all, as we have learned, our Unitarian Universalist ministry has grown in diversity over the years.

In October, the Committee sponsored an all-church workshop called Beyond Categorical Thinking, facilitated by Reverend Keith Kron, Director of the UUA Transitions Office. This three-hour workshop is designed to promote inclusive thinking and prevent unfair discrimination during a congregation’s search for a settled minister. It uses conversations and case studies of actual events from other UU congregations to suggest new ways of thinking about ministers and ministry.

From the possibilities brought by calling our next Minister to the possibilities our staff, members and newcomers create, becoming a beloved community involves all of us in a variety of ways.
Hospitality, responsiveness to emergencies, and congregational safety are all critical to welcoming the newcomer and member alike. We strive to provide a warm welcome as our Greeters show them in and our Ushers help them to find a seat.

Since our Annual Meeting last May, we offered informal training on the use of the Automated External Defibrillator attended by greeters, ushers, staff, and interested others. In addition, as an aspect of our Safer Congregations program, we are offering a program on Recognition and Prevention of Elder Abuse and we are using a new acknowledgement form with additional language to help prevent physical or mental abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual molestation; volunteers and staff alike must sign this form.

We have embarked on a major capital improvement project to update our 1960 church building, consistent with our values as we understand the world in 2019 and beyond. We have already completed the first phase of technology upgrades, which will soon allow us to stream our services and programs to those who cannot be present, physically, on Sunday mornings. A new large screen in the sanctuary and audio/video equipment has opened new possibilities in worship design. In addition, we are addressing our lack of accessibility by adding ramps, lifts, a second accessible restroom, and automatic doors, so those who have physical disabilities can more easily enter and move about our building. When complete, all will be able to move from the sanctuary to our religious education wing with ease.

In the process of planning and implementing these changes, we continued last year’s efforts to grow our understanding of racism and white supremacy in our community, the country, and the world, so that we might be welcoming to all.

With the planned upgrades to our building, we were challenged to choose between tradition and change that recognizes the significant hurt people of color continue to feel. Our discussions focused on how to handle the automation of our Warner Memorial Doors created by renowned local artist Charles Parks.

Automating the doors was not...
in question as we work to transform our physical building into one that is physically accessible to all.

The question of replacing the doors was difficult, centering on the prominence of Thomas Jefferson in the doors’ artwork – something we chose in 1954 when the doors were designed for our original 8th street building. This was a time when our country and Unitarianism were not yet focused on the ongoing racism towards people of color. The Brown v. Board of Education case of 1954 was significant in the struggle against discrimination and segregation in mainstream American life.

It wasn’t until December 1955 that Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a city bus to a white person, sparking a 13-month boycott of the city’s buses by its black citizens and exposing discrimination against African Americans in public accommodations.

In 1993, the concerns about Thomas Jefferson made the headlines at the UUA General Assembly when the GA Planning Committee decided to hold a Thomas Jefferson Ball, inviting delegates to attend the ball in period costume. What were African Americans to wear? Dress as slaves?

Some delegates, including African Americans and their white allies, protested the event. “The ensuing conflict sent ripples throughout Unitarian Universalism, raising awareness that underlying dichotomy of Jefferson as a slave owner who could not envision how to change that system of oppression within his lifetime, even while speaking against it, gave many in our congregation cause to advocate that the doors be replaced in order to create a more welcoming entrance for people of all races.

In October, after much research and deliberation, the congregation voted to refurbish the doors and put them on display in our Parish Hall, where we will be able to address in writing the complicated nature of our relationship with this American icon. Just as Monticello has adapted to include the history of Jefferson’s slave ownership and his deeply fraught relationship with the slave Sally Hemmings, we cannot erase our congregation’s history. Rather we are seeking to expand our understanding.

This is not a new conversation for Unitarian Universalists, who long embraced Jefferson as one of our own, and it is a conversation that must continue as we make progress towards our goal of beloved community.

*https://www.uua.org/economic/ga/thomas-jefferson-ball
CREATING CONNECTIONS

From Potluck dinners and Game Nights to Youth Ski trips, there are many possibilities for connection at First Unitarian.

Engaging newcomers in the life of the congregation begins at our Welcome Table, where volunteers answer questions and help orient visitors to First Unitarian Church. While visiting the Welcome Table, we invite newcomers to fill out a contact card so that we can be in touch with them if they choose. Most newcomers find First Unitarian through our wayside pulpit on US 202; coming in second and third are invitation from a friend or family member and our website. We eliminated our pilot program for newcomers to visit with one or two experienced members away from the crowded Coffee Hour, as we found newcomers preferred their Welcome Table visits and discussions with the broader community.

Our Newcomer Orientation Sessions have continued, redesigned as a single two-hour session after church, including lunch and childcare, four times a year. This adjustment was to accommodate the changing requests and requirements of our guests. Newcomers can sign up at the Welcome Table as well as online, an addition to the traditional paper signup.

This introduction to our faith and our church in shorter time commitments has improved attendance at the sessions. They provide a broad overview of the Unitarian Universalist faith, review of the Principles and sources of the Unitarian Universalism, our covenant and polity, the life of the Church, bonding with other newcomers, and, if desired, a way to become a member of the church.

We offered several other easy ways to connect with others. Our Circle Suppers program helps to build community among long-time members and those who are new to First Unitarian in a small group social setting of six to eight people. Each month, a Congregational covenanting ceremony with new members to recognize, welcome, and support them in their journey.
different group of people share a potluck dinner, giving ample opportunity to meet a variety of people. Our Environmental Justice Task Force also offered three Vegan Potluck dinners, open to the congregation and the community, and were well attended.

Our annual Coffee House, organized by Scott Ward and First Unitarian friend Martin Hargrove, was full of fun and laughs, as always. Children from our Children and Youth Exploration classes provided refreshments, raising funds for Climate Change efforts. Children and adults entertained us with their talents and humor at our open mic. We experienced instrumental music, singing, joke telling, a karate routine, and more!

DEEPENING OUR CONNECTIONS

Our Soul Matters program continued this year to inform worship, religious education, and small group ministry. It is through our small group ministry that members and guests find a deeper, thoughtful, and spiritual way to connect with others. Soul Matters is a nationwide consortium of more than 150 Unitarian Universalist congregations who share monthly themes for worship, religious education, music, and small group ministry. This year our themes were based on the question, “How can we be a people of...?” – Vision, Sanctuary, Memory, Mystery, Possibility, Trust, Journey, Wholeness, Curiosity, and Beauty. Anecdotally, it seems that these themes spoke more powerfully than ever to members of the congregation. Groups are always open to new participants.

We also offered several Connection Circles of small groups that explored meaningful topics in a supportive environment. In our Short Story Group, a wonderful thing happens when a dozen or so people get together every other week and discuss a short story “until it wobbles, yields, then catapults into your face”. (Ben Marcus, from the introduction of New American Stories, Vintage Books, 2015). While we are sharing ideas about life, death, alienation, and endless other topics, we are growing to care deeply about each other.

The Feminine Spirituality Group has transitioned over the past two years to be a part of the small group ministry efforts at First Unitarian Church. The group has been in existence...
for many decades. In the past two years the format has changed so that the first session of the month is on a topic picked by someone in the group and the second session is a Soul Matters group discussion of the theme for the month. People in the group take their turn leading the sessions. Signups are officially opened every year when the Soul Matters groups are formed, and new people are welcomed throughout the year whenever the group has less than fifteen participants. All gender identities seeking this type of spiritual experience are welcome.

There is also a Connection Circle held on site at Cokesbury Village Retirement Community for First Unitarian members and others. They meet monthly and use either the Soul Matters materials or choose an alternate topic to discuss.

For those who enjoy conversation over a meal, we have several Brown Bag Fellowship Groups for men and women, and the Channing Society, a men’s open social gathering that shares a meal and lively conversation each month. First Unitarian members and friends are invited.

**CREATING A CARING COMMUNITY**

Pastoral Care Associates (PCA) serve and strengthen our beloved community by providing support to those in the congregation experiencing difficult or challenging times. Pastoral Care Associates are a shared Ministry of the congregation and are an extension of the Minister’s Pastoral Care role and responsibilities.

This year, there were ten active and compassionate Pastoral Care Associates who offered comfort, a listening presence, and support to members who were experiencing medical or other emergencies. They assisted in bereavement support and at memorial services, and maintained regular phone and in-person contact with homebound congregants.

An additional eight volunteers fulfilled specific caring support functions such as sending cards for bereavement, get well, and thinking-of-you, arranged flowers for Sunday services, prepared and delivered meals, arranged drivers for rides to appointments, and organized and maintained the food pantry. To deter expired and open packages in the food pantry we modified the procedure using signs and notices in the First Unitarian weekly e-news asking donors to place their contributions in a bin in the Office, not directly on food shelves. Our volunteer regularly checks the bin and shelves and disposes of anything unusable. This is a project-in-process for redirecting our donors to provide quality, usable food for those in need.

This year the Pastoral Care Associates supported and enriched the Pastoral Care functions through:

- two mini-trainings: a spiritual perspective of pastoral care and self-care
- continuing education on Recognizing and Reporting Elder Abuse, presented by a member expert, Becky
Sponsoring a program for the Church and larger community on “End of Life Planning” presented by Delaware Hospice staff.

To supplement our Pastoral Care program, volunteers periodically sent greeting cards, often handmade, to older church members so they receive something in addition to official church correspondence. Recipients reported great pleasure in receiving the cards, which are an attempt to maintain contact with members who may find active participation more difficult.

The “Knitting Ministry” supports pastoral care and service works of First Unitarian. Throughout the year, comfort cloaks, both knit and crochet, were created and donated to support our pastoral care team who distributed them throughout the year. In addition to this, we were able to support another Blue Christmas service, in which we offered comfort cloaks to our congregation for those who needed extra comfort during the holidays. Approximately ten comfort cloaks were distributed during or after the service. In partnership with Pacem in Terris, we had the honor of providing three survivors of gun violence with comfort cloaks during a very moving evening event sponsored by Moms Demand Action. Finally, as part of a pulpit swap, we took eight comfort cloaks to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harford County. We also shared our comfort cloak patterns with their congregants who were interested in starting a similar program there.

The Living Well with Chronic Illness Group (LWCI), started by Rev. Barbara Gadon during her ministry with First Unitarian, provides a small group setting for pastoral care. The members of LWCI have much in common dealing with health issues and with people who don’t understand the ups and downs as well as the severity of having chronic illness.

Before coming to the group, members dealt with health problems in isolation. Having a group that listens and deeply understands is an incredible gift. At meetings, members discussed how the recent month went, abiding reports of bad times and cheering the better times. Outside of their regular meeting, members checked in with each other as they gathered for other activities.

RECOGNITION IN COMMUNITY

It is a joyous time when the possibility for recognizing individual members arises. Such was the case on two special occasions this year.

GLEN BARBARAS

On Sunday, March 10, we celebrated Glen Barbaras’ 100th birthday. Glen has been a member of First Unitarian Church for sixty-one years, attending almost every Sunday service. He has led and served on many committees, including Finance and Annual Giving, and Chair and President of the Board of Trustees. He also served as local chair for the annual
meeting of the UUA General Assembly in Philadelphia in 1981.

Having earned a PhD in chemistry from the University of Chicago, Glen worked on the Manhattan Project for three years. He spent almost thirty-one years at DuPont, becoming a research manager. Glen has been on the boards of various community organizations and was a founding member of the Academy of Lifelong Learning (now Osher Lifelong Learning Institute). In retirement, Glen became a self-trained abstract wood sculptor. This past summer, the church hosted a show of thirty-two of his sculptures. Sitting in his living room, on that Sunday, after the exhibit, with some of the people who had volunteered to transport the sculptures, Glen smiled and made this comment: “I think we are starting a new tradition at First U by having a memorial service for a person while s/he is still alive.” Recently, Glen was asked if he ever sells his sculpture. He responded that he doesn’t want to think about selling when he does his art because he’d wonder if the thought of selling would sneak into his subconscious, making the act of creating art less fun.

Glen’s wife and partner, Gerry, a musician and a University of Chicago PhD chemist, also worked for DuPont. She was very active in this church and served a term as President of the Board. After retiring, Gerry turned her creativity to composing modern chamber music. She died in 2004. Glen and Gerry’s three children were raised in our Sunday school.

MARGE MEYERMANN

It was a pleasure to present Marge Meyermann with the Clara Barton Sisterhood Award this year! Universalist Clara Barton is best known for her work in organizing nursing services during the Civil War and, later, founding the American Red Cross. She did not start this work until she was over forty.

The Unitarian Universalist Women’s Federation Clara Barton Sisterhood was created in her name as a way for local women’s groups, congregations, and individuals to honor women aged 80 and over for their contributions to their congregations and communities.

Marge arrived in Wilmington late in 1945 and immediately began to attend the old church at 8th and West and soon was assisting in the nursery on Sundays. She taught Sunday School for ten years. Over the years, she served on every church committee, including twice on the Board, on the Building Committee as the Sharpley Church was built, and a Minister Search Committee. She also hosted a bi-monthly church caregivers’ group for many years. First Unitarian became an important part of family life.

As Marge went to work as a volunteer administrator for the state, she recruited numerous volunteers and created programs that helped low-income families in multiple ways. Many needs were met through special drives for clothing, beds, cribs, other furniture, even cars to get people to work. She created The Warehouse Project that was run by First Unitarian volunteers from 1990 to 2003. Building supplies were donated by persons in the community, stored in a rent-free warehouse which was opened each Saturday. The goal was to provide free building materials to low income people to renovate their houses while also recycling the material, so it did not end up in a landfill.

Marge once wrote "If we remained unmoved and untouched by the suffering and deprivation around us, the potential goodness in us would die and we, too, would be impoverished."
Sunday worship is, for many, the primary time for expanding both mind and spirit, creating possibilities for new ways of thinking about our world, our church community, and our individual spirituality. With new technology in our sanctuary, our worship leaders were able to add a visual component to appeal to young and old alike. Continuing from the previous year, we held multigenerational worship services once a month. Often, the Soul Matters theme of the month was presented in a family-friendly way in order to provide an opportunity for all ages and stages to be engaged with the same theme to facilitate conversation across the generations.

Our Worship Associates, composed of lay volunteers from the congregation, contributed to the planning and delivery of services throughout the year. Several of our Worship Associates wrote and delivered sermons this year on topics such as: Darwin’s The Evolution of Beauty, Lessons Learned on the Camino: the Essentials of Being Human, Is There A God?, A Vision towards Seminary, This Way – a sermon on tolerance, hospitality, fellowship and friendship, and whether we can achieve our goal, and The Search for Truth and Meaning.

In December, the 4th – 6th graders led us on a train ride to the equator to welcome the sun back as they presented “The Solar Express” by Jeanette Ruyle and inspired by The Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg.

A lay-led monthly Vespers service on Wednesday evenings was offered again as a contemplative way to nourish minds and spirits. It is based on the Taizé style of worship, featuring candlelight, inspirational music, readings and meditation.
Music plays a major role in the life of First Unitarian church and it was a busy year for our music program. Scott Ward, Honorary Minister of Music, went on a two-month sabbatical during which he visited several UU churches and met with various UU music directors to discuss the changing role of music in UU churches. This led to several changes at our church, including the starting of the First U Pop UUp Choir of participants of all ages, a more modern repertoire for the choir, and the acquisition of rhythm instruments and their inclusion in worship. Other additions included a drumming circle, started by Rev. Dr. Richard Speck to enhance our second Wednesday Vespers evenings and Adult Religious Education music programs. Jim Curtis presented the History of Broadway and Scott Ward presented an explanation of Music Notation and Basic Music Theory. Scott was also able to visit the children and youth classes during the year.

The music program continues to sponsor and support the good work of the Brandywine Transition Singers, led by Rebecca Fisher. In addition, our Counterpoint Society supported several special music events. This included a return of Brother Ebo and his drumming and dancing group, Linda Henderson and Harvey Price bringing us music for Hanukah, Anne Z. Turner with special soloists, and several other solo and ensemble special music.

We had a variety of all-Music Sundays this year, including: Hymns of Our Heritage, The Spiritual Leonard Bernstein: A Centenary Celebration, and A celebration of the music of Franz Schubert for Easter Sunday. We also shared our music with others as our Choir and Chamber choir were active, including a “road trip” to the Unitarian Universalists of Central Delaware to help celebrate their tenth anniversary of being a chartered Unitarian Universalist congregation.

We continued our project of periodic art installations based on our Soul Matters Themes, providing a means of artistic expression of individuals’ experiences with the themes...
The creative possibilities are many for both our John G. MacKinnon Memorial Library and our First Unitarian Church Archive to serve the nourishing of minds and spirits in our beloved community. The Library provides a central physical space and resources for knowledge, understanding, and inspiration. The Archive, in organizing and preserving church records and memorabilia, fosters awareness, connection, and continuity from our congregation’s past to our journey forward.

The work to renew the Archive, which began last year, anticipates creative possibilities to support or initiate activities that reflect our history and enhance milestones in our church life. Along with historical research, through painting, drawing, writing, needlework, and photography. The goals of the program are to inspire creativity among our members, to present an expanded perception of religion, church, and spirituality, and to appreciate and support our artists. During the year, fifteen members were inspired to show their creations. In January, First Unitarian hosted the Pacem in Terris Children’s Visionary Peace Art Exhibit in our gallery. Once again, our children and youth had the opportunity to participate in the exhibition at The Delaware Contemporary during Delaware Peace Week, and then some of the artwork traveled to different locations. The children were invited to create a picture of peace, considering two questions: *What does peace look like? What does a peaceful world look like?* The Youth Peace Art Exhibition was designed for Delaware K-12 students, who inspired us all with their thoughtful depictions of peace.

Our Adult Forum continued to meet on Sunday mornings throughout the year, watching videos on a wide range of topics and then discussing them. As an example, the most recent series was “Religion and Violence.”

We continued to offer Yoga and Open Heart Zen Sangha. Monday Night Yoga creates an environment that taps into the diversity of the Wilmington community, allowing individuals of various genders, races, and ages to feel accepted. Members have a sense of camaraderie as they move through a variety of poses that promote their physical and emotional well-being. Likewise, Open Heart Meditation group provides an open, warm, and harmonious environment for participants to practice silent sitting and walking, share practice experiences, and cultivate equanimity and compassion.

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the Archive is a practical resource for ongoing or periodic teams and projects to reference past work.

Our lending Library forms a vibrant crossroad linking worship activities and religious exploration. It creates a welcoming alcove amidst the ebb and flow of Sunday mornings where all ages are found browsing the shelves or enjoying quiet moments. It provides the space and opportunity to explore sought-for or unexpected possibilities in the subjects, images, words, and creative design of books as an adjunct to other ways of learning.

The Library also serves as an inviting space for daytime and evening meetings throughout the week, for both church and outside groups. First Unitarian’s Soul Matters “Oval” group, which meets in the Library, donated a sculptural wooden book, *Splinters of Wisdom*, in appreciation for the Library and its resources. Made by Hans Francke, it is displayed in the Library.

The Library supports initiatives in our church, and borrowing is increasing. Two Library copies of the UU book *Centering: Navigating race, authenticity and power in ministry* are circulating. We acquired Peace Week speaker Sarah McBride’s 2018 book, *Tomorrow will be different: Love, loss, and the fight for Trans Equality*. In December, the First Unitarian Human Rights Task Force held a convivial Sunday session in the Library to make cards for asylum seekers detained at the US-Mexico border. First Unitarian’s March theme of “Journeys” offered the opportunity to display diverse titles in time and place, from personal pilgrimage to race, immigration, and refugee experience.

Rev. Finkelstein and First Unitarian members were author, illustrator, or contributor to several new titles on our shelves, joining other books by members. New titles also highlight the life and works of artists associated with First Unitarian, including Charles Parks and Edward Loper, and range beyond our walls to *Etched in stone: Enduring words from our nations’ monuments* (2006). Elie Weisel’s *After the darkness: Reflections on the Holocaust* (2002) is among others on the Holocaust. Our collections for children, youth, and adults also address environment, Unitarian Universalism and other religions, life stages, and more.

Our First Unitarian **Book Corner** has provided a safe place for people, especially visitors and newcomers, to gather and chat with fellow book lovers. It has provided a source of books on Unitarian Universalism and other spiritual beliefs as well as copies of the UU Common Read. The Book Corner is evolving. Stay tuned to next year to see what develops.
What can be more full of possibility than the minds and spirits of our children and youth?

Each year, the groupings change depending on the number of children and the program material.

In our Nursery (Infants – 3 years), infants and toddlers enjoy their Sunday mornings playing. Our volunteers provide a warm and caring environment during worship services, with age appropriate toys, crafts, and stories.

Our Rainbow Walkers (PreK3 – Kindergarten) are introduced to Unitarian Universalism through multi-sensory stories and spiritual work. They begin each Sunday morning with a sharing circle where they “light” a battery-operated chalice and participate in Unitarian Universalism rituals. After a story and snack, the children choose their own spiritual work from a variety of options including art materials, blocks, story baskets, and other materials.

The Seekers (1st grade – 3rd grade) participated in the Faithful Journeys program, focusing on Unitarian Universalist Principles. Because ours is a creedless faith, defining what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist can be challenging. Our adults and youth often welcome such a challenge — indeed, a questioning spirit is part of our faith. Yet, our children need to learn who Unitarian Universalists are, what we believe, and how we live in faith. Faithful Journeys equips them with language and experiences to answer these questions and help them develop a strong Unitarian Universalist identity.

Seekers embarked on a pilgrimage of faith, exploring how Unitarian Universalism translates into life choices and everyday actions. Through sessions structured around the Unitarian Universalist Principles, Faithful Journeys demonstrates that our Principles are not a dogma but a credo that individuals can affirm with many kinds of actions. Over the course of the program, children discover a unity of faith in the many ways Unitarian Universalists, including...
themselves, can act on our beliefs.

The Questers (4th grade - 6th grade) participated in the Windows and Mirrors program. Windows and Mirrors nurtures children’s ability to identify their own experiences and perspectives and to seek out, care about, and respect those of others. The sessions unpack topics that lend themselves to diverse experiences and perspectives—for example, faith heritage, public service, anti-racism, and prayer. The program teaches that there are always multiple viewpoints and everyone’s viewpoint matters.

The metaphor of windows and mirrors represents the dynamic relationship among our awareness of self, our perceptions of others, and others’ perceptions of us. An ongoing art activity gives children a way to respond to the metaphor creatively and concretely. Questers did guided work on individual Window/Mirror Panels in each session to explore looking inward and looking outward in terms of the session’s topic. As a mirror, the panel reflects the individual child. As a window, it represents their view and connections beyond themselves to the congregation, other communities to which they belong, and the world.

The Questers are a large and energetic group. This year we added a variety of team building activities to help them think about their actions, the consequences of their actions, their role as a member of a group, and to have some fun! When asked what were some positive things about the Questers group, they responded that they are all friends and they respect each other. They enjoy church and being together!

Additionally, this group led the multigenerational worship service in December. This helped them learn the elements of a worship service, recognize the work needed to provide a worship service, and feel connected to the larger church community.

The Explorers (7th grade - 8th grade) participated in the Coming of Age program. Coming of Age is a Unitarian Universalist rite of passage focused on providing opportunities for youth to explore beliefs and values, as well as individual gifts, strengths, and weaknesses. The program is designed to be mentally and physically challenging. It aids rising youth in their personal growth and understanding of self, culminating with an Affirmation Worship Service.

The Youth Group (9th grade - 12th grade) met every other week after the worship service. Youth Group is led by elected youth leaders in partnership with the Director of Religious Education and adult advisors. This year the elected youth leaders are Hayden Laster and Joyce Salasky. Activities formed a balance of social action, faith formation, worship experiences, and opportunities to gather for fun and
friendship.

The youth led a worship service focused on the Journey theme. They shared their experiences from their Social Justice Journey to West Virginia during the summer of 2018. They also reflected on the journey of a person growing up as a Unitarian Universalist. This included creating a new verse to the song *Come, Come Whoever You Are* and reflecting on credos they wrote when they were younger.

One of the goals of the Children’s and Youth Religious Exploration Team is to instill the importance of social action and service and provide service opportunities. During the summer of 2018 the Youth Group participated in a Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice trip to West Virginia. They learned about the issues facing Appalachian communities and participated in a variety of service projects on this week-long journey. The Questers spent time learning about Independent Living for Young Adults (ILYA) and then planned a fundraiser to help support ILYA. This group also organized a book drive for Claymont Elementary School and made muffins for the teachers and staff of Elbert Palmer Elementary School. The Seekers group led a food drive for the Claymont Community Center. Additionally, a group of seven 4th - 10th graders participated in the U.S. Youth Climate Strike in Love Park, Philadelphia, PA. The children and youth made signs and learned about the Youth Climate Strike movement led by Gretta Thunberg.

The Youth Group teaches the congregation a dance they learned in West Virginia.
Social justice and action are at the heart of Unitarian Universalism. Quoting the Unitarian Universalist Association on the topic of Justice and Inclusion, “We have a legacy of ‘deeds not creeds.’ Our work for a better world calls us to unexpected places as we harness love’s power to stop oppression. From grassroots community organizing to interfaith state, national, and corporate advocacy; in protest marches, prayer vigils, and press conferences; in homeless shelters and in prisons, Unitarian Universalists put our faith into action.”*

First Unitarian Church has embraced the call to action, helping to create possibilities in our communities and beyond through service, education, advocacy, and public witness. We had multiple opportunities for public witness by members and friends of First Unitarian Church, among them:

- The 5th Annual March for a Culture of Peace in September brought together city and suburban, black, brown and white, Anglo, African, Asian, and Hispanic, native-born and immigrants, advantaged and disadvantaged, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Jew, young and old, and people of all political views to show that we are one community opposed to violence, poverty, racism, and exclusion.
- #believesurvivors National Walk Out Day in support of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, who bravely came forward and shared her story about her sexual assault at the hands of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh
- 2019 Women’s March on Washington
- No Wall: No Emergency Border Protest to say NO to the emergency, No to the wall, and YES to dignity and respect for all immigrants
- Prayer service and vigil at the Islamic Society of Delaware on Sunday in March. The tragic mosque shootings that occurred in Christchurch, New Zealand shook our Muslim community to the core. Many innocent lives were lost in this senseless act of violence. People of all faiths joined in prayer and vigil.
- The children & youth of First Unitarian Church participated in the US Youth Climate Strike in March in Philadelphia’s Love Park.

*https://www.uua.org/justice
First Unitarian Church has three official Social Justice Task Forces that represent our current interests and strengths in social action: environmental justice, human rights, and First Unitarian’s longstanding direct service project, Independent Living for Young Adults.

The Task Forces have committed to:

- working both within and beyond the congregation
- making intentional efforts to connect with a diverse set of partners within the larger community
- keeping racial justice in the center of their work
- emphasizing the importance of spiritual practice to social justice work.

All three task forces are welcoming new volunteers. To learn about meetings and opportunities to become involved, speak with or email any member of a leadership team. Contact information is available on the First Unitarian Church website: www.firstuuwilm.org.

In addition to these task forces, other social service or social justice activities are ongoing within the church, such as serving the Emmanuel Dining Room, the Knitting Ministry, and doing legislative work with the Unitarian Universalist Delaware Advocacy Network.

Environmental Justice Task Force

The Environmental Justice Task Force participated in the following projects this year:

- Our Vegan sub-committee sponsored three vegan potlucks, several Hospitality Tables, and a showing of the documentary Forks Over Knives, which examines the claim that most, if not all, of the chronic diseases that afflict us can be controlled or even reversed by rejecting animal-based and processed foods. A trailer is available at: https://www.forksoverknives.com/the-film/#gs.2fcpb8.

- The Task Force members continued support of the Southbridge Community, regularly attending their Neighborhood Association and the South Wilmington Planning Board meetings. The Wetland Park in Southbridge is on track to begin with contracts opening for bids with consideration for minority businesses. Wilmington parks have a plan in place for the renovation of Eden Park. As the permitting process for Walan Specialty Construction Products, a slag-grinding operation slated to operate near both the Southbridge Neighborhood and the Christina River, proceeds, our Task Force continues to bear witness and offer our support.

- Thanks to our First Unitarian
members for their participation in our book collection efforts that have been shared with both Elbert Palmer Elementary School and the preschool and aftercare programs at the Southbridge Neighborhood House.

First Unitarian Church also participates in The New Castle County Congregations of Delaware Interfaith Power and Light (NC3 of DeIPL), an interfaith effort involving congregations in New Castle County, the state of Delaware, and the federal government. First Unitarian’s Chad Tolman is the Climate Change Chair for the Delaware League and the Delaware Nature Society, focusing on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Independent Living for Young Adults (ILYA)**

Independent Living for Young Adults provides support for young adults who are aging out at 18 years old or have already aged out of foster care (up to age 21) in New Castle County, Delaware. Our goal is to fill some of the gaps in the support provided by the state programs. By acknowledging the basic worth and dignity of these young people and supporting some of their most basic needs (such as shelter and education) the ILYA team expresses our Unitarian Universalist values to the wider community.

In the words of the young people we serve and their Independent Living Coordinators (hired by the state), ILYA projects have a hugely positive impact on the lives of these youth, both now and well into the future.
ILYA program volunteers contributed to the following projects this year:

- **Student Care Packages**: Sent “care packages” 5-6 times during school semesters to bolster morale.
- **Supportive Grants**: Provided one-time grants to assist with apartment or utility security deposits, admission fees, books, and emergency needs.
- **Furniture and Household Goods**: Arranged for free furniture and household goods for a first apartment.
- **Holiday Giving**: Facilitated fulfilling “wish lists” submitted by young people at winter holiday time.
- **Graduation Backpack/Pizza Party**: Provided graduation gifts and a graduation pizza party (often the only celebration these young people get). This creates the opportunity to build support networks among the youth.
- **New Apartment Kits**: Provided basic items that get a young person started in their first apartment out on their own.
- **Baby Supply Support** (formerly Baby Shower project): Helped create a positive, supportive atmosphere for expectant mothers, providing basics for safe, healthy baby care.

Not only are team members happy to have the opportunity to serve this very deserving population but are also grateful for the support and closeness gained within the team that is constantly expanding. As our network continues to grow, First Unitarian Church enjoys greater visibility in the larger community of New Castle County.

*The mission of Independent Living for Young Adults (ILYA) is to support young people aging out of foster care in building successful independent lives. Specific goals are to: prevent homelessness for young people aging out of foster care; reinforce the value of continued education with emotional and practical support; facilitate furnishing a first apartment according to the preferences of the young person; recognize and celebrate holidays, birthdays and milestones with the young person; and promote a sense of self-worth by demonstrating interest and caring.*
Human Rights Task Force (HRTF)

The Human Rights Task Force plans initiatives to provide information, increase awareness, and build compassion about important human rights issues in our local community or our nation. At larger events, we collect e-mail addresses from participants, especially those who are not church members so we can invite them back to First Unitarian for worship and for other HRTF events. In this way, the HRTF is also an outreach program that creates the possibility of new people finding a faith home with us.

Peace Week - Sarah McBride & the Fight for Transgender Equality

The HRTF planned and publicized an important event in September as part of Peace Week Delaware. Sarah McBride, board member of Equality Delaware, was the keynote speaker for The Fight for Transgender Equality. She spoke about her life and her advocacy against discriminatory policies towards those who are transgender. Almost 100 people attended this event.

Refugee & Immigration Event – Welcoming the Stranger: Refugee and Immigration Crisis in Delaware and Beyond

Human Rights efforts were focused this year on the refugee and immigration situation faced by our nation. Welcoming the Stranger, held in November, attracted about 45 people. Speakers came from Widener University Delaware Law School, Network Delaware’s Safe Communities Campaign, and Jewish Family Services Refugee Resettlement program. We also highlighted the work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee during the discussion.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) – Welcome Cards for Asylum-Seekers

First Unitarian supported the UUSC initiative to make cards for migrant families trying to cross our borders to seek asylum. On two Sundays in December we set up a card making station during coffee hour. This was a wonderful intergenerational activity and we sent almost 70 cards to the UUSC to be displayed at the shelters along the southern border.

The Human Rights Task Force will advance the cause of human rights—expressed in many forms and for the benefit of all—in harmony with the principles of Unitarian Universalism. Recognizing that racial justice has been our congregational focus in recent years, the Human Rights Task Force will seek to build on this work, but also to engage with those who have other agendas and goals within the larger movement for human rights. These may include LGBTQ rights, women’s rights, the rights of refugees and immigrants, religious freedom, support for Black Lives Matter and the Coalition to Dismantle the New Jim Crow, economic justice, and other human rights challenges.
**Movie Night – Harvest of Empire**

We held a movie night in early February to show *Harvest of Empire*, a documentary about US policies in Mexico and Central America that have created violence and instability in these areas. Our Human Rights partners in the community helped with publicity for this timely event. Participants made more cards for UUSC at this event as we highlighted the work of UUSC, Network Delaware, Peace Week and other partners.

**Book Discussions: Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry**

In April, the Human Rights Task Force held discussion groups about the book *Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry*. The book details the experiences of Unitarian Universalist ministers and religious educators of color working in a predominately white denomination.

Discussions were informative and meaningful.

**UU Delaware Advocacy Network**

This spring, we worked closely with UU Delaware Advocacy Network (UU DAN) on legislative advocacy with the other Delaware UU churches. The main initiatives have been education and criminal justice reform.

**Children of Palestine: Heartbreak and Hope**

The Human Rights Task Force is co-sponsoring this three-part series about efforts to help Palestinian children gain basic survival and human rights.

**Sunday Worship Justice Moments & Support of Partners**

The Human Rights Task Force also continued to foster relationships and build strong partnerships with other organizations working for important social justice issues.

This year, we have highlighted the work of a few organizations in our community during worship on Sunday mornings. For these “Justice Moments”, we welcomed Network Delaware, the YWCA Dialogues to Action, The Poor Peoples Campaign, and American Promise.

**Ongoing Partnerships:**

Our ongoing partnerships include: Peace Week Delaware, American Promise, Network Delaware, Jewish Family Services, Pacem in Terris, Delaware Advocacy Network (UU DAN), Coalition to Dismantle New Jim Crow (information follows), and the YWCA.

We continue to support the work of American Promise, working to pass a constitutional amendment to get money out of politics, and the work of Network Delaware’s Safe Communities Campaign, working to ensure safe policies for Delaware’s immigrants. Some members facilitated and others participated in the YWCA Dialogues to Action about race
and race relations in our community. The final Action Forum was held at First Unitarian Church in April.

Delaware Coalition to Dismantle the New Jim Crow (partnership)

The Coalition met monthly, featuring speakers to educate members about issues within Wilmington and the State. Among the presentations were:

- “Poverty, Race, and Public Education in Delaware” – Dan Rich
- Visioning and setting priorities – Barbie Fischer, Executive Director of Restorative Encounters
- Status of the court systems and reform efforts – Brenda Wise
- “Racial Disparity in Economic Development as a Cause of Violent Crime” – Dr. Yasser Payne, Associate Professor in Sociology and Criminal Justice Departments of the University of Delaware
- “An Anthology of Writings by Incarcerated Men” – Jayne Thompson, Asst. Professor of English and Director of Chester Writers House in Chester, PA
- Update on how the State is addressing discrimination in state agencies and progress on the Ivy Report recommendations – Keith Hunt, Chief Diversity Officer for the State of Delaware
- Public Policy and the Legislative Process workshop – Network Delaware’s Nicholas Brock
- Community-wide celebration of the life and inspiration of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized in partnership with the Newark Branch NAACP and the Newark MLLK Weekend Celebration Committee

The Coalition is currently working on legislative initiatives to reform the criminal justice system in Delaware, as well as promoting universal Pre-K for all of Delaware.

Building New Partnerships:

We are in the process of building new partnerships with the Poor People’s Campaign and Delaware Equal Justice Initiative

Other Community Connections

Martin Luther King Jr. Week Celebratory Concert:
Thanks to the work of our Honorary Minister of Music, Scott Ward, we once again hosted the annual concert of the DuPont Diversity and First Unitarian Choirs. A good will offering was taken to support the anti-racism work of YWCA Delaware.

Members of the Emmanuel Dining Room team at First Unitarian Church transform the world through their action of feeding the homeless and those in need.
need every month at the Ministry of Caring’s Emmanuel Dining Room (EDR) at 2nd and Jackson Streets in Wilmington. A rotating team of about thirty individuals come together to cook casseroles on the 19th of the month and serve them on the 20th to over 200 individuals who come for a free hot meal. The program costs remain the same as in previous years - about $200/month or $2,400/year for the supplies. Our main income source is the special monthly offering; this year two monthly offerings were included to help fund the EDR budget. With a strong commitment to help our community, basic financial solvency for the project, and a solid team from within our congregation, we anticipate this program continuing for years to come.

Since 1997, the House Pin Team has donated $27,200 to the YWCA Home Life Management Center, which provides transitional housing to homeless families. The goal of the program is to help these families obtain permanent employment and stable housing. In recent years, we have supplemented our sales by making bead jewelry from donated supplies. We donated $1,700 to date in 2018-19.

Loving action in partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Association and affiliated organizations was also a priority at First Unitarian during this year. First Unitarian Church has been an active participant with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee over many years. The First Unitarian Church UUSC Team works to support the UUSC as it addresses difficult human rights issues around the world, usually working with the most marginalized and always working with on-site partners to empower those without power or resources. UUSC’s work is based on our Unitarian Universalist principles, especially the inherent worth
and dignity of every person. Between 4/1/2018 and 3/31/2019, First Unitarian members and friends contributed over $59,000 to UUSC in response to Guest At Your Table, honey sales, Justice Sunday, donated gifts of stock, pledges, fund raising campaigns, and online giving. During the year, First Unitarian participated in the following programs and activities:

The Guest-At-Your-Table (GAYT) UUSC Program for all ages took place the six weeks prior to Thanksgiving, with the kick-off beginning in mid-October. This Program has two basic goals:

- To educate our members about the world-wide work of UUSC
- to promote giving to support the work and programs in twenty different countries, including the US.

These goals were achieved by:

- having one-on-one conversations with many members to provide information and to answer questions,
- distributing GAYT boxes to all CYRE classes and church members,
- giving Stewardship Reflections and Tale for All Ages in Sunday worship services,
- writing weekly articles for E-News and two E-Blast articles for church-wide distribution,
- publishing support testimonials from First Unitarian members, answering “Why we support UUSC,”
- hosting the coffee hour hospitality table and social justice tables, and selling over 100 pounds of Doyle Dobbins’ donated honey,
- helping with the “Setting of the Table Service” the Sunday before Thanksgiving.
- Plus, something new—knitted hats and scarves made by our knitting group and friends, which were given to UUSC as part of our Guest at Your Table program. UUSC sent all 98 of them to immigrants and refugees at our southern border.

Welcome Cards: Handmade cards of welcome were sent between mid-December and mid-January, via UUSC to refugee/immigrants being detained at our border. This project was in conjunction with the Human Rights Task Force and was a small way to let people at the border know that we care.

Justice Sunday: On March 17, 2019, we observed Justice Sunday with the theme, “Joining Together for Justice,” with two homilies on the work of the UUSC. A special offering was received to support the UUSC justice work throughout the world.

UUSC Coffee Project: Support for the Fair-Trade Equal Exchange/ UUSC Coffee Project and its sale of products was sustained throughout the year. We received a delayed certificate from UUSC for 2017. Thanks to Steve Marek and family, the Project had sales of over $5,000, placing First Unitarian Church in the top 5% of Unitarian Universalist churches supporting this program.
Humanitarian Crises: These crises are unscheduled, but when they happen, the UUSC team promotes support for those who are most marginalized in these crises through timely special giving to UUSC. Examples include: Syrian Refugee Crisis, Climate Change Displacement Crisis, and the Rohingya (Myanmar) Refugee Crisis.

We continue to offer a worship service yearly on UN Sunday. At this service we provide information to the congregation about the UU-UNO and solicit memberships and donations to the work of the UNO. This year, we spoke about migration and immigration. The world continues to suffer from events that cause millions of people to migrate in search of safety. In addition, recent rhetoric and rule changes regarding the southern border of the US has created significant problems for asylum seekers including family separation.

First Unitarian sent a full slate of delegates to the UUA’s General Assembly in June 2018, All Are Called, in Kansas City, Missouri, which continued to focus on dismantling white supremacy. Delegates selected “Undoing Intersectional White Supremacy” as a multiyear Congregational Study/Action Issue. Resolutions were also made that condemn criminalization of migrants, call for the end to private prisons, and urge support for indigenous water protectors. Articles about General Assembly 2018 can be found online at https://www.uua.org/ga/past/2018.
“Stewardship is not about asking for money. It is about what kind of people our mission calls us to become and about how a community of faith uses its resources to serve with love, compassion and integrity.”

- Michael Durall

Thank you to our members and friends for your ongoing support which sustains our congregation and this faith.
“(First U performance) demonstrates strong stewardship of our assets and your financial contributions to the Church. Our money is being well-managed and being spent in accordance with the annual budget passed by the Congregation.

I want to recognize the Executive Team and the Church Staff for their very good work in tracking, managing and containing expenses again this year."

~ Steve Cohen, Treasurer

As of March 31, 2019

**Investments And Fixed Assets**

Net Assets (Unrestricted)  
$319,625  
Net Assets (Restricted)  
$1,426,987  
Capital Campaign Fund  
$785,067  
Total Net Assets:  
$2,531,679
First Unitarian members, visitors and friends made the following contributions from May 2018—April 2019:

- Murray Grove $1,204
- UU House Outreach $852
- National Alliance on Mental Illness—DE $390
- YMCA $712
- Grants for Growth:
  - UU Fellowship of Easton, MD $1,400
  - Yes You Can $603
  - Water is Life Kenya $935
- Emmanuel Dining Room (meal prepared and served for 200+, once a month) $2,218
- Coalition to Dismantle New Jim Crow $559
- Independent Living for Young Adults:
  - Special offering $1,173
  - 25 Backpacks (estimated value) $1,713
  - Holiday project $1,395
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC):
  - Coffee Project Sales $5,000
  - Guest at Your Table (including honey sales) $11,345
  - Justice Sunday special collection & monthly gifts $2,657
- YWCA—House pin sales $1,700

Total donations through First Unitarian Society $33,856

Direct contributions by First Unitarian Members:
- EDR International Dinners (approximately 150 seats purchased) $3,750
- UUSC: donated gifts of stock, pledges, special fundraisers, online $45,857
2018–2019 MINISTER & STAFF

Rev. Roberta Finkelstein, Developmental Minister
Scott Ward, Honorary Minister of Music
Catherine Williamson, Director of Religious Education
Marina VanRenssen, Business Manager
Chrissy McCullin, Congregational Administrator
Ernie Congo, Building Coordinator
Tariq Thomas, Night Custodian
Mohamed Konate, Weekend Custodian
Lenell Laws, Substitute Custodian
Julia Davidson, Elizabeth Donovan, Natalie Ruggerio—Childcare
Leo Claney, Will Donovan, Elise Harrell, Meghan McCullin, Nicole McGhee,
  Hannah Weiss, Kyle Williamson—Substitute Childcare

Our Executive Team

Reverend Roberta Finkelstein, Developmental Minister
Marina VanRenssen, Business Manager
Randy Windle, Lay Member at Large
Lois Morris, Lay Member at Large
Our Principles

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person
2. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
6. The goal of world community, with peace, liberty, and justice for all
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

First Unitarian Church of Wilmington

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