We unite to strengthen the bonds of kinship among all persons; to promote human dignity; and to increase reverence for life's creating, sustaining, and transforming power through worship, study, and service.
**Our Vision**
We come together as a congregation to inspire our quests for the spiritual, ethical, and meaningful in life and to advance respect, compassion, and justice in the wider world.

**Our Mission**
Countryside is seen as the growing voice and source of liberal religion in the northwest Chicago suburbs by…
…creating a place of inclusiveness, welcome, connectedness, compassion and respect
…providing for the spiritual and intellectual growth of members of all ages
…cultivating a vital future for our congregation and community through thoughtful stewardship of our financial resources and our environment
…acting on a social conscience

To serve our mission and make real our vision, we engage with one another and with this congregation in the light of these

**Aspirations of Membership:**
To the extent that my life circumstances permit, as a member of Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist I will:
• Attend Sunday services and congregational meetings
• Seek out and share opportunities for spiritual, ethical, and meaningful growth
• Engage in congregational projects, programs, or events that reach beyond the church
• Engage in congregational projects, programs, or events that support the life of the church
• Strive to give 5 - 10% of my income to support the mission of the church
• Share with others outside the church the value of my membership at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist

**Covenant of Right Relationship**
In my relationship with the CCUU community and in keeping with our UU values, I will strive to:
• Take responsibility for my words and actions by being honest and respectful in my speech, while listening to others with an open mind and heart;
• Be sensitive to possible conflicts, and be willing to work toward solutions using available resources, accepting that some differences may not be resolvable;
• Respect and support the diversity within our congregation, and work to create and maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all.
# Table of Contents

## BOARD REPORTS
- President’s Report: 1
- Treasurer’s Report: 3
- Balance Sheet: 6
- Proposed Annual Budget 2015-2016: 7
- Budget Reinstatement Schedule: 10

## STAFF REPORTS
- Senior Minister: 11
- Assistant Minister for Lifespan Religious Education: 14
- Community Minister: 15
- Interim Choir Conductor: 16
- Congregational Administrator: 16

## THE MINISTRIES
- Worship Ministry: 19
- Music Program: 21
- Study Ministry: 22
- Religious Education Council: 22
- Senior High Youth Group: 25
- Adult Faith Development: 26
- Service Ministry: 27
- Countryside Animal Friends (CAF): 27
- Green Sanctuary Committee: 28
- Lay & Care Ministry Programs: 29
- Living the Welcoming Congregation (LWC): 30
- Outreach Steering Committee (OSC): 31
- Social Action Committee (SAC): 33
- Kinship Ministry: 35
- Membership Committee: 36
- Circle Suppers: 36
- Chalice Circles: 36
- Compassionate Communication for the Resolution of Conflict (CCRC): 37
- 20-30 Somethings: 38
- Feminine Divine Women’s Group: 38
- Seder Dinner: 39
- Transitions: 40

## OPERATIONS TEAM (FORMERLY FOUNDATIONS MINISTRY)
- Aesthetics Task Force: 41
- Audio-Visual Task Force: 43
- Grounds Committee: 44
- Church Historian: 44
BOARD REPORTS

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Welcome to our 2015 Annual Meeting! Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist is a vibrant community that I’ve been proud to serve this past year since Beverly Snedd, our most recent past President, moved to California. I accepted the challenges and responsibilities of leading our Board of Trustees knowing full well that there would be a tremendous amount work to do. I also knew that committing to serving others would bring a tremendous amount of joy. My expectations have certainly been exceeded.

Our leadership team, made up of our Board of Trustees, Ministry Council, and staff, change over time and that presents interesting opportunities and challenges alike for how to operate our church and how to help our new leaders get up to speed to lead effectively, efficiently, and... instantly. Our members that come to serve in leadership positions often begin, and sometimes even end, that tenure with a limited understanding of how decisions are made and where power and authority rest. This is not a criticism of how smart or able our members are that come into leadership positions. We all start off in the same position of not knowing what we don’t know. It is a challenge for the leadership team to engage and work through matters of power and authority because the decisions tend to be long lasting for the Sr. Minister who is a constant while our other leadership positions rotate among committed/unpaid volunteers. The words “hard fought” come to mind when reflecting on the idea of making concrete or making changes to our governance practices.

The Board retreat last fall saw the creation of several goals the Board decided to take on this year. Each of these goals has proven to be larger and more difficult to complete than expected. Two of the goals are related to governance and one is related to our building and finances:

Goal 1: Define our governance model to establish clear roles and responsibilities and identify opportunities to “right size” our organizing model. This goal aims to look at the big picture of how the work of the church can get done with improved efficiency. The team that has worked on this goal considered the roles of Board, Ministry Council, Committees (Committees of the Board, standing committees, ad hoc committees, and task forces), Sr. Minister, and staff to carry out our work. While this work continues, some of the themes that have arisen include looking at ways of increasing volunteers and minimizing the creation of new/ad-hoc committees if an existing committee could take on the challenge. The efforts in this area led to a higher level of engagement between the Board and Ministry Council to understand needs that each has.

Goal 2: Define the governance associated with Personnel/HR matters. The focus here is on the division of authority and responsibility of all personnel related processes between the Sr. Minister who is our chief of staff, our Board which has fiduciary responsibility, our Personnel Committee which supports processes such as hiring, on-boarding, compensation, contracts, employee reviews, and so on. This is an important goal to complete since we have significant efforts going into searching and hiring new staff member this year that complement the regular, annual personnel processes such as employee reviews. To act effectively as well as in the spirit of covenantal employment, we need to make clear the roles, authority, and responsibilities of the Sr. Minister, as our Chief of Staff, the role of the Personnel Committee, and how the Board fulfills its fiduciary responsibility.

Following through to completion of both of the governance related goals is important to ensuring smooth operation of our church. If there’s a criticism here, it’s that it’s been truly difficult for me to rally the leadership team to work on governance when there are so many other urgent tasks in front of us. Steven Covey’s 7th habit, “Sharpen the Saw”, from his acclaimed book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People captures the spirit of what I’m talking about. We’re too busy sawing to take time to sharpen the saw blade.

Goal 3: A third goal from the Board retreat is related to capital planning and the adequacy of our capital reserves to face the building repairs that we anticipate over the next 5 years and beyond. Steve Black, a volunteer on our Operations Team, updated our capital forecast and improved the visibility we have to those costs that we can expect to face with an aging infrastructure. Our issues here aren’t capital alone, but our estimated annual capital reserve requirement exceeds what we’ve been able to set aside in the past: $0 to $10,000/year. How proactively or reactively we deal with matters of the building will impact our total cost of ownership as well as how visible and impacting infrastructure problems become. This reality caused us to ask the question: When and under what circumstances should we decide to conduct a capital campaign?
Our stewardship campaign this year highlighted these needs to raise congregational awareness about what it costs to operate the lovely facilities that we call our church home. So will we conduct a capital campaign? Probably, but most likely that will take place after the leadership team and the congregation have made decisions about one or more initiatives that could come from the follow-up on the strategic planning process that will begin in the fall. A capital campaign that is centered on accomplishing a big goal will be received differently than one focused on repair work—no matter how pressing.

You will hear comments during the Annual Meeting from the Strategic Planning team that committed their talents and time to helping us to gather insight about the what the congregation values and wants to do. I look forward to the next phase of turning the results of the plan into action.

Now turning to the Annual Meeting and recognition for the great work of all the people that have served our congregation, I have always enjoyed attending the Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist congregational meetings, both as a congregant and also as a member of the Board. Our collective dedication to the democratic process is unmistakable as we come together to elect leaders, celebrate our accomplishments, and have important all-congregation conversations. The Annual Meeting and Town Hall meetings have always been among my favorites as they are “democracy in action”.

I have been happy to serve with fellow Board members who are dedicated and passionate about Countryside. I will miss all of the Board as I complete my term and help Karen Noorani transition into her role Board President. I know I speak for the Board when I say we will miss the contributions of our Secretary, Deb Quentel, and Trustee, John Conneely, who are rotating off of the Board this year. I wish them well as they find other ways to contribute to CCUU.

I would like to express a special thank you to Mary Johnson, our new Treasurer, for her hard work this year stepping in mid-year after Beth Ligouri stepped down to tend to work and family priorities. Mary’s willingness to accept the challenge along with her strong follow-through will serve our congregation well. A big thank you goes out to Gary LaBedz who significantly eased the pain of the transition and agreed to co-lead the stewardship campaign this year.

Under the leadership and strong organizational and time management skills of Sheryl Skifstad, the Ministry Council has continued to coordinate and develop programming at Countryside. A glance at the Focus or the blue insert provides evidence that we are a thriving and active church! An Operations Team was formed last year after disbanding the Foundations Ministry. The Operations Team is charged with overseeing various matters related to the facility, including maintenance, repairs and scheduling. Thank you to our Church Administrator, Laurie Lantz, as well as Reverend Hilary, and Steve Black for working to operationalize tasks needed to maintain our building and assets and oversee volunteer workdays.

I am grateful for the continuing hard work of committees who assist the Board in advancing the mission and vision of our congregation. The Outreach Steering Committee has spent its second year continuing to sponsor fundraising events. They raised $24,000 for outreach from our Time and Talent Auction event and have been thoughtful about defining what “service” means to Countryside.

The Personnel Committee has actively worked to enable and support the efforts associated with hiring our new RE Assistant, Lisa Vanderbleek, our Interim Choir Conductor, Guillermo Muñoz Küster, our yet to be announced Music Director, and our Interim Religious Educator! Thank you to Greg Blus, Michael Graves, Chuck Smith, and Board liaison, Karen Noorani, for your work with Rev. Hilary and me this year. Thank you also to the Music Director search team and the Interim Religious Educator search team. Your collective wisdom and commitment to finding the best candidates to meet our needs helps us to live up to the reputation for excellence that we’ve established.

The Nominating Committee has presented a slate of impressive candidates for Board positions and other leadership positions; their work ensures a continuing tradition of strong and capable leadership at Countryside.

This has been a busy year for our Senior Minister and our Assistant Minister for Lifespan Religious Education. Under their stewardship, our spiritual home is well tended and individuals are ministered through life’s challenges. Reverend Hilary has taken the audiovisual experience in worship services to a new level this year. She has proven she has a gift when it comes to the spoken word at memorial services and pastoral work with grieving families.
Our religious education program is an amazing gift to our children and youth, and the adult faith offerings have continued strongly over the last year. We will miss Rev. Colleen Vahey as she departs to be with her young and growing family and discerning her next steps in ministry.

Our staff continues to impress – many thanks to Laurie Lantz, Guillermo Muñoz Küster, Debbie Lee and all of our childcare workers who help to keep things moving forward and as smoothly as possible. Finally, a thank you to our Community Based Minister, the Reverend Dr. C Scot Giles, for his unwavering support of CCUU.

Lastly, I want to express many thanks to the volunteers who are the heart and soul of our church. Every day our building is filled with members and friends who set up for events, send out invitations, provide food, teach our children, clean up, paint, garden and work together to make things happen. I am so grateful to be a part of such a magnificent church!

In Faith,
Mike Gilley
President, Board of Trustees

TREASURER’S REPORT
Submitted by Mary Johnson
Over the past six months, I have been honored to serve as the Treasurer of Countryside Church. The learning curve is tremendous in such a robust organization, and I am very grateful for the help and support of our Ministers, staff, fellow members of the Board of Trustees, members of the Finance Committee and the many volunteers with whom I have had the pleasure of working. I must specifically acknowledge the help and support of Laurie Lantz, who has provided wonderful backup.

The most valuable asset in any organization is its members, and ours is no different. I believe that our Church is a family, a family each of us has chosen to join, and that we each have responsibilities in that family. My role here is to describe to you what I believe are the most important aspects of CCUU from the financial perspective.

Our Church Building
The church building is our Congregation’s largest physical asset. It is carried on our books at a value of $900,000, its approximate cost. We have an outstanding mortgage balance of $445,000 at 4.83% interest. Our annual mortgage payments are $36,336. The last time our building was appraised, it was valued at approximately $2 million. The CCUU mortgage is actually a commercial loan with a maximum five-year term even though the principal amount is amortized over a longer period, currently 20 years. In plain English, our mortgage must be re-financed every five years. Because we are a Church, we do not have to pay property taxes on our church building.

The cost of operating a building of this size is significant. In addition to utilities and landscaping, we must provide a fire alarm system, security, custodial services, repairs and maintenance. The total amount budgeted for Buildings & Grounds next year is $80,600 excluding the mortgage payment. Please see the 2015/2016 Proposed Budget document (following pages) for a line-item listing. Additionally, the Board of Trustees is committed to accumulating reserve monies to save for replacement of our building’s major components, including roofing, masonry, siding, HVAC, windows, tuck pointing, etc. Placing money in this Reserve Fund was the top priority identified by the CCUU membership during this Spring’s Strategic Planning sessions.

Capital Reserve Fund
The current balance in our Capital Reserve Fund is $37,500. In the past, CCUU has conducted several Capital Campaigns, which funded both exterior and interior improvements. Exterior improvements have included new siding, roofing, windows and HVAC, as well as parking lot resurfacing. Interior improvements have included the sanctuary’s video system and our security system. While there is currently no Capital Campaign in process, the Finance Committee will be assessing our facility’s replacement schedule this year to quantify the current status of our needs, the funding available, and determining a recommendation to present to the Board of Trustees.

North Property
The single family home located at the north end of our church’s parking lot is fondly referred to as our “North Property.” CCUU fully owns this home, and we carry it on our books at a value of $270,000. We currently rent
this property out. The North Property is not tax-exempt, and we currently pay property taxes of $6,314 annually. The home is an older model, and beginning to show its age, in terms of maintenance: during the past year, we have had to replace the sump pump, water heater, and some of the windows.

Endowment Fund
Because of the generous donations of many past members, CCUU has $53,000 in endowment funds. Our thanks go to our Endowment Committee (Mike Berry, Kay Gredell, Karen Greenland, Art Mayfield, Fran Mueller) who recommended a Vanguard Fund that currently holds these monies. It has a portfolio similar to the UUA Common Fund i.e., 60/40 bonds/stocks, and that shares many of the same actual securities screened for SRI (socially responsible investing) criteria, but has substantially better performance and lower fees. With this substantial foundation, our hope is the Endowment Fund continues to grow through new gifts from current members. Please remember these gifts can be made at any time, not just as a legacy gift.

Finance Committee
The Finance Committee meets monthly to review our organization’s financial statements, including evaluation of our asset and liability positions and to analyze the monthly Statement of Income and Expenses (Profit and Loss Statement). The Committee also receives reports from both the Stewardship and Budget Committees. Additionally, the Finance Committee considers any current financial issues and/or concerns. The Committee reports its findings to the Board of Trustees.

Our thanks go to the very dedicated Finance Team: Gary LaBedz (controller), Greg Blus, Jürgen Juffa, and Bob Spielman. We are especially grateful to Laurie Lantz, CCUU’s Congregational Administrator. Laurie not only provides the bookkeeping function for our congregation, she provides the monthly financial statements, answers endless questions, and attends all Finance Committee meetings; in other words, she provides indispensable support to our Committee.

Audit Committee
The purpose of the internal audit is to ensure that Income and Expense Reporting by various members and staff of the church follows policy, that handling of church funds is above reproach, and year-end books are closed and balanced properly.

Many thanks to Gary LaBedz, our Controller, and to John Evans and Jürgen Juffa who diligently completed last year’s audit and reported their findings to the CCUU Board of Trustees.

Budget Process
The Budget process is where we align our CCUU values with the funding that our congregation provides.

Staff and many volunteers participate in the development of the annual budget. It is compiled from multiple sources as noted below:

- Revenues are based on pledges received in the annual Stewardship Drive and forecasted rental income.
- Each Ministry coordinator submits a budget of programmatic expenses based on the input of the programs and committees within its Ministry.
- The Personnel Committee develops salary recommendations.
- Buildings and Grounds expenses are determined by the actual expenditures in the current and prior fiscal years.

The Budget Team is comprised of representatives from the Ministry Council: Jeff Phillips, Bernice McCarthy, Juli Cicarelli, and Lisa Bohné; Controller Gary LaBedz; and the following members of the Board of Trustees: Mike Gilley, Karen Noorani, Sheryl Skifstad, and Mary Johnson, as well as our Senior Minister, Hilary Krivchenia. This team prioritized expenditures based on their collective vision for CCUU. This proposed budget was then submitted to the Board for approval and presentation to the congregation.

We are grateful to all who participated in the budget process to ensure that it is fiscally sound and accurately represents the anticipated income and expenses for our next fiscal year.

Stewardship Drive
Financial support of CCUU is one of many important responsibilities of membership to this independent liberal church. It is through the payment of pledges that all members ensure that the mission and programs of CCUU continue. First and foremost, I want to thank everyone who pledged for their
generous support. Additional thanks go out to those who stretched to meet our Aspirations of Membership, as well as the generous individuals who contributed to our “Close-the-Gap” drive, our extra push to try to balance next year’s Budget.

The stewardship drive is a major effort, which takes the time, talent and dedication of many to ensure its success. Special thanks go out to the following individuals who contributed to this year’s drive: Rev. Hilary Krivchenia, Mike Gilley, Mike Berry, Karen Noorani, Gary LaBedz, Gloria Kinney, Sheryl Skifstad, Alan Greenland, Deb Quentel, Lisa Bohné, John Conneely, and Matt Bridell. Each of these individuals took time to reach out to our congregation, to make phone calls, and to provide input at a number of strategy sessions.

Financial Results as of April 30, 2015: Summary

- **Profit & Loss Statement** – As of April 30, on a year-to-date (YTD) basis, our Profit & Loss Statement looks like we have a surplus of $53,800. In fact, a significant number of our expenses for the current fiscal year have not yet come in. At this time, we anticipate finishing this year with a surplus of approximately $17,500 (please see the Profit and Loss Detail section, below). Because the current Capital Reserve of $37,500 is not enough to support a building the age and size of our church, the Finance Committee will recommend to the Board of Trustees that any surplus from the current fiscal year be transferred to our Capital Reserve account, in anticipation of future needs.

- **Balance Sheet** – As shown and detailed below, CCUU has a strong balance sheet with $1,372,000 in assets, $477,000 in liabilities, and a resulting net equity position of $895,300. Assets consist of various cash accounts and the purchase price of our real property (North and Church). Our mortgage is our primary liability. The equity section shows how our various net assets are designated.

Financial Results as of April 30, 2015: Detail

**Profit & Loss Statement**

- YTD Pledge income, which comprises 85% of our budget, is $372,600, as expected. Rental Income for the church itself is $28,800, which is $3,200 ahead of budget. Total plate cash is $13,800 ($3,900 under budget); we have donated $4,900 to charities through our “share-the-plate” social outreach program. Income from use of our facilities is $28,800, which is $3,200 over budget.

- Expenses in total have been coming in under budget this year, due mainly to the temporary drop in payroll expense, the result of the unfilled position of Music Director. Several other categories may look like we are under budget for now, because some of their significant expenses have not yet come in: landscaping and capital reserve, for example. Among the expenses which have exceeded their budgets this year: building repairs/maintenance (the largest expenditures were for carpet cleaning and replacement of our fire alarm board) and natural gas (heating during another very cold winter). Please also note that our North Property had $2,000 in unanticipated expenses this year: several windows, the water heater and the sump pump all needed to be replaced.

**Balance Sheet**

- Assets - The current assets consist of our daily operating cash, operating and capital reserves ($148,307) and our endowment fund ($53,600). The reserves and endowment funds have designated equity accounts associated with them. Fixed assets are composed of the amount paid by CCUU for the North Property ($270,000) and the Church Building ($900,000).

- Liabilities – Current liabilities consist of advance payments of next year’s pledges and a monthly timing difference for payroll tax payments ($31,500). The mortgage on the church property is CCUU’s only long-term liability ($445,000).

- Equity – The Reserve and Endowment funds are associated with specific current asset accounts, as noted above. Equity in Church Property ($725,000) is the difference between the amount paid (in assets) and the current mortgage balance (liabilities). We have numerous special purpose (short-term) funds that are used by various church programs (totaling $15,000). For example, Coming of Age has proceeds from their fund-raising, the Green Sanctuary group has raised funds for their environmental projects, and Navigators collects fees from their members to pay for various activities. Lastly, Retained Earnings (negative $57,000) represents the cumulative results of CCUU’s prior year income and/or loss and net investment in capital improvements. Overall, equity totals $895,000.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mary Johnson
Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As of April 30, 2015**

### ASSETS

#### Current Assets
- **Checking/Savings**
  - MB Cash Accounts
    - MB Money Market Acct: 41,106
    - MB Operating Checking: 69,734
  - Total MB Cash Accounts: 110,839
- **Merrill Lynch Capital Resrv-Inv**: 37,468
- **Vanguard Wellesley Endowment**: 53,587
- **Total Checking/Savings**: 201,894

**Total Current Assets**: 201,894

#### Fixed Assets
- **Property Value 1025-1033 Smith**
  - Main Property: 900,000
  - North Property: 270,000
- **Total Property Value 1025-1033 Smith**: 1,170,000

**Total Fixed Assets**: 1,170,000

### TOTAL ASSETS
**1,371,894**

### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

#### Liabilities
- **Current Liabilities**
  - Other Current Liabilities
    - Advance Contributions: 11,175
    - Outreach Funds: 17,862
    - Payroll Liabilities: 1,554
    - Security Deposits: 925
  - **Total Other Current Liabilities**: 31,516

**Total Current Liabilities**: 31,516

- **Long Term Liabilities**
  - Mortgage Note Payable MB Finan: 445,071

**Total Long Term Liabilities**: 445,071

**Total Liabilities**: 476,586

#### Equity
- **Capital Reserve Fund - Invest**: 37,468
- **Endowment Fund**: 53,587
- **Opening Bal Equity**: 26,452
- **Operating Reserve**: 41,106
- **Program Special Purpose Funds**: 14,927
- **Property Value Equity Account**: 724,929
- **Retained Earnings**: (57,016)
- **Net Income**: 53,856

**Total Equity**: 895,307

### TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY
**1,371,894**
# COUNTRYSIDE CHURCH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
## 2015-2016 PROPOSED BUDGET

### Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase (Decrease) in Pledges</td>
<td>$ (8,616)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (Decrease) in contributions (new/delinquent pledges, other)</td>
<td>$ 154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (Decrease) in Facility Use Income</td>
<td>$ (200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planned Increase (Decrease) in Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>(8,663)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Planned Additions (Reductions) to Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2% Ministry Staff Raises</td>
<td>$ 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Changes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Director/Pianist/RE Assistant</td>
<td>$ 2,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Assistant</td>
<td>$ 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexton</td>
<td>$ 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Salaries</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 2,257</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Contribution to Capital Reserves</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry budgets</td>
<td>$ (1,629)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church office</td>
<td>$ (1,300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and grounds</td>
<td>$ 5,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational Dues</td>
<td>$ (13,772)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Planned Increase (Decrease) in Expenditures</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ (8,624)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Planned Increase (Decrease) in Net income**

$ (39)
Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist
2015-2016 Proposed Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013-14 Actual</th>
<th>2014-15 Budget</th>
<th>2015-16 Budget</th>
<th>Budget Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Contributions Income (Pledges)</td>
<td>403,436</td>
<td>425,594</td>
<td>416,978</td>
<td>(8,616)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Campaign Income</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less delinquencies (4.5%)</td>
<td>(18,155)</td>
<td>(19,152)</td>
<td>(18,764)</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plus Continuing Canvass</td>
<td>10,973</td>
<td>11,576</td>
<td>11,342</td>
<td>(234)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Pledges</strong></td>
<td>396,255</td>
<td>418,018</td>
<td>409,556</td>
<td>(8,463)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate Cash (net of Outreach)</td>
<td>20,502</td>
<td>21,500</td>
<td>21,500</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions- Other</td>
<td>7,305</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Contributions Income</strong></td>
<td>424,062</td>
<td>439,518</td>
<td>431,056</td>
<td>(8,463)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Facility Use Income            |                |                |                |               |
| Events                         | 1,650          | 1,600          | 2,000          | 400           |
| Recitals                       | 3,527          | 2,800          | 2,200          | (600)         |
| **Facility Use Income**        | 27,539         | 26,200         | 26,200         | 0             |
| **Total Facility Use Income**  | 32,716         | 30,600         | 30,400         | (200)         |
| North Property Net Income      | 13,908         | 16,730         | 16,730         | 0             |

| Outreach                       |                |                |                |               |
| Fundraisers                    | 26,750         | 18,500         | 20,000         | 1,500         |
| Share the Plate Contributions  | 5,695          | 5,000          | 5,000          | 0             |
| Gifts to Others                | (32,445)       | (23,500)       | (25,000)       | (1,500)       |
| **Total Outreach**             | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0             |
| Misc Income                    | 2,099          | 1,000          | 1,000          | 0             |
| **TOTAL REVENUE**              | 472,785        | 487,048        | 479,106        | (8,663)       |
## Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist
### 2015-2016 Proposed Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Expenses</th>
<th>2013-14 Actual</th>
<th>2014-15 Budget</th>
<th>2015-16 Budget</th>
<th>Budget Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Salaries &amp; Professional Expenses</strong></td>
<td>300,506</td>
<td>305,850</td>
<td>308,107</td>
<td>2,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministries</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>3,269</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>3,629</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>(500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>3,719</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>5,971</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>7,312</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbatical Coverage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(2,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship</td>
<td>2,193</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>(700)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Ministries</strong></td>
<td>20,122</td>
<td>25,600</td>
<td>23,971</td>
<td>(1,629)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church Office</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Service Charges</td>
<td>1,778</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>6,010</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>(2,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>2,447</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage/Petty Cash</td>
<td>1,897</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equip Lease/Repair</td>
<td>5,660</td>
<td>5,600</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Expense</td>
<td>1,001</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Office</strong></td>
<td>18,793</td>
<td>18,200</td>
<td>16,900</td>
<td>(1,300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buildings/Grounds</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Committees</td>
<td>2,133</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bldg Repair &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>3,822</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Reserve</td>
<td>4,564</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodian</td>
<td>7,320</td>
<td>7,300</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HVAC</td>
<td>4,540</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>10,628</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>9,928</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>5,277</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>2,262</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbage</td>
<td>3,614</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td>9,126</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (supplies)</td>
<td>2,469</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>5,225</td>
<td>4,080</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Bldg/Grnds</strong></td>
<td>70,928</td>
<td>74,780</td>
<td>80,600</td>
<td>5,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mortgage</strong></td>
<td>37,993</td>
<td>36,336</td>
<td>36,336</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Denom dues</strong></td>
<td>23,515</td>
<td>26,544</td>
<td>13,272</td>
<td>(13,272)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board Dev Fund</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ancillary expense</strong></td>
<td>296</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Misc</strong></td>
<td>61,004</td>
<td>63,300</td>
<td>49,600</td>
<td>(13,772)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES</strong></td>
<td>472,450</td>
<td>487,810</td>
<td>479,186</td>
<td>(8,624)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>472,785</td>
<td>487,848</td>
<td>479,186</td>
<td>(8,663)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET INCOME</strong></td>
<td>335</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2015-16 Budget Reinstatement Schedule 2015-05-06

This table highlights our budget priorities and shows the order in which items that had been cut from the 2015-16 budget will be re-instated as additional pledge revenue comes in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEQUENCE FOR RE-INSTATEMENT OF BUDGET ITEMS:</th>
<th>INCREMENTAL FUNDING</th>
<th>Line Fund Accumulated %</th>
<th>Line Fund Accumulated $</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0  All unspent 2014-15 revenue will be allocated to Capital Reserve in July 2015</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  Staff COLA (2% salary/FICA allocation for Sr. Minister &amp; Congr. Admin only)</td>
<td>$2,916</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$2,916</td>
<td>$5,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  RE Materials ($500 increase requested)</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$6,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Kinship (Membership Materials $700 increase requested)</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td>$6,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Denominational Dues</td>
<td>$4,424</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>$4,424</td>
<td>$10,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  RE Materials</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$11,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Kinship (Membership Materials $700 increase requested)</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$700</td>
<td>$11,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Denominational Dues</td>
<td>$8,848</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$13,272</td>
<td>$20,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Capital Reserve</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>$18,000</td>
<td>$25,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  Part-Time Facilities Maintenance (Sexton) 1 of 2</td>
<td>$5,800</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>$5,800</td>
<td>$31,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10  Capital Reserve</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
<td>$41,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11  Part-Time Facilities Maintenance (Sexton) 2 of 2</td>
<td>$5,800</td>
<td>101%</td>
<td>$11,600</td>
<td>$46,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12  Capital Reserve</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$33,000</td>
<td>$51,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13  Office Assistant Paid Hours</td>
<td>$8,397</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$8,397</td>
<td>$60,385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once again, Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist has had a year of change and challenge. We’re in good company. The quaint, unchanging church in the peaceful town, where lives are relatively predictable may have existed somewhere at some time (though I have my doubts) but it surely doesn’t exist now. Ours is a constantly changing world. Religious societies and congregations of all kinds are being affected by this. Still we have done remarkably well due to the depth, dedication, and diligence of many, many Lay Leaders. As you read through the pages of this Annual Portrait of CCUU, I hope that you will see that dedication writ large. Truth is that this is a primarily volunteer organization – in fact, more than an organization, Countryside is a community – and because of that, it thrives or dives based upon the passion and energy of the people here. So I also hope that, as you read through this report, that you won’t simply see this as a record of tasks accomplished because much more importantly, it is a record of hard work done in the spirit and service of love.

We’ve been fortunate in many ways. To thrive into the future in the world as it is becoming, CCUU has decisions to make. Congregations of all faiths that try to stay aloof from the changing world are dwindling and ailing. Here we have a message that, in its very character, can respond to our times in multiple ways and that can offer a healing vision of the world.

It’s also helpful for you to know a fraction of what I’ve been doing this year, in addition to preaching on Sundays.

Operations and Foundation
This year much of my time, energy, and attention went into Personnel matters. We were very fortunate to have the willingness and talents of both Janice Razaq and Rick Burdsall as pianists and choir accompanists.

We had a remarkable Search Team for the Music Director position. Jason Shelton came here to consult with the Search Team and offer guidance. Initially, I met often with the team. They continued to meet and work hard and take care of so many vital aspects of searches for both an Interim Choir Director and a Permanent Music Director. As we moved to in-person interviews, I spent more time with them. Guillermo Muñoz Küster joined our staff as our Interim and brought talent, warmth, and professionalism to our choir and our congregation. The Search Team continued to work hard and the hardest part was making a final choice, faced with gifted candidates. The Team unanimously agreed on our new Music Director, Alison Vernon. I look forward to planning services with her.

The hire of the RE Assistant was not a trivial matter. Debbie Lee has done such an excellent job of serving at 10 hours a week in that capacity, however, we had always intended for that job to be enough hours to truly and adequately support the Religious Educator so that she or he could devote more time to innovative work for RE. It was imperative that the congregation understand that Debbie’s departing the position had nothing to do with her performance. 20 hours a week was too much with her busy schedule. Rev. Colleen Vahey worked diligently to complete and train our new hire. We are lucky to have Lisa Vanderbleek, who is wonderfully competent and a joy to have working here.

With Reverend Colleen Vahey departing, another search process began, this time for an Interim Religious Educator. We assembled a team with considerable Religious Education experience here at CCUU and have been meeting, writing, doing outreach, and interviewing. As of this writing there is no Interim, but we have other additional plans. It’s been a challenging process, as Interim Searches usually are, since they take place in Spring for the most part. In the Fall, a Search Team will be formed by the Board for the permanent Director of Religious Education.

As we looked at the Strategic planning process, I began to wonder if the 5-10% goal for pledging was setting the bar so high that people would become discouraged. With the Board, the decision was made to lower the stated goal to 3-5%. Pledging is a matter of conscience and it is also a matter of setting a standard. That standard must be fair and realistic. I was pleased at the Board’s decision. I look forward in the fall to working with lay leaders on the strategic plan material to set a course for the future.

Staff and Ministry Council are exploring a Team Approach to coffee, ushering, greeting, and audio-visual volunteering, and perhaps, other areas. Further insight was gained from a webinar attended by Laurie Lantz,
Congregational Administrator, on a new book by John Wimberly on teams for engaging congregations, as well as conversation with Rev. Wimberly. His new book is focused on that method for energizing congregations.

Kinship
My time with Kinship was modest this year. I attended the Path to Community class three times to talk about UU history and polity and the meaning of membership. It was a pleasure to work with Tom MacTavish who stepped in and helped to guide the program all year. I wrote a detailed version of the Path class so that anyone in the congregation could simply pick up the booklet and understand how to present it easily.

The Passover Seder, which lives between Kinship and Worship, was, again, a great event this year. It is intended to be a family event. It's a fun, spiritually grounded, educational, and intergenerational event – and a highpoint of my year each year. Carol Bobbe has been doing an outstanding job of organizing all the moving parts.

Study
It is with great sadness that I say goodbye to Reverend Colleen Vahey. She has been here since I arrived seven years ago. I have seen, with teamwork, what magic she has produced in our Religious Education Program. I have watched the program blossom and flourish. I will miss her, but wish her the very best as she moves forward in her life.

Service
We offer our service to one another as well as to the larger world through our service ministry. This year much of my focus was on service, but it was, to a large extent, through preaching, professional development, and support of the programs of the congregation.

We held an energetic retreat to increase coordination between the groups within that ministry.

We added 5 new Lay Ministers to our Lay Ministry Team and the congregation commissioned them. It's a great group of compassionate and confidential folk.

I was very happy to arrange to have the Rev. Michael Dowd come and preach on climate and The Great Story (check out GreatStory.com). It was a good way to affirm our congregational dedication to being a green sanctuary and to prepare for taking some real action to walk our talk. We were able to look ahead and plan some comprehensive worship to support the Climate Change focus of the Green Sanctuary Team.

Our Social Justice work is growing stronger all the time. This ministry strengthens us and is a key way that we put our faith into action.

The Auction and Music with a Mission raised a tremendous amount of money for our partner organizations.

Worship
Worship was a pleasure and a challenge this year. The challenge came via the searches. The pleasure came with the successes and from the team work with musicians, Search Team, and a choir, both patient and outstanding. I tried some different forms for the start of the service and look forward to working with the new Music Director, Alison Vernon, to find new ways to create vibrant worship.

Working to coordinate music with more staff this year was a challenge but one made easier by the dedication, skill, and professionalism of the Interim Choir Director and the two pianists. Still, I am eager for the Music Director to start and for us to shape worship together.

This year, we began in earnest the new format for Affirmations – the Spiritual Journeys services. It has been very well received and there are more people interested in offering their Affirmations or Spiritual Journeys. These offerings in worship are a particularly important element. They truly affirm our principles of the free and responsible search for truth and meaning as well as the encouragement to spiritual growth. Just as our Coming of Age Services, with the strong and candid voices of our young people bear witness to the ever growing spirit in each person, so do our affirmations.

As of this writing, I met with Rev. Rex Piercy from Congregational United Church of Christ in Arlington Heights. We will be cosponsoring the Annual Interfaith Pride Service and the UCC church is hosting this year, with a potluck picnic following the service.

Last June, I found that being Chaplain and Adult Worship mentor at Midwest Leadership School was richly rewarding. I witnessed a wide variety of services, since we enjoyed two per day led by attendees. I co-led two services with the youth chaplain and offered a sound meditation that was well received. I had, initially, intended to do it again this summer. With staff departures, that plan is changing. Midwest Leadership School is a powerful week-long session for lay people with a passion for leadership and engagement in Unitarian Universalism.
**Professional development**

I consulted with Beth Zemsky from One Ummah Consulting, whose work in the area of diversity, inclusiveness, and intercultural competence, had impressed me at a workshop a year before. I believe that the congregation as a whole would benefit from doing such exploring collectively. I believe it will be encouraging, challenging, and useful as we increasingly move into the larger community.

I’ve continued to mentor Eileen Wiviott, who will be coming to CCUU as our Ministerial Intern beginning in the fall. She will be with us part time for two years. Ministerial interns spend time in congregations not to provide fill-in work where needed, but to learn about all aspects of parish ministry. For many years, CCUU was a teaching congregation and helped many aspiring ministers to discern and develop, as both a credit to the congregation and a gift to our religious movement. I was able to raise funds for this one internship outside the congregation, but no other internships will happen without a congregational contribution. Thus, I have asked the Board to begin to build a budget line so that gradually, we will have the in-house resources to offer internships. Interns bring with them vitality, interesting ideas, and a powerful sense of connection with our larger association. If we build the budget line gradually, we can be ready in 6 years to begin hosting interns every other year.

I attended the Unitarian Universalist Minister’s Association Excellence in Ministry Meeting in February at Asilomar near Monterey, California. It was an inspiring program with Joanna Macy, the eco-activist and leader in eco spirituality. I was able to share some of that experience and look forward to sharing more of her teaching, which truly transforms despair into active hope.

I attended a conference in Birmingham in recognition of the Anniversary of the crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. I encourage anyone with a passion for racial justice or a desire to learn more and to experience history past and in the making to attend. I have been able to apply here so much of what I learned. I recommend the living legacy tours (http://www.uulivinglegacy.org) to anyone.

**In Memoriam**

I would like to stop a moment, while reading this document, and take time to remember the members among us who died in the last year.

- Anita Smith
- Jill Hodges
- Jim Wilson
- Joyce Marks
- Jim Booth

These are treasured people whose spirits live on here with us.

*Yours in Good Faith,*

*Hilary*
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It is bittersweet to be writing my final annual report. After nine years, I remain ever grateful for the congregation’s commitment and generous support of lifelong learning and spiritual growth.

We give thanks for the exceptional service of Lisa Bohné and Bernice McCarthy, Study Ministry Coordinators; Kim Tilford, Youth Group Coordinator; and all members of the RE Council (see reports below). We extend our deep appreciation for your generous time, spirit, and leadership.

Cooperative Program
We are grateful to the many facilitators who lead excellent offerings in our Adult Faith Development program, and the 100 Religious Education volunteers, who guide our young people. One sign of our vibrant RE program is that 20% of our RE volunteers are members, who do not have children in the program, but give generously of their time to be part of this vital ministry.

RE Assistant
We deeply appreciate the exceptional work of Debbie Lee, Interim RE Assistant, who began in 2010 as the paid ¼ time Interim RE Assistant; when the position was advertised in 2011 and could not be filled, Debbie generously continued in this role the next four years. We are very grateful for Debbie’s outstanding work maintaining records, managing supplies, assisting with communications, and providing invaluable support to teachers and classes. In April, the congregation hired a new 20-hour/week RE Assistant, Lisa Vanderbleek. Welcome, Lisa!

Childcare Providers
We are also very fortunate to have a conscientious and caring childcare team - Aida Acurio, Cindy Ghrist, and Joana Gonzalez (who helps with Summer RE and subbing). We appreciate the many ways they serve our Nursery and Chalice Children classes, and provide childcare for meetings and events. We are very fortunate to have such skilled and dedicated support for our youngest members.

Coming-of-Age
We are fortunate to have 20 mentors and youth who completed the COA program this spring. We are grateful for the dedicated COA advisor team: Laurie Lantz, Chris Smith, and Rob DeHaan, and all the mentors, parents and youth, who make COA such a meaningful experience. The COA Boston heritage trip will be June 6-8, 2015.

Youth Group
We are also very grateful for the expanded leadership of this year’s youth ministry team: Kim Tilford and Bill Huber, Lead Advisors; Steve Black, Jeanie Michalec, and Donna LaJeunesse. We are also very grateful for the very thoughtful and engaging monthly world religions workshops facilitated by John Camardella. Thank you! (see report below)

Worship
I enjoyed planning and leading inter-generational services, some message-for-all-ages elements of our Sunday services, and assisting with some rites-of-passage. I also enjoyed working with Courtney Dirksen, Director, and our many volunteers and young people, who participated in this year’s Christmas pageant.

Leave-of-Absence
I deeply appreciate everyone’s support during my 8-week leave of absence in October and November, in lieu of sabbatical time. After nine years of service, it was wonderful to have this time away for rest, renewal and discernment. Lessons and events were planned and organized prior to my leave. During the leave, Sunday morning responsibilities were covered by members of the Committee on Religious Education Ministry (COREM), RE Council, and RE Assistant Debbie Lee. Thank you!

Professional Development
I am grateful to the members of the Committee on Religious Education Ministry (COREM) – Judy Ball, Linda Berry, Andy Khan, CarolAnn Shindelar, and Clif Dahlgren - for their tremendous support, feedback, and guidance, and for providing an evaluation of my ministry, as part of the renewal process for preliminary fellowship as a UU minister.
I continue to enjoy attending monthly meetings of the UU Chicago Area Liberal Ministers group (CALM); monthly meetings with my mentor, Rev. Roger Bertschausen; and helping mentor new religious educators. I was grateful to attend General Assembly last June, and the regional UU minister’s retreat this spring.

Thank You
I will be ever grateful for your generous time and spirit, your trust and collaboration, and the privilege of helping foster this learning community. You have touched and graced my life beyond all measure. I especially thank Rev. Hilary and the Board of Trustees, for their generous support of the lifespan RE program and of my ministerial fellowship process. I trust that this congregation will continue to grow and thrive as a learning community, and serve the world in meaningful ways. I feel so very fortunate to have been part of your lives these past nine years. Thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve with you.

With much gratitude and love ~
Rev. Colleen

COMMUNITY MINISTER

Community Ministers in the Unitarian Universalist Association are required to be a member of a UU society and to possess a certification in some form of specialized ministry. I remain grateful to Countryside Church for being the Affiliated Congregation for my work. I believe it is healthy for Community Ministers to say in relationship with a specific UU congregation.

I am a Board Certified Chaplain with the Association of Professional Chaplains. I specialize in working with persons who have life-changing medical problems and help them using an advanced form of medical hypnosis. I am a Diplomate of the National Guild of Hypnotists. This is the highest level of professional rank that can be earned. I am also currently enrolled in the training program to become a Certified HeartMath Coach, which will allow me the right to use the research results from the HeartMath Institute in California in my hypnotic work.

In the small world of hypnotic practitioners I am well known, and if anyone is interested you will find the details on my web site at www.CSGiles.org

I filled our pulpit three times this year. I am not paid by our congregation. All of my compensation is generated from my practice. I maintain professional liability insurance to the maximum amount possible, am a limited-liability company, and comply fully with HIPPA, the Federal privacy law.

The majority of the work I do is with cancer patients. The revenue for my practice comes from patients in my ICAN hospital program at LaGrange Memorial, and from private clients who consult me at my office in Wheaton. I maintain three free clinics for cancer patients at Wellness House in Hinsdale, Little Company of Mary Hospital in Evergreen Park and, new this year, a free online program using video conference software that is open to anyone, anywhere in the world. Between these three clinics I help up to 75 cancer patients each month without charge.

This year, I have taught at the annual convention of the National Guild of Hypnotists and the Mid-America Hypnosis Conference. I write a quarterly column for the Journal of Hypnotism and sit on the Board of the National Guild of Hypnotists as well. I will be teaching an instructional workshop on running a professional medical hypnosis practice at the annual of the National Guild of Hypnotists to practitioners in August.

I am the current President of the UU Society for Community Ministries, and have responsibility for helping our denomination coordinate the work of all Community Clergy. I am entering the final year of my final term this year. It has been a good experience but I am ready to pass the gavel to my hand-picked successor who has my full confidence. Denominational work is stressful under the best of circumstances and this year has seen significant conflict between the UU Society for Community Ministries and Starr King School for the Ministry when the latter withheld the degrees from two student members of my organization over a political issue. We were successful in helping our members receive their degrees and are now in the process of requesting the Board of the Unitarian Universalist Association to investigate the school for other reasons.
I want to thank you all for your kindness and support, and I am happy to be part of Countryside Church. I am also especially grateful to my parish colleague, Rev. Krivchenia, who has been most generous and welcoming to me as the Affiliated Community Minister in her congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. C. Scot Giles, D.Min.

INTERIM CHOIR CONDUCTOR

This year, the choir at CCUU has provided music at both the 9am and 11am services. The choir helps lead the congregation in worship, particularly in the singing of hymns and also by singing an anthem. The purpose of the choir is to reinforce the worship message while lifting spirits and adding another dimension to the way in which congregants experience worship.

The choir at CCUU is, like the rest of the church, a welcoming body that encourages diversity of all kinds and supports UU values through the music it provides in services. The choir generally seeks to perform a wide range of music from various traditions and cultures with words that further affirm these principles.

The choir supports the work of the worship ministry by providing music that seeks to elevate words, enhance the weekly worship message, and reaffirm UU values. The choir is a place where congregants can make an important contribution of lending their time and voices to enrich the worship experience for all involved.

Membership to the choir is open to anyone willing to make the weekly rehearsal commitment. Those interested in joining the choir should contact the interim choir director (music2@ccuu.org) or music director whenever he/she begins the position.

Other members of the music team: Rick Burdsall & Janice Razaq, pianists; Ron Polomchak, Music Committee chair; other members of the music committee (Meredith Boulet, Mary Ellen Heelan, Steve Combs, Denise Sepos, Judy Miller)

Respectfully submitted,
Guillermo Muñoz Küster, Interim Choir Conductor

CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Last year’s Annual Report referenced the sunshine and the bird activity outside my office window; that is not the case at this writing, though the flowering trees are spectacular.

This year and next bring continued staff transition. I have enjoyed working with Guillermo this year and am glad the music search committee was able to find such a capable, genial interim choir conductor. While I look forward to learning of the next music director, I will miss Guillermo. It will be sad to say good-bye to Rev. Colleen, who has been wonderful to work with the past nine years. She is a warm, positive presence and always adds thoughtful, ministerial guidance to discussions; she has much to offer the next congregation and staff team she might work with.

Communications

In addition to compiling the Annual Report, which you are currently reading, I compile & edit the monthly newsletter, the weekly e-updates, the order of worship & inserts. I do some updating of the website, in particular the worship descriptions, posting the Board agendas & minutes when they are approved, and posting the newsletter. I did not publish a printed membership directory this year, but I keep one updated on the website and provide to church members an electronic copy and instructions for accessing the online version.
**Finance/Bookkeeping**
I appreciate working closely with the Board Treasurer (Beth Ligouri through December; Mary Johnson since then) and with the Controller (Gary LaBedz). I continue to use Quickbooks to record income and expenses and to prepare the month-end reports, which Mary and Gary review prior to presentation to the finance committee and the Board. I also use Quickbooks to process payroll, which enables us to offer direct deposit of paychecks, as well as to make payroll tax payments and to file quarterly payroll tax returns electronically. This is not without cost, though the cost is less than through other services I’d researched.

**Operations**
The operations team this year has been Rev. Hilary, Board President Mike Gilley, volunteer facilities chair Steve Black, and me. We missed Bob Spielman’s participation and hope his health will improve soon. The purpose of the operations team is to provide support to the Administrator and to be sure the Board is aware of the areas of concern for the staff and the facility. I worked with Steve Black to organize a facilities work day in November and to identify possible members of a facilities team. (See Operations report later in the annual report packet.)

I worked with the Safety Task Force this year to identify issues of safety which might need to be addressed, policies that need to be written, and/or items that need to be budgeted for & purchased. We were continuing work done initially two or three years ago; it is still far from complete and will continue, with the help of resources available from the church’s insurance company. The safety task force also researched, discussed, and made a proposal to the Board about the concealed carry signs posted at the church entrances. The safety task force was made up of John Conneely (Board rep), the Rev. Scot Giles, Michael Koo, and Ed Waxler; many thanks to them all for their time and careful consideration of the safety of the congregation. Tim Reuter-Bowers is reviewing the Safe Congregation Policy, and the safety task force will work with him and the RE Council in the future, as needed.

**Ministry Council**
In addition to attendance at monthly finance committee meetings, I also attend Ministry Council each month to serve as a bridge between programs and operations/administration. I have worked with Ministry Council on documenting processes and in discussion of facilitating member participation and involvement in church activities. I provide budget reports and assistance with publications to the ministry coordinators.

**New Database Implementation**
After 12+ years using a homegrown MS Access membership and pledge database (thank you, Rick Klein), last August I purchased and began implementing new church management software – ChurchDB; of those available, it is one of the less expensive while still having lots of capability. So far, I have been using only the membership and stewardship modules and have continued to use our existing database, too (doing time-consuming double entry) so I can ensure that information has carried over accurately. It is taking some time and patience to figure out how to generate reports (such as pledge statements) that provide the same information as those we’ve been used to.

There are additional modules & features of ChurchDB that I hope to get up and running in the next year, including recording rites of passage, such as dates of Child Dedication, Coming of Age, weddings, and memorial; recording pledges of “time” and “talent” as well as “treasure” so the ministries know who is interested in what level of participation; and an online directory (with the ability to include photos). The Groups module will allow us to be more aware of participation in the various groups/teams/committees; the Education module will allow us to manage children and adult religious education classes and attendance (done thus far using Excel spreadsheets), allowing us to have everything in one place and to easily “rollover” classes at the beginning of a new church year. This summer, I will train RE Assistant Lisa Vanderbleek on the database, and she and I will get the fall classes set up. Eventually (maybe not this summer/fall), we will be able to use ChurchDB for online registration for classes – for youth and for adults.

**Professional Development**
I maintain membership in the Association of UU Administrators (AUUA). I attended AUUA Professional Days in Providence RI last summer & will attend in Portland OR this June; it is a valuable conference for learning pertinent administrative updates from the UUA and for sharing resources and information with colleagues, as well as being professionally reinvigorating. I will not attend UU General Assembly this year. I attended a meeting of the local chapter of The Church Network (formerly called National Association of Church Business Administrators). I have participated in webinars presented by The Church Network on capital reserve planning, adaptive leadership, and mobilizing congregational teams; after each, I shared the presentation videos & power points with the Board & Ministry Council (and in the case of capital reserve planning, with finance and operations). I try to meet quarterly
with other UU administrators in the area. This year prior to Regional Assembly, MidAmerica UUA hosted an
administrators’ gathering that was relatively well-attended. Everyone in attendance appreciated the chance to
meet with colleagues and to share ideas & information, and we hope to hold another such gathering in the fall,
perhaps in conjunction with the ministers’ or religious educators’ fall retreat.

Looking to Next Year
In the coming year, I anticipate more work with operations & facilities teams and the safety task force; continued
development of the new database; and possible work on updating the newsletter and website to mobile-friendly
formats, as more and more people use their phones for electronic communication and accessing the internet.
There is always ongoing work on the Office Procedures Manual (among administrators, jokingly called the “hit by
a bus” manual) and on culling and reorganizing of Office & Historical Files. Last year, I learned of different ways to
present the Annual Report, which I did not have time to look into further; it would be nice to make it more visually
appealing and perhaps to move it to an online, blog-type document – perhaps that will progress with any
newsletter or website updates that happen. It is my hope to obtain at least one more computer or to rehab a
recently donated desktop computer for use by office volunteers and/or by our new staff.

Volunteers
My greatest appreciation goes to Debbie Lee, who volunteers in the office about ten hours each week (above and
beyond the hours for which she was paid as R.E. assistant), helping with the Sunday Times, visitor letters,
materials needed for Path to Community classes, archiving & copying the recordings of the worship services, and
just about anything I ask of her. She is a very capable, willing, and helpful volunteer.

There are other regular office volunteers for whom I am very grateful. Dan Yokas & Tim Walsh help out every
Friday morning. Lois Phillips’s cheerful nature and organizational and aesthetic talents are always of great help to
me, especially this year and next as we look at office space for our new staff members and potential ministerial
intern. The Focus folding team (Ken Bobbe, Jim Booth, Art Mayfield, Pat Rochelle, Kathi Wise) is always a
pleasure to see each month. Jim Booth’s presence will be greatly missed. I will also miss Kathi Wise, who is
leaving CCUU. Thank you to Tom Curtis, who has offered to be a presence in the office between services on
Sunday, when staff is not available.

Sign-up Genius: We continue to use this online tool for congregants to be able to sign-up for the essential Sunday
volunteer positions of greeter, usher, A/V assistant, and coffee host. Using www.signupgenius.com requires less
managerial time on the part of office staff and volunteers. We still have mixed success in filling these important
roles each Sunday, and Ministry Council is hoping to implement a team approach going forward (more may be
discussed at the Annual Meeting). I helped Angelina Huntsha use sign-up genius for the PADS Meal sign-up; I
think that helped her and it seemed to go quite smoothly.

Gratitude: The Ministry Council and Staff continue to discuss how best to thank the many volunteers that make
Countryside work. One method last fall was the “Grateful Box” in Atherton Hall, with contributions shared in the
Focus. After the extensive decorating for events, the Grateful Box didn’t make its way back out; you will see it
again soon & I encourage you to use it. In April, I assisted Ministry Council in sending handwritten thank you
notes to Sunday morning volunteers (greeters, ushers, audio-visual assistants, coffee hosts) who contribute so
much to hospitality & a smoothly-run worship. We hope to form teams in each of these areas for the upcoming
church year, to make it easier to provide training/orientation and scheduling. Watch for more information about
these Sunday teams to be distributed at the Annual Meeting.

Areas Where You Might Help
• We need volunteers willing to be on a facilities on-call list, to be called as needs arise – see the operations team
  report for further details.
• We can use additional volunteers who are willing to be trained to help with keeping the website content up-to-
  date.
• If there are members of the congregation with an interest in graphic design and experience with blogs who
  would be interested in helping to refresh the Annual Report format, please contact me.
• Those who like photography, I encourage you to take photos of church meetings, events, gatherings, worship
  and to share them with me, so we have selections to use for purposes on the Annual Report and other
  publications.

In appreciation and faith, Laurie Lantz
THE MINISTRIES

The activities and programs of Countryside Church UU (CCUU) are organized into Ministries. Each Ministry encompasses events, teams, committees, groups, councils, and is led and sustained by staff and lay leadership. The Ministries help people find pathways to become involved in activities of interest and to create connections among our people and programs. Ministries support the work of CCUU and ensure that our work is aligned with the mission, covenant, and seven principles of Unitarian Universalism.

Our Ministries are named to represent our congregational covenant, “we unite to strengthen the bonds of Kinship” and to promote our vision through Worship, Study, and Service; and they exist to make that covenant live.

The Ministry Council coordinates the many programs and efforts of these Ministries. It meets monthly and is made up of the Board Vice President and Senior Minister, who act as co-chairs; the Staff Leads and Ministry Coordinators of each of the ministries; and the Congregational Administrator.

This year was another successful year for the Ministry Council. Thanks to our strong council members, we had an insightful and productive kickoff with the board. We discussed how activities of the church are organized and coordinated. We worked in parallel with the board this year to understand how to enhance members experience by making it easy to participate in activities and groups within the church. We hope that some of the process we documented this year and some coordination we want to pilot in the fall will improve the ease of engagement.

Ongoing key activities of the council were efficiently and effectively executed this year by our strong team including the annual Ministry Fair, the budget planning and prioritization process. We also completed a draft of the Ministry Council Playbook that will help the Ministry Council effort to coordinate the committee activities and allow the council more time to support the committees and the mission and goals of the church.

...submitted by Sheryl Skifstad, Ministry Council Chair & Board Vice President

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Reverend Hilary Krivchenia, Minister
Guillermo Muñoz Küster, Interim Choir Conductor
Coordinator: Jeff Phillips (2014-15)

The mission of the Worship Ministry is to increase reverence for life’s creating, sustaining and transforming power through worship and to deepen the sense of worshipfulness throughout all aspects of congregational life.

The Vision of Worship Ministry is to

- Create a center of worship excellence, spiritual growth, and exploration in the northwest suburbs. In keeping with our UU Principles, we foster Unitarian Universalist spiritual groundedness as well as interfaith affirmation.
- Provide a worshipful environment that opens up opportunities to deepen the spiritual lives of all individuals and that strengthens the religious community at CCUU. The worship experience is enhanced by providing sermons, music, performance arts, and visual images throughout our worship services and in other settings within the church, such as meetings and events. The Sunday service is the weekly touchstone of our spiritual life.

Over the past year, we have:

- Supported the searches for both the Interim Choir Director and for the Permanent Music Director. Their Report will be elsewhere – but it must be said that the work of that group was lovingly covenantal, warm, caring for every person in the congregation, facing challenges with a spirit of partnership and willingness, investing approximately 2.5 to 3.5 hours a week (and often much more) each, working with professional tools but tailoring them to a congregational setting, and supporting one another while making hard choices.
- We were particularly fortunate that two gifted pianists – Janice Razaq and Rick Burdsall – were willing to step in for the year and provide both beautiful music to enrich our services on Sundays as well as providing excellent accompaniment for the choir in rehearsal.
- The Interim Choir Director, Guillermo Muñoz Kuster, brought new energy to the choir and a great sensitivity to music. It was a year of great flowering for the choir. Changes in rehearsal have allowed
the choir an opportunity to reconnect with their congregational community, while maintaining a consistently high level of harmony and beauty.

- Last year a goal was to bring back our affirmations -- times in the worship service that members of the congregation shared their spiritual journeys from the pulpit. We did that this year, through the primary efforts of Christine Organ. They were both revived and expanded to go more deeply into the spiritual journeys of our members. This also resulted in an article that will be going into print in the UU World about Christine and her work on this program.
- We have experimented with the start of worship – to bring people in more mindfully and more fully, using music.
- We have continued with the Solstice service in Winter and continue to offer and summer solstice as well.
- The choir moved to singing at both services twice a month. It will be interesting to see what develops with the new Music Director as that person discusses and plans with the Choir.
- Sound Meditation continued this year – but almost entirely through the efforts of Elizabeth Vesto. The Sound meditations combine the vibrations of gongs and crystal singing bowls to help participants reach a deeper level of spiritual awareness. Elizabeth Vesto has been a key proponent and vital contributor, in periodic partnership with the Minister in this endeavor.
- We have incorporated more responsive readings in services, more engagement on the part of the congregation, more silence, and more reflective meditations.
- We have continued our involvement in the Interfaith Pride Service. Reaching out, through the Minister, to other congregations, to build a wider network.

We have also recognized the following Priorities for the coming year:

1. The highest priority in the coming year, will be to support the new Music Director: orientation and professional development are the two areas of greatest import.
2. Through discussions with the candidates we know that we continue with the goal of offering more variety in worship in both the nature of the services through content, media, style, and times offered. This is most likely to mean needing volunteer musicians as well, to be coordinated in partnership with the Music Director.
3. While it was not practical this year, we plan, next fall, to encourage people to stay after the second service once per month for quiet and meditation.
4. We will be working toward intergenerational worship activities for families and intergenerational groups.

Our other longer-term efforts include:

- Continued support of our Audio and Video dimension. There will be an expansion of the AV team and training offered to help people feel confident when operating the AV systems at CCUU.
- To continue to strengthen our summer worship so that, throughout the year, worship is of high quality.
- To support the Leadership/Coming Alive Project through a series of worship services.
- To meet in Retreat (or Advance!) each year in addition to our regular meetings to help foster a greater sense of our collective imagination and to brainstorm ideas for the year.
- To continue to strengthen the presence and involvement of children and young people in our worship services.
- To continue to enhance the participatory aspects of worship that many find deeply meaningful; i.e. Water Communion, Flower Communion, Lighting Candles, etc.
- To continue to professionalize our worship through the development of strong policy, particularly as it pertains to copyright law.

Jeff Phillips has been a capable Worship Ministry Coordinator this year, though we are looking for his replacement as of this writing.

We are an energetic and creative ministry in CCUU. Through the efforts of dedicated staff and tireless volunteers, we have overseen the carefully thought-out Sunday services which help to nourish us as a religious community, and we look forward to expanding the worship experience to other days/evenings of the week in different formats to serve different spiritual needs. Our choir devotes tremendous time virtually every week to create a profound dimension of worship for the congregation. We have a strong Worship Ministry and much more is possible for the future.
MUSIC PROGRAM
Submitted by members of the Music Committee

Search Committee: The music program here at Countryside Church has continued to remain active even in the absence of a Director of Music. In search for a new Director of Music, a committee was formed and began weekly (and sometimes more often than weekly) meetings. Members of the committee included CCUU members Cathy Maraist (chair), DuRee Bryant, Sheryl Skifstad, Chris Smith, Mary Ellen Heelen, Ron Polomchak, and Reverend Hilary. The committee received counsel from Rev. Jason Shelton (Associate Minister of Music, First UU of Nashville, TN) on the search process. The committee would begin by finding an interim Choir Conductor to keep our Countryside Choir a strong and vibrant part of our Sunday Services. Guillermo Muñoz Küster was hired to lead our choir as an interim through the church year. The search committee continued their work over the many months designing a job description for the Director of Music position, soliciting applications, interviewing applicants, and holding an audition rehearsal with the choir for the finalists.

Choir: Countryside Choir welcomed a number of new and returning singers this past year. The year began with a retreat as we welcomed Rev. Jason Shelton from Nashville to workshop the choir. Rev. Shelton also advocated the choir on covenant building as well as some important aspects of moving forward. In October the choir welcomed our interim choir conductor, Guillermo Muñoz Küster. Guillermo brought a much needed feeling of stability to our choir. Countryside Choir has been singing at BOTH the 9:00 am and 11:00 am services, but only twice a month. Countryside Choir is open to all who love to sing. Interested in joining? Contact our Director of Music (or Interim Choir Conductor) for more information.

Music Committee: The purpose of the Music Committee at CCUU is to support the music director in providing music for worship services and other CCUU-sponsored activities—music that reflects and promotes our UU principles and values; that encourages diversity of culture, religion, age, gender, and sexual orientation; and that plays an important role in inter-generational cooperation and community outreach. The Music Committee helps the music director plan and implement Countryside’s music program. During monthly meetings we share ideas, plan new programs, monitor progress toward goals, and help with the budgeting process. We believe that music is a tie that binds us to each other, to the worship experience and to our UU heritage and values. This mission guides our development of current and new music programming. In absence of a Director of Music, the committee took on a limited role this past year; however, still remained very active in the church. Members of the Music Committee included Ron Polomchak (chair), Meredith Boulet, Stephen Combs, Mary Ellen Heelan, Judy Miller, and Denise Sepos. The committee spent the summer designing music webpages for the CCUU website (have you checked them out yet? Take a look!) The committee also organized its annual Christmas Caroling Party, worked with RE to teach music for the annual December Pageant, promoted the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network (UUMN) with an information table and share-the-plate, and worked with Outreach Steering Council on the annual “Music with a Mission” fundraiser. The committee also found additional music for Sunday Services by inviting the Countryside String quartet to play in September, Mary Ellen Heelan in January, Karen Noorani in March, and several songleaders for congregational singing support. When a permanent Director of Music is hired, the committee can continue working on other events such as hymn sings, singing meditations, and cultural outings.
This year has been a time of maintaining many of the learning experiences at the core of our Lifespan Religious Education program, while also assessing our volunteer commitments, and strengthening opportunities for spiritual growth. Many thanks to our Study Ministry Co-Coordinators, Lisa Bohné and Bernice McCarthy, for their generous service.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL
The RE Council works closely with the Assistant Minister for Lifespan RE to support our Religious Education (RE) program for children and youth. This year’s RE Council had eight members: Susan Conneely, Chair; Jeff Oremland, Jennifer Alton, Cara Duffy, Jeanie Michalec, Courtney Dirksen, Lisa Bezella, and Tim Reuter-Bowers. Our RE Classroom Coordinators were Cara Duffy, Brenda Pathmann, Jennifer Alton and Matt Reuter-Bowers, Susan and John Conneely, Shila Khan, Lisa Hagenbuch, Fran Mueller, and Kim Tilford. We extend our deep appreciation to all these leaders, who give generously of their time, energy and spirit.

RE Volunteers
RE is a cooperative effort and would not exist without many hours of generous support. Many thanks to everyone who served as RE Floater, and the many volunteers, who made this year’s RE experiences possible. The RE Council hosted a teacher orientation in August, and a festive coffee hour in April to thank everyone for their support.

RE Classes
This calendar year, we had 178 young people enrolled in our RE program. Throughout the school year, we offered 12 classes for infants – Grade 12. This was our fourth year of expanded RE offerings, with opportunities for infants–Grade 5 at both 9:00 and 11:00; and youth classes for Grades 6-12 at 11:00.

Curriculum
The Chalice Children (ages 2-3) and Spirit Play (ages 4-Grade 1) classes continue strong with the great story-based curriculum we’ve created. Grades 2-3 enjoyed good experiences with Moral Tales, exploring universal themes such as the value of loyalty, friendship, family, and the practice of compassion. Grades 4-5 enjoyed, Toolbox of Faith, exploring the key values of our UU faith, how our beliefs shape our actions, and identifying experiences to develop a spiritual “toolkit” for life. The Grades 6-7 class enjoyed relevant lessons from the popular Popcorn Theology program. The Coming-of-Age program continued from last spring with 22 youth and mentors. Many thanks to our COA advisor team, Laurie Lantz, Chris Smith, Rob DeHaan, Rev. Colleen, and all the mentors, for their exceptional leadership.

RE Library
Thanks to a great team of volunteers, the RE Library has increased circulation this year, offering check-out between services on Sundays; and highlighting monthly featured books around different themes. Many thanks to Amy Huber, Crystina Smith, Jessica Gardner, Chelsie Scoggin-Chang, and youth volunteer, Kadyn Geier, for all their work!

Holiday Celebrations
The RE Council supported several holiday activities including the RE Easter celebrations; Hanukkah workshop; and the Christmas pageant.

Faith in Action
Our popular Faith-in-Action program promotes service learning and advocacy to help our young people own their power to make a positive difference in the world. This year young people in Grades 2-7 learned about: racial and economic justice, and the UU College of Social Justice from three youth - Sarah Pratt, Jack Spector-Bishop, and Adriana Wydell, who participated in last summer’s justice training in New Orleans; Kadyn Geier, who attended the UU Midwest Youth Leadership School; fair trade and sustainable farming, and the efforts of the UU Service Committee, including the Guest-at-your-Table program; and the great work of Play for Peace.
Throughout January, classes created made many beautiful items for the FIA Art Faire. The Art Faire raised $1900 that was shared with two groups selected by our students: Play for Peace, and 3 scholarships for youth to attend UU College of Social Justice trainings. Many thanks to Liana Allison and Kathi Hillyer, Art Faire Coordinators, and all members of the Faith-in-Action team for their most generous time and support!

**Summer RE**

Last year’s summer RE program for Grades 1-6, *Celebrating the Web of Life*, provided fun opportunities for young people to learn about nature, reduce their carbon footprint, and help make a positive difference in our world. With the leadership of Ray Holpuch, and CCUU Garden Coordinator, Donna Calwas, our 8th year of the summer children’s garden went very well! We grew many vegetables, which were donated to the food pantry.

**Summer Youth Opportunities**

We are very pleased to have several youth participating in this summer’s UU youth opportunities. At least three of our high school youth are participating in the new Southwest Border justice training with the UU College of Social Justice. We also have several middle and high school youth attending other UU camps and programs – including Marwood and Midwest UU Summer Assembly.
SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP
Lead Advisors: Kim Tilford, Bill Huber
Youth Ministry Team: Steve Black, John Camardella, Jeanie Michalec, Donna LaJeunesse

We had three youth attend UU College of Social Justice trainings in summer 2014 and one youth attend the Midwest Youth Leadership School. This summer, three youth will participate in the new UU College of Social Justice Southwest Border training.

This year, our 9th graders participated in the Coming of Age program. We look forward to welcoming them to youth group this summer!

We greatly expanded our youth advisor team this year with the addition of Donna LaJeunesse, Jeanie Michalec, and Steve Black. All helped while both Bill and Kim were out on separate medical leaves, and all have agreed to stay on for the next RE year with various time availabilities. We also thank John Camardella for contributing excellent monthly workshops on world religions this year, which were very well received and most appreciated.

Bill Huber has decided to step down, after eight years with Senior High and twenty years as an RE volunteer, and will not be returning next year; the group recognized all of his efforts and support at the bridging ceremony. We bridged six seniors this year and look forward to the youth from COA joining us next fall.

The group attended both Fall and Spring regional youth conferences and a winter mini-con. Two youth from our group served on the Northern Area Youth Council (NAYC), Travis Black and Jack Spector-Bishop. At spring con, Kadyn Frawley was elected to serve on the council and Kim Tilford is an advisor on NAYC.

In February, we led our annual worship service, entitle **Who Are We? CoExisting 101.**

The group made a $500 donation to Youth Outlook that will be used to open a youth transgender drop-in center hosted through Lay Ministry at CCUU. Discussions are being had about using the bank balance for a social justice trip.

*Respectfully submitted by Kim Tilford*
ADULT FAITH DEVELOPMENT

This year has been a time of supporting the ongoing learning experiences of Adult Faith Development, while assessing and adding new learning opportunities based on the UU covenant of service and social justice, and the relationships between ourselves and each other.

AFD is the home of seminars, workshops and groups for the purpose of seeking meaning, by engaging and enriching the mind, body and spirit of both Countryside members and community guests. It’s all about learning: Classes, Seminars, Discussions, Practice in Body Health, Meditation and Retreats.

The 2014-2015 List of AFD Offerings:
We continue to support 9 ongoing groups and classes: Movies with Meaning, The Book Circle and Last Mondays Book Club, Open Forum Discussion, Atheist-Humanist-Agnostic Discussion, Vine and Branches—the Christian UU Study Group, the Buddhist UU Study Group, Journey Inward, and QiGong. New offerings this year included: The Power of Collective Wisdom, a monthly Poetry Seminar, and The Information Cascade—What Wrong Food Does to the Body. As part of our core curriculum, we offered the Wellspring program and the annual Journeys Retreat.

The total number of attendees for Fall 2014 to Spring 2015 was 469, peaking in mid-September, October, and early November. Average attendance for this year: Movies with Meaning 18, Book Circle 13, Buddhist Study Group 13, AHA 11, Open Forum 11, Journey Inward 10, Last Mondays Book Group 9.

This year’s Journeys retreat was facilitated by Greg Eaton, consultant and facilitator with training from the Parker Palmer Foundation and included a pre-evening session presented by Reverend Hilary. The theme was enhanced self-awareness—a deeper look at where I’m from, who I am now, what I need from this community, and the gifts that I bring. Greg’s program included individual, small and large group activities that were thought provoking and enlivening. Typical evaluations included:

“I found the retreat created a warm welcoming community letting us get to know one another on a deeper level.” “Helped center me and get connected.”

Next year’s retreat is scheduled for May 6-7.

Looking Ahead
We will proceed with an examination of the coordination across all AFD offerings of the seven principles and six sources of UU. We are considering ways to reach this goal while we await working with the new religious educator. To what extent do the various courses and sessions reflect and support our principles, and promote and affirm UU values?

Clearly this is what we hope to accomplish this year as a committee along with our committed course presenters and facilitators:

- To continue to involve church members in an active pursuit of continuous learning and
- To provide high quality offerings that affirm the spirituality of true community and embrace the milestones of life that connect us.

Submitted by Lisa Bohne and Bernice McCarthy, Study Ministry Coordinators
SERVICE MINISTRY

duRee Bryant and Courtney Renwick, Service Ministry Co-coordinators
Rev. Hilary Krivchenia is the staff liaison to the Service Ministry

Our congregation’s covenant, its stated vision and mission all speak to this congregation’s commitment to acting on our UU beliefs and values. In acting together, as part of Countryside’s congregation, we are able to create a strong voice for our UU beliefs and values, within the UU community and in the broader community beyond our walls.

Countryside has a long history of its members acting on their UU beliefs and values. There has been a Social Action committee or group going back almost to the beginning of this congregation that has served as a vehicle for action as a congregation. Over time, that commitment to action has broadened considerably to include all the groups below. Each committee has come into being due to the concerns and passions of our congregation.

This ministry continues to grow and evolve in response to needs of this congregation and to the needs of the wider world. And, in recent years, that response has engaged our full congregation – in projects, partnerships, and commitments. The committees encompassed by the Service Ministry give each member of Countryside the opportunity to support our members and also to “…advance respect, compassion, and justice in the wider world.”

It is the vision of the Service Ministry that each member of this congregation will find an opportunity that speaks to them for meaningful service. There are many kinds of opportunities to be of service, for individuals, for families, for those with little time to volunteer, and for those who have a passion they are willing to take leadership for.

Look for opportunities on the Service Ministry bulletin boards outside of the office, as well as in our area in Atherton Hall or contact us at Service@ccuu.org.

COUNTRYSIDE ANIMAL FRIENDS (CAF)

Countryside Animal Friends (CAF) is a local chapter of the UU Animal Ministry (www.uum.org) and was co-chaired this year by Belinda Robinson and Sheryl Bass. As of May 2015, Belinda will step down as co-chair and Sheryl Bass will continue to chair the group. She is currently seeking a new co-chair.

CAF supports the UU Animal Ministry’s (UUAM) mission to uphold and honor the seventh principle of UU - the interdependent web of life, of which we are all a part. We at Animal Friends strive to promote the idea that all beings on Earth are connected - social and environmental justice for humans is related to social and environmental justice for all other species. In this sense, CAF can complement and aid the work of other groups at CCUU such as Green Sanctuary and Social Action Committee.

In 2014, the UUAM introduced a campaign to officially change the wording of the First Principle of the UU covenant to use the word “beings” instead of “persons” as having inherent worth. Animal Friends introduced the tenets of this campaign to the congregation as the theme to our Blessing of the Animals Service in summer 2014 - “The Inherent Worth and Dignity of Every Being.”

While Animal Friends did not push CCUU to adopt the word change for our own congregation (although we agree with the proposed change) we wholeheartedly endorse the UUAM in their efforts at the June 2015 General Assembly, where they hope to receive a vote by the UUA for this word change to our first principle.

Furthermore, in accordance with both the first and seventh principles, both UUAM and Animal Friends promote and provide education about adopting a plant-based diet. We feel that a plant-based diet is an effective tool for combating water and soil pollution, as well as animal (both domestic and wild) welfare.

We hosted a vegan bake sale, in conjunction with Suburban Vegetarian Meetup, in September 2014, to raise funds for Wedrose Acres, a farm and exotic animal sanctuary in Gridley IL. We also hoped to bring awareness of farm animal issues and introduce plant-based baked goods to the congregation.

We continued our second full year of vegan (plant-based) potlucks this year. The potlucks occurred monthly in Atherton Hall, from October 2014 through April 2015. We also co-hosted summer picnics at Twin Lakes in Palatine IL. An average of 20 people attend the potlucks. We hope to continue the potlucks in Atherton next year and in the years to come.
These potlucks and the bake sales are co-hosted by Suburban Vegetarian Meetup, based in Mundelein IL, and we are grateful and blessed to have this relationship with them. Some of their members now regularly attend CCUU services as a result of this relationship.

We continue to maintain a Countryside Animal Friends Facebook page for the community at large - [www.facebook.com/CountrysideAnimalFriends](http://www.facebook.com/CountrysideAnimalFriends). We use this page to share news stories, petitions, and ideas pertaining to animal welfare and rights.

One new thing we did this year was to host a Movies with Meaning screening. In July 2014, we screened the award-winning documentary, BLACKFISH, about marine mammals in captivity. This is something we hope to continue next year.

CAF’s plans for the coming year include:
- Officiating the Blessing of the Animals Service (Sheryl Bass will lead the service).
- Continuing to host a monthly vegan potluck during the school year in Atherton Hall.
- Maintain the Facebook page.

Tentative plans include hosting a Movies with Meaning series.

We invite everyone in the community and congregation to participate and contribute to our events. We have several opportunities for volunteering and getting involved:
- Helping to set up/clean up for monthly potlucks
- Read for Blessing of the Animals service
- Help set up for Blessing of Animals service
- Help maintain Facebook page
- Bake vegan baked goods for an upcoming bake sale
- Buy vegan baked goods at an upcoming vegan bake sale
- Help plan, set up and advertise Movies with Meaning screening
- Arrange a speaker for one of the Fifth Friday Coffeehouse series, or at one of the potlucks.
- Maintain the bulletin board and our area of the Service Ministry table.

Furthermore, we are always welcome to any new ideas and projects pertaining to our mission.

For more information about Countryside Animal Friends, UU Animal Ministry, and how to become involved, please contact Sheryl Bass at sherylbass999@gmail.com

GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE

The Green Sanctuary Program is a UUA accreditation process inspired by our UUA Seventh Principle of “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part” and has as its purpose encouraging the spread of “green” values to all aspects of church life. We on the Green Sanctuary Committee in cooperation with other committees and programs are working to facilitate that program. Recently the UUA has decided to make Environmental Justice the focus of the Green Sanctuary Program. This focus means that working with other committees and programs is even more, so to speak, natural. The emphasis on Environmental Justice makes clearer the connection to our other UU Principles such as dignity, equity, and compassion, incorporate environmental values by promoting such basic human rights as access to clean air and water, healthy food, and proper sanitation. UU Principles of peace and justice may be tied to other environmental issues such as the availability of essential resources and the effects of climate change.

Since we are a program that has an impact on all aspects of church life and activity we touch other ministries by working to make the congregation as a whole aware of environmental issues through projects led by members of the congregation. Our goal is to create a framework, a focus, for thought and action that is fundamentally environmental so that environmental actions become so ingrained as to be fundamental to who we are as a congregation.

We have begun two new projects this year. The first is to move the church and the members of the congregation toward a carbon-neutral life. We launched this project with an environmental service in March and will continue to
promote becoming carbon-neutral over the coming year and beyond. Our second new project is to create an interfaith group for the northwest suburbs, called (as you might expect) the Northwest Suburban Interfaith Environmental Group, that will focus on environmental actions.

We held the second Climate Change Conference on April 11. This year’s conference was organized around the theme of active hope: how to remain positive in the face of increasingly severe effects of climate change and was expanded to include a movie festival on April 10 in cooperation with the local chapter of the Sierra Club.

Our committee’s ongoing projects for the past church year also include: participation of several committee members in Lobby Day in Springfield, recommending movies for Movies with Meaning, the Countryside organic vegetable garden, donations to the Palatine Food Pantry from both the children’s and adult’s garden, a Winter Farmer’s Market (sponsored by Faith in Place) and a November Farmers’ Market that support local, sustainable farming, support for the Roots Community Garden in Palatine and support for Citizens for Conservation environmental education programs.

Below are general categories of activities of the Green Sanctuary Committee; for a full list, please see the GSC bulletin board or contact Judy Ball and Leslie Peet at greensanctuary@ccuu.org.

- Work toward an increasingly sustainable approach to church practices, building, and grounds
- Educational programs
- Fun, intergenerational activities
- Restoration opportunities for volunteers
- Environmental justice projects
- Partnerships with local organizations
- The opportunity to appreciate and care for the environment with a group of like-minded people

The Green Sanctuary Program serves the larger community through educational programs, environmental films, donations of fresh produce to the Palatine Food Pantry, support for local, sustainable food, and restoration of natural areas.

We partner with the following groups:

- Citizens for Conservation
- Deer Grove Forest Preserve Stewards
- Faith in Place
- Palatine Food Pantry
- Roots Community Garden (sponsored by the Palatine Opportunity Center)
- Sierra Club

The co-chairs of the Green Sanctuary Committee are Judy Ball and Leslie Peet.

The Green Sanctuary Committee would like to express our appreciation of all the members and staff who have supported Green Sanctuary projects.

All our projects are open to volunteers. We encourage anyone with an idea for a project or an interest in working on a project to contact us and to attend our monthly committee meetings on the second Sunday at 12:15 in classroom 6.

LAY & CARE MINISTRY PROGRAMS

We are completing the 28th year of providing lay/care ministries to the Countryside Church congregation. This year, the Lay Ministry was fortunate to have the following people continue to serve in the program: Ken Bobbe, Bill Marcum, Jane Matthews, Joy Simon, and Kim Tilford. The following new lay ministers were trained on May 31, 2014 and commissioned on October 19, 2014: Karen Greenland, Barbara Griggs, Kathi Hillyer, Melanie Schikore and Chris Smith.

On September 30, 2014, Rev. Hilary coordinated a Retreat for all lay ministers. The topics covered at the Retreat included analysis of Myers-Briggs results, Aging Congregation Care, Support Groups and Lay Ministry responsibilities.
This Lay Ministry Team supports and expands the pastoral care of the called minister, but the Team also serves to strengthen the ties among the members of the congregation through the active embodiment of the spirit of mutual care. This is a special Team in the congregation and requires particular attributes in order to insure that we are taking the best care within the congregation that is possible.

Over the winter, all lay ministers were involved in calling every member of Countryside to touch base and to take questions regarding lay ministry. We find this to be very helpful for us and for the congregation in general. Lay Ministry meets monthly at the church to check-in with each other, review current Lay Minister activity, determine availability and write and send cards to members needing support.

Our Care Ministry coordinator, Sheilah Sokeland, continues to arrange for practical assistance, such as rides for medical treatment, check-in calls and visits, and meals for Countryside members when appropriate. These arrangements are made through Rev. Hilary Krivchenia or one of us.

Submitted by Ken Bobbe and Jane Matthews, Co-coordinators

LIVING THE WELCOMING CONGREGATION (LWC)

We look forward to the day when everyone feels safe and valued, exactly as they are. We hope you'll join us to help make that day come sooner. The Living the Welcoming Congregation (LWC) Program helps our congregation live up to its covenant to unite to strengthen the bonds of kinship among all persons.

Current active members of the LWC committee are Jeanie Michalec and Tracy Boland, co-chairs; Joy Simon, Dan Yokas, Tim Walsh, Matt Bridell, Deb Quentel, Nadine Mallick, Elizabeth Vesto and Angelina Huntsa; Rev. Hilary Krivchenia, ex-officio member. Other supportive members include Greg Blus, Jim Booth & Jane Matthews, Sue DeLuca, Lisa Hagenbuch, Kathi Hillery, Dan Huntsa, Lorraine LeBlond, Paul Mallick, Karl Michalec, Ron Polomchak, Sarah & Ryan Schaefges, Natalie Silk, Barbara Wright & Bob Anders, and so many others.

The LWC committee supports legislation that promotes social justice and legal equality and participates in e-mail and letter writing on political issues pertinent to LGBT issues. Some committee members are active in the Human Rights Council (HRC) and Equality Illinois. Members of CCUU participate in many ways to promote equality and justice for LGBT people.

Our church provides services for LGBT rites of passage, including union services and dedication of children. We have services that celebrate all kinds of families, including LGBT couples raising children. The RE curriculum and library contain LGBT-related materials. Since 2007, CCUU has provided Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education classes for more than 70 young people in K-1, Grades 4-5, Junior and Senior High. In 2007 and 2009, our church hosted area-wide training for OWL leaders from other churches as well as our own.

Our church provides meeting space for the local PFLAG chapter. We provide Pride Youth with space for their drop-in center and have donated money to both Pride Youth and PFLAG. We have staffed a CCUU booth at Palatine Street Fest in August to market and educate the community about our safe and celebratory community for LGBT individuals and their families. Many CCUU adult members and youth, in addition to LWC committee members, attend the Pride parade and participate in Pride Week activities.

Activities of Living the Welcoming Congregation (LWC)

LWC plans to continue to focus on educational and information-sharing activities, as well as have LWC-sponsored fundraisers to support local groups.

- **Halloween Ball.** Host intergenerational costume party with food, music and prizes. Suggested entry fee is a contribution of food for local food pantry. The Halloween party was held Sat., Oct. 25. Atherton Hall took a trip down the rabbit hole as the congregation travelled to Wonderland. Themed treats were featured at the Mad Tea Party, children of all ages were a-maze-d, and a deck of cards came to life for the Queen of Hearts croquet match.

- **Interfaith Pride Service.** We will again participate in planning and hosting an Interfaith Pride Service. It will be held on Sunday, June 7 at the Congregational United Church of Christ in Arlington Heights. A picnic is scheduled immediately following the service on the lawn of the church. It will be a traditional interfaith religious service, with homilies, readings, hymns, choir anthems and prayers. Participants will include ministers, lay individuals, and choirs representing various faith traditions. All are welcome.

- **Support Pride Parade.** Support Youth group in marching in the Pride parade. Offer viewing as a group.
• **Navigators.** Support first IL chapter of Navigators USA, "a different kind of scouting" Support stand against Boy Scouts’ discriminatory policies Support stand against the Boy Scouts’ discriminatory mentality against LGBT and atheists. LWC members Elizabeth Vesto and Jeanie Michalec are Navigators members.

• **Education.** Speak at Religious Education classes on LGBT issues. Collate support resources for LGBT issues.

• **Movies.** Host movies and support/contribute movies for Movies with Meaning.

• **Support two special CCUU services.** LWC will work with Worship Ministry to coordinate/support services in June and October.

• **Outreach.** Propose outreach grant to Night Ministry which assists homeless youth, who are often LGBT who have been abandoned by their families.

• **Gave financial support** to worthy groups like Pride Youth and The Night Ministry.

Learn More

LWC Meetings are held the 1st Wednesday of January, March, November and August at 7 pm in the Stokes Room. Additional meetings are held as necessary to plan Countryside’s Joint Pride Service, Community forums, LWC Movies with Meaning, and of course, our fabulous Halloween Party! See www.ccuu.org for more information.

See the LGBT Resources listed on the LWC page of the CCUU website.

Submitted by Jeanie Michalec and Tracy Boland, committee co-chairs

OUTREACH STEERING COMMITTEE (OSC)
The Board of Trustees established the Outreach Steering Committee to assist and guide CCUU and its congregants in reaching out and making a difference in our community. Our work together began in August, 2013.

OSC Vision Statement
The OSC is a catalyst for channeling the talents and passion of the CCUU community to the human needs of the larger community. We will do this through understanding the needs of organizations that address issues important to the CCUU membership and providing resources of both time and money to make a transformational difference to these organizations and CCUU members. We will collectively learn as we develop innovative solutions and processes that enable broad member participation in these activities and manage relationships such that success is sustained. The pride and joy of this effort will be felt by every CCUU member and their children, and become an inspiring example to others.

Based on congregational input and an assessment of community needs, Countryside had six service partners in place in 2014. Each partner had a liaison (see below) and we extend special thanks to them for the work they did on behalf of Countryside.

Through your donations, we contributed approximate funds and participated in service opportunities as noted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Partner</th>
<th>Liaison</th>
<th>Allocation</th>
<th>Service Opportunity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palatine Opportunity Center</td>
<td>Matt Myren, Courtney Renwick</td>
<td>30% $7800</td>
<td>• Holiday decorating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Li’l Fishes</td>
<td>Kathi Wise</td>
<td>10% $3500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night Ministry</td>
<td>Dayle Roberts, Mary Janes</td>
<td>10% $1675</td>
<td>• Meal distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journeys/PADS</td>
<td>Angelina Huntsha</td>
<td>15% $3600</td>
<td>• Ongoing: Meals and Overnight work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICDI</td>
<td>Melanie Schikore, Nancy and Rick Klein</td>
<td>10% $3300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith in Place</td>
<td>Dan Huntsha</td>
<td>15% $3300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Fund</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>10% $2586.84</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
We are growing our relationship with the Palatine Opportunity Center. They helped us decorate for the Time and Talent fundraiser, and then we visited their Center to help decorate for the holidays. Our decorating team helped them with their fundraising event for Cinco de Mayo.

**Congregation Engagement and Communication**

It is our intent to provide an open, transparent and evolving process for this work. We hope you felt informed about the work of our service partners. We maintain [Outreach web page](http://ccuu.org) which is accessible to all via the Ministries at Countryside/Service tab.

**Events**

110 people attended Time & Talent, including 8 of our service partners. We raised more than $24,000 including $8140 through 128 bids for the “Raise the Paddle” items.

The second annual Music with A Mission event was held in March and netted more than $1800. We’re really grateful to the Music Committee for taking the lead in planning and hosting the event, and Feminine Divine for providing food and helping at the event. More than 100 people attended, including lots of guests. (We had a liquor permit from the Village and the State for this event.) Both 2 Li’l Fishes and Palatine Opportunity Center attended, as well.

**OSC Planning for the Future**

- For many years, the Social Action Committee coordinated Countryside’s Share the Plate contributions. In 2015/2016, Share the Plate will be coordinated by OSC in collaboration with the Social Action team so that we can be more efficient and more effective.
- We are reviewing our Service Partner and Share the Plate criteria and your nominations in preparation for making choices on partners for 2015/2016 by July 1. We’ll be seeking to confirm liaisons for each partner as this is key to a successful relationship.
- Based on your input, we know that there is interest in more volunteer opportunities.
- Fundraising events are still being planned.
- A process for distributing the reserve funds will be developed.
- OSC and the Service Ministry as a whole is interested in better coordination of volunteer opportunities. Some ongoing ideas related to this include:
  - Fewer service partners so we can focus our time and money
  - Set up a website to learn about opportunities
  - Set up a process to track service hours against a goal

We thank you for your contributions and input this year. If you have questions, input, or are interested in serving on the committee, please feel free to contact any of the committee members or email Fundraising@ccuu.org

_Sincerely,_

_Bruce Bendix, Larraine LeBlond, Dan Huntsha, Nancy Klein, Melanie Schikore, Matt Myren, & Laura Mandell_
SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE (SAC)

This year, the SAC continued evolving as a networker, becoming more effective in offering the congregation more opportunities to engage with the wider community. We expect continued vitality as we undertake new projects in the next fiscal year.

Share the Plate will move to the Outreach Steering Committee. With the creation of the OSC it became clear that “share the plate” has a closer alliance to the work of the OSC than to the SAC. Yvette is currently in the process of working with the OSC to ensure that “share the plate” is folded in smoothly, and she will continue to assume a role for the “share the plate” over the next year or so. As of this writing, a total of $12,008.98 has been sent to the scheduled share-the-plate organizations, UUSC Guest at Your Table collection, and the UUA-UUSC Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund.

Growing Involvement with UUANI (UU Advocacy Network of Illinois) We are encouraged by the increased interest in UUANI. In February 2015 the SAC sent both Maryanne O’Dowd and Colin Tysoe to a national “Escalating Inequality” workshop held at the Evanston UU. (Recall that the UUANI platform for this year was in favor of raising the IL minimum wage.) They returned with ideas which we will develop into a Sunday service to be held on July 26, 2015.

Recently Alan Greenland, Angelina and Dan Huntsha attended UUANI training in Naperville. They learned a process for developing deeper connections between potential leaders in the congregation. This involves 1 to 1 interviews. This summer, under Angelina’s direction, they will begin to develop this process in our congregation.

Calls/Emails to the Office That Resulted in Networking and Programming

Movies with Meaning programs – On 12/12 “Trigger” was shown to a group of about 28 folks. This movie was brought to us by the Southminster Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights. The post-movie panelists included Fay Michaelis from Southminster, Alan Greenland, Andrew Cranberg and Yvette.

On 1/9/15 we showed “Homestretch” a movie that followed several homeless youth as they try to move forward in their lives. One of our outreach partners, Night Ministry, figured prominently in this movie. About 33 folks came out on a cold, icy winter evening. Our surprise guest was Aiden McCormick who had driven in from Chicago to lead the post-movie discussion.

Involvement in Palatine Faith in Action That Resulted in Networking

For two years Yvette has been involved with Palatine Faith in Action (PFA), a group of 6 or so churches who meet bi-monthly and seek to do common good. This relationship became especially important after our office received a call from a substitute social worker at Palatine High School who sought help with providing about 50-60 “abandoned” youth with holiday gifts or gift cards.

With the help of one of the other churches, we found PATH, a local non-profit organization that was willing to work with the Palatine High School social worker and oversee the collection and distribution of gift cards. Our congregation very generously donated $850 worth of gift cards for this effort. Palatine Faith in Action (PFA) continues to ask questions of Palatine Township, PATH, and the high schools as we seek to understand this issue.

Our involvement with PFA has led to another opportunity for our congregation. On Saturday May 30, 2015 there will be an inter-church event at Feed My Starving Children in Schaumburg. Marsha Balster will be signing up interested CCUUers.

PADS Monthly Meals and PADS Site Workers Angelina just completed her first year overseeing this large responsibility—ensuring that we have volunteers to make all aspects of the monthly meal provided to our PADS partner: Presbyterian Church of Palatine. Further, through her efforts, we advertised Journey’s ongoing need for PADS volunteers at their partner churches. CCUU signed up six folks who volunteered at a PADS site over the past year (Oct – Apr.) Below are the names of all the folks who helped support the PADS effort in this fiscal year. Thanks to Laurie Lantz who used the “Signup Genius” link to facilitate signing up to provide meals.

People that have helped with meals and/or volunteered at sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angelina Huntsha</th>
<th>Yvette Johnson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mike Graves</td>
<td>Mark Krivchenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Mandell</td>
<td>Laurie Lantz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Lee</td>
<td>Carol Bobbe</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Fair Trade Monthly Sales  The Fair Trade has a budget which is self-sustaining.  The small mark-ups added to our products go to purchase all the fair trade coffee needed by our partner PADS site (Presbyterian Church of Palatine) for the entire PADS year.  Further, we were able to add $500 from the Fair Trade budget account into our SAC-run Kiva account.  Also this year, we provided free tea for the Sunday after service coffees.  Thanks to Yvette Johnson for overseeing these monthly sales.  She has been ably assisted this year by Maryanne O’Dowd, Lisa Christensen, Tom Curtis, John Evans, Marsha Balster, and Kevin Christensen.  This fiscal year, it was suggested that we consider using co-op vendors besides Equal Exchange for our products.  Yvette checked into this and decided not to pursue the idea.  Why? Because Equal Exchange enters into relationships with the religious organizations that purchase from them.  A portion of everything we buy goes back to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.  Yvette spoke to the EE representative who told her that in 2013 alone, $14,452.82 was given to the UUSC as a result of UU churches buying from Equal Exchange.

Kiva Account  Nancy Klein oversees the Kiva account started by the Social Action Committee some years ago.  The money put in by SAC over the years represents about $5,000, while the monies of CCUU personal members who maintain their own separate accounts is about $50,000.  All of these together make up the Countryside Church UU Kiva Fund—33 members.  Anyone can join.  As of 4/19/14, Nancy noted that together we had made 966 loans.  She hopes we’ll break 1,000 soon.  For the SAC account, Nancy usually funds women, retail, and environmental projects.  She considers all recommendations from the congregation.

Fair Trade Fair was a great success on December 7, 2014.  Vendors included Artisans of Ghana, MayaWorks, Sandpiper Imports, Global Hope, Malia Designs, Gifts of the World Schaumburg and our own Fair Trade table.  Amnesty International also hosted a Write-a-Thon at the event.  This event was ably coordinated by Marsha Balster and Linda Swenson, who said that a vendor mentioned that our church “has a reputation as a generous congregation for Fair Trade events.”

Palatine Township’s “Holiday Gift-Giving” Program  Again this year, we were fortunate that Linda and Steve Pratt coordinated this program.  Congregants signed up to buy presents or gift cards for 20 Palatine folks in need (about five families.)

Respectfully submitted by Yvette Johnson, Chair
KINSHIP MINISTRY

Coordinators: Juli Cicarelli
Staff Lead: Rev. Hilary Krivchenia

The mission of the Kinship Ministry is to ensure Countryside Church grows and has increasing impact on the religious and social life in the Northwest suburbs by developing an atmosphere that is inclusive, welcoming, connecting, compassionate, and respectful.

We include each and every member of Countryside as partners in this mission. We need your welcoming smiles and willing hands and hearts as we welcome newcomers, host church events like the Seder, and help out with church committees. One of the best ways to get to know others and to become an integral part of our beloved community is just to step up and say, 'How can I help?'

Key Committees and Programs
- Membership Committee (Tom MacTavish)
- Vines & Branches (Dan Huntsha)
- Chalice Circles (Lisa Bohné, Dan Wiseman)
- Circle Suppers (Marty Farrington)
- Compassionate Communication for Resolving Conflict-CCRC (Vid Axel)
- Feminine Divine Women's Group (Kathryn Hillyer)
- 20-30 Somethings (Jessica Gardner, Ryan Schaefges)
- Transitions (Dan Wiseman, Gloria Kinney)
- Friday Game night is not presently active.

Social Events
These were coordinated by Juli Cicarelli and volunteers were recruited on an ad-hoc basis.
- September Ingathering. (Team: Yvette Johnson, Mary Johnson, Barbara Griggs, and Sheilah Sokeland)
- February Chocolate Fest was not held this year because of other events scheduled for February Sundays (Faith in Action Art Faire & Souper Bowl), and we lacked a team to pull it off. It is hoped that we can bring it back. Everyone loves chocolate.
- March Budget Celebration in conjunction with Stewardship (Team: Karen Noorani, Sheilah Sokeland, and Raymond Yee)
- April Passover Seder (Team organized by Carol Bobbe – see her separate report). The Seder is a massive undertaking. Thanks, Carol!

Thanks to Raymond Yee and Mark Krivchenia, who have hosted coffee hour on so many Sundays. What would we do without coffee, just go home after service?

Thanks also to those of you who volunteered as greeters. Your welcoming smiles on Sunday greet newcomers and members alike. Your smiles bring our covenant to life.

As I close this Kinship year, I would like to commend and thank Tom MacTavish for reorganizing and heading the Membership Committee, vital work for the growth of the Church. I also want to thank Gloria Kinney and Dan Wiseman for everything they do for the Transitions group. Thank you, also to Dan Huntsha, who brings skill, energy, and ideas to all aspects of church life.

Thank you to all of you, so many of you, too many to list in an annual report, for giving Countryside your skills, enthusiasm, time, and energy. Please know that your efforts are appreciated and valued and helpful to the church in countless ways. It takes a congregation to run a congregation.

I hope in the future that Countryside will hire a membership coordinator again. Dan Wiseman served ably in that capacity for two years. Many UU Churches have a paid membership coordinator, and research has shown that in time this investment pays off. These Churches flourish and grow spiritually and often numerically.

Submitted by Juli Cicarelli
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE
This year’s committee included Dan Huntsha, Siri Laurin, Tom MacTavish, Chris Smith, and Dan Wiseman. We emphasized making the Path to Community classes more available and accessible to potential members and as a result offered classes of different lengths at several times in the year. A long class was held for three sessions and included information, discussions, and introductions to our ministers and ministry leaders. The short class consisted of a one-hour informational meeting. For both classes, we developed a semi-structured curriculum, not only to ensure uniformity, but also to provide flexibility to meet the groups’ needs. We developed supporting materials for both classes. For the long class, we share a presentation slide set and for the short class, we share a detailed information packet. All guests at our classes received a folder with substantial resources describing the UUA, our church, our ministries, and a request for participating in the life of the church through active personal engagement and financial support. We had 9 persons who attended the long meeting and 7 total who attended the three short meetings. Subsequently, 19 persons joined the church this year including those who had added classes in prior years, or who joined from prior affiliation with UU churches.

To better understand the visitor/new member experience, the committee met several times and developed a framework to describe visitor interests and our offerings. And, we developed a service design blueprint to identify opportunities for improving their experience of engaging with our congregation. We will use these materials to guide our on-going efforts to improve the experience of finding and joining our church community.

Many thanks to Siri Laurin who re-vitalized the monthly informational sessions about our congregation and helped ensure that we had more greeters available on Sunday mornings. Please remember that we are all ambassadors for our community and a friendly smile and expression of interest goes a long way toward starting new relationships.

Submitted by Tom MacTavish, Membership Committee Chair

CIRCLE SUPPERS
Circle Suppers is an activity sponsored by the Membership Committee in which long-standing members, new members, and interested visitors have a chance to become acquainted over dinner in the host’s home. There are two sessions each year, Fall (Oct.-Jan.) and Spring (Feb.-May). Over the four months, each participant dines with a new group each month, hosting one of the four evenings. 40-60 people participate in Circle Suppers each session.

Beginning in the Fall 2005, non-members became full participants, hosting the third or fourth month, rather than participating as guests only. Several visitors and new members have told me that they enjoy the Circle Supper program as a way to meet others in the church and feel welcome. Similarly, many long-standing members participate partly as a way to get to know newer members and visitors.

Submitted by Marty Farrington

CHALICE CIRCLES

Live your life from your heart. Share from your heart. And your story will touch and heal people’s souls. ~ Melody Beattie

The goal of the Chalice Circle program is to provide a vibrant, small-group ministry aimed at developing a sense of community, trust and support among our Countryside Church members and friends.

Chalice Circles provide a safe and welcoming place for spiritual exploration and growth. The practice of deep listening encourages and supports us as we share our unique stories, ideas and feelings. This small-group ministry program is dedicated to nurturing community and meaning and cultivating new and deep connections among individuals.

Vital Stats (as reported for UUA certification in February 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(combined total of Sanctuary attendees and religious education classes, incl. young people and teachers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Educ. Enrollment</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nursery - Sr High)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
After four years of running up to eight concurrent Chalice Circle, including between 40 to 70 participants, this was a year of planning and preparation for the Chalice Circles.

While we did not offer Chalice Circles this church year, Carol Paton, Mark Stamm, Dan Wiseman, Joy Simon, Bill O’Brien and Lisa Bohné worked as a planning team to review and refresh the format and materials of our Chalice Circles. We have developed and are refining materials for Chalice Circles for the 2015-2016 church year and plan to have registration in August and September for the sessions which will start in October 2015. Although the materials were developed by our planning committee, we are modeling them after the materials found in the Heart to Heart and Soul to Soul books that we used the first several years of Chalice Circles. We feel that their structure and content allowed for greater introspection and reflection in advance of the meetings and laid the groundwork for very meaningful sharing of our personal stories.

Among the topics we have planned are:
- Hope
- The Dark Side of Good Things
- God, Religion and UUs
- Making Amends

We have also included in the series a couple of purely social gatherings, such as potluck dinners, to allow for some light-hearted and relaxed socializing.

We will have several new facilitators next year and will be offering four Chalice Circle groups, with the aim of keeping them small and intimate and scheduling them at a variety of times to allow a broad cross-section of people to participate.

If you are interested in spiritual growth and in strengthening the bonds of kinship among all persons, this small-group ministry might be just the group for you.

“As you begin to pay attention to your own stories and what they say about you, you will enter into the exciting process of becoming, as you should be, the author of your own life, the creator of your own possibilities.” ~ Mandy Aftel

Submitted by Lisa Bohné

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION for the RESOLUTION of CONFLICT (CCRC)

The CCRC (Compassionate Communication for Resolution of Conflict panel) now consists of Vid Axel (chairperson and panelist), duRee Bryant and Lisa Bohné (panelists).

The CCRC stands ready to assist those within the CCUU family who might encounter conflicts with others within our congregational circle, but who encounter difficulty engaging constructively with these conflicts, on their own.

All panelists have received training regarding the kinds of support that we can offer, how to offer it, and with respect to the limits of CCRC activity.

When the panel’s support is sought, the more experienced members of the panel make judgments regarding what kinds of support our less experienced panelists might need in order to offer the most effective help in specific, conflict situations.

For those who would like assistance, the CCRC can offer multiple forms of confidential support. Support can range from the rudimentary to the more actively involved.

CCRC panelists may offer advice which a person can then apply when striving on one’s own to deal more constructively with a conflict. When more support is wished, the CCRC can also offer intermediate forms of help.

In its most advanced form, when a given situation warrants, and both parties are willing, one or more CCRC panelist(s) can even assist with facilitated dialogue or mediation.
The CCRC does not take sides or dictate solutions. The CCRC does not seek to act as some kind of "conflict police."

Rather, the aim of the CCRC is to offer confidential and safe support that will assist CCUU community participants who find themselves in conflict, and who request assistance, to 1) communicate more effectively within the framework of our Covenant of Right Relationship; 2) to more deeply understand one another; and 3) together, to craft their own, constructive solutions.

The CCRC may also, at times, make educational presentations in which we draw attention to the existence and purpose of the CCRC, as well as teach skills in more effective communication and conflict resolution.

During the past year, when the CCRC has been sought for support we have provided it. Because of the confidentiality involved in such support, further details cannot be provided in this annual report of our activity.

We are grateful for the opportunity we have been given to serve our congregation. We feel strongly that our participation has helped and will continue to help. Those who have sought our assistance have reported that we have helped and have lived up to our aspirations. Even so, we continue to learn from experience and to improve our work.

We look forward to future opportunities to offer additional support and education.

Respectfully Submitted by Vid Axel, Chairperson, CCRC

20-30 SOMETHINGS
We are a group of young adults organized by two co-leaders (currently Jessica Gardner and Ryan Schaefges). Anyone interested is free to contact either of us at ccuu2030s@gmail.com

Our group provides fellowship for people in their 20s and 30s through twice monthly meetings and discussions, monthly social events, and service events.

We help to serve the community and the church through various service projects, such as helping with the Seder.

We offer support and kinship through engaging and thought provoking discussions on a variety of topics at our monthly meetings and social gatherings / events. We also work with the service ministry to do service events.

We would welcome anyone who would like to volunteer with us during our service events. These are usually planned during our meetings a few months / weeks / or sometimes days in advance. These service events often serve the larger community (Feed My Starving Children, Night Ministry, Clearbrook, etc.)

We aim to continue gathering as we have, and hopefully expand to somewhat larger numbers this next year. The meeting times that we plan going forward are the 1st Sunday of the month after the service (starting June) and the third Wednesday of the month at 7p.m.

Submitted by Ryan Schaefges

FEMININE DIVINE WOMEN’S GROUP
Countryside's Feminine Divine Women's Group started in 2008 as a study group for the UU curriculum "Rise Up and Call Her Name," continuing in subsequent years with the program "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven." These two programs were the result of a 1977 UU General Assembly Resolution calling on all UUs and UU organizations to examine and put aside sexist assumptions, attitudes, and language and to explore and eliminate religious roots of sexism in myths, traditions, and religious beliefs.

After completing these programs, the group felt strongly that we wanted to continue meeting, but in a slightly different
format. That led to our current structure, which uses a different book each year as a focus for exploring areas of feminine spirituality. This year we read and discussed "The Book of Forgiving," by Mpho and Desmond Tutu. This book is a powerful tool in exploring the fourfold path for healing ourselves and our world, and is based on the author's experiences in South Africa. Tutu said, "We are each made for goodness, love and compassion. Our lives are transformed as much as the world is when we live with these truths."

The purpose of this group is less on outside service and more on supporting our members and exploring our inner beliefs. We are closely aligned with the first (the inherent worth and dignity of every person), third (acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations), and fourth (a free and responsible search for truth and meaning) principles. However, our discussions carry us through all aspects of our beliefs as Unitarian Universalists.

The Feminine Divine Women's Group meets the last Saturday of the month, from 9:30-11:30. The meetings typically begin with a reading of our covenant, where we reaffirm our commitment to the confidentiality and safety of our shared time together. We then spend time on Check-In, where members are free to share their thoughts and experience over the previous month. This is not a time for advice or therapy, but rather an opportunity for us to bring into the open our joys and sorrows, in a safe and supportive environment. Confidentiality is always honored. Some months we then have a period of meditation and reflection. This is followed by a break and social time, where we enjoy the snacks we've brought. The rest of our time is spent in discussing that month's chapter. Each month the meeting is led by different members, as we have a shared responsibility to the group. We have a very democratic structure. We laugh, we cry, we enjoy!

In addition, we participate in social outings. This summer's activities have yet to be planned, but we recently joined the Transitions group on a trip to the Blue Lotus Buddhist Center in Woodstock. Our service project the past two years has been in supporting Music with a Mission by providing food and volunteers.

This year the group was co-facilitated by Kathryn Hillyer and Juli Cicarelli, although each month different members take turns leading the discussions. Group membership is open and fluid, as people have conflicts and other commitments. For more information, please contact Kathi Hillyer, the 2015-2016 facilitator, at kathioh@aol.com, or 847-477-8331.

What will our focus be for next year? That will be determined by the group in August. I am open to suggestions as the group reflects the desires of its members. One area I hope to explore is how we can be of greater service outside our group, to the church or community.

Submitted by Kathryn Hillyer

SEDER DINNER
This year’s Seder Team was: Carol Bobbe, lead; Linda & Mike Berry, Ken Bobbe, Dan Wiseman, kitchen prep; Juli Cicarelli, George and Kathy Motto, clean up; the 2030s group, set-up; Lois & Jeff Phillips, Cathy Maraist & Jeff Oremland, music; Juli Cicarelli and Barbara Griggs, registration; office staff, printing and PR.

We organize and hold an annual Seder dinner that corresponds to the Jewish Seder observance. We learn about one of the major Jewish Holidays. We bring whole families including some from outside the church together for this observance. This UU Seder is focused on freedom and gratitude with many stories from history including UU history.

This event supports the work of Kinship, Worship, and Study ministries.
• Kinship – we bring church families together for a social evening including a service and dinner.
• Worship – the Seder service is a form of worship, complete with music
• Study – reading the Haggadah is a study of the history of Jews and other persecuted people

There are a lot of jobs available for volunteers: setting up, taking down, preparing the food before the Seder, picking up the chicken, making the charoset, making matzoh balls and soup, purchasing the food and other items needed for the dinner.
This event is open to the larger community; non-members who don’t belong to a Synagogue or who are just curious about this Jewish Service have attended – and many return.

We had about 80 people in attendance this year (2015), we hope to have more next year. We’ve had as many as 135 and as few as 60 over the last few years.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions is a daytime program for older adults at Countryside which is a part of the Kinship Ministry. We meet at 10 a.m. in Atherton Hall on the fourth Thursday of each month for a program presentation followed by a potluck lunch. All are welcome. Program selections for the monthly meetings are driven by the interests of the group’s members as well as the willingness of someone in the group to volunteer to lead a presentation and/or discussion on a particular topic. Over the last two years we have had presentations on a wide variety of topics, starting with MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) and ranging through Travel and Spirituality. The May 28 presentation will be on T.E.D. Talks which are available on the internet. Average attendance has been 20-25 participants in these monthly meetings.

In addition to the monthly Thursday meetings, the Transitions program has offered some programs which consist of several sessions. For example, Memoir Makers, a biography writing group, led by Tom and Krista MacTavish and Barbara Griggs, has been meeting a couple of times a month for the last two years.) Newcomers are welcome to join anytime. We have used the Great Decisions Course materials led by Judy Miller, to guide our study of current events. Toward the end of June 2015, a Great Books discussion group based on their book, Voices of Immigrants, will begin. Interest in this topic grew out of one of the Thursday morning presentations and the current immigration and migration issues in the world.

Our 2014-15 field trips have ranged from trips to local houses of worship, Baha’i and Buddhist, to Community Theater, locally-shown films and Ravinia. Next year we plan to continue emphasis on field trips to houses of worship as well as to local community and cultural events. We will also encourage members of Transitions to reach out to their non-UU friends and invite them to participate in our meetings and activities.

The Transitions Program’s goals in 2015-16 are to increase feelings of kinship and camaraderie among participants, and to provide educational services to CCUU members and to the larger community beyond CCUU. During 2015-16, we will be reaching out actively to members of our local community and inviting them to join us at Countryside.

For more information about Transitions or to put your name on our email list, please contact one of the Co-Facilitators:
Gloria Kinney, (847) 397-8114, gloriakinney@comcast.net
Dan Wiseman, (847) 221-5197, connect1947@att.net
OPERATIONS TEAM (formerly Foundations Ministry)

Last year, the Board of Trustees restructured the Foundations Ministry, which was unlike the other program-based ministries. The key change was that the care and running of our congregational home, which resides increasingly with staff, has been combined into an Operations Team to support the staff, to enhance communication between Staff and the Board, and to facilitate effective and timely work. The “Ops Team” consists of the Congregational Administrator, the Senior Minister, a Board member (this year, Mike Gilley), and the Facilities Chair (Steve Black). Last year, Bob Spielman was “member-at-large” on the Ops Team; he has been missed and in our thoughts this year as he deals with health issues. We have not recruited anyone else yet. We will need a new Board member on the team, as Mike’s term ends; Mike has been a good addition to the team given his expertise in many of the related areas (perhaps he’ll stay on as member-at-large?).

Committees that had originally been part of the Foundations Ministry that are coordinated by the Operations Team:

- Aesthetics
- Audio Visual
- IT
- Historian
- Building Use & Scheduling
- Building Grounds & Facilities, including North Property

This year, Steve Black updated the capital expense 20-year projection originally put together by Paul Sneddon. Steve has also obtained quotes for needed masonry repairs and updated weather stripping along the east side of the building. The operations team has also been updating the facilities task list originally compiled by Mark Huston and getting task lists onto Google Drive, where they could be accessed by multiple people (the facilities team). We appreciate those who help with minor repairs throughout the building. In addition to Steve Black, Mark Huston and Ron Vargason and Jeff Phillips have been tremendously reliable and helpful in this capacity. It is our hope that we could expand this facilities team, in the absence of a paid sexton, so that the repairs are shared by a greater number of people and no one person feels overly burdened by any one person.

The facilities chair (Steve Black) and the congregational administrator (Laurie Lantz) organized a facilities work day on Sunday, November 2. Many thanks to those who helped: Mark Huston, Matt Briddell, Kady Geier, Kathy & George Motto, Joel Fisher, Jason Tilford, and of course Steve B. Work done included replacing the urinal in the men’s room, washing all the windows, painting stained ceiling tiles, putting up window clings to prevent birds from crashing into the high sanctuary windows, cleaning out downspout scuppers.

The carpet throughout the building was cleaned in August. It is our hope to be able to do the entire building once/year and to clean the carpet in the Sanctuary & Atherton Hall twice/year.

The North Property is the house immediately to the north of the church; it is owned by CCUU and is currently rented to a family. This year, the hot water heater & sump pump were replaced, and three windows replaced (all others had been replaced in 2009).

In the area of IT, we are in process of reviewing voice-over-internet phone (VOIP) packages to reduce the church office budget and anticipate having it up and running this summer. VOIP would also alleviate our reliance on the increasingly aged and outdated onsite voicemail system and open up new opportunities for enabling our staff to work from virtually any location that has network connectivity. We will also be looking at updating the church website to a mobile-friendly format; there has been initial discussion about whether to stay with joomla or to move to wordpress. Thank you to Cherita Axel and Mike Gilley for the work they do to keep the website up-to-date.

If you have interest in helping with any of the areas in Operations, please contact the church office, ccuu@ccuu.org, or any member of the operations team.
AESTHETICS TASK FORCE
Lois Phillips – Chair; Dan Yokas, Tracy Boland, Lorraine LeBlond; and Members-At-Large Gloria Kinney and Laurie Lantz (Congr. Admin.)

Our Guiding Belief: Aesthetic beauty helps to establish a mood, or an atmosphere, that allows for the laying aside of day-to-day cares so that the heart can open and Spirit can come in. Our mission is to leave no stone unturned in the creation of Spirit-welcoming spaces throughout our church home.

Our work is tied to all committees and, therefore, all members of our faith community, and we thoughtfully consider all of them when planning any projects.

In addition to countless of-the-moment consultations during this past year, we have:

1. With Rev. Colleen’s blessing, we moved the entire R.E. Library from Room 3 to Room 8 (the former Stokes Room). This has allowed for more wall and book space and permitted a large table and several chairs to be added. The table & chairs now makes this room usable as a meeting space, helping to alleviate the problem of not enough small meeting rooms for all the requests.

2. Moved the Stokes Room (room #8) into Room #3. This gave the Board of Trustees a larger room for meeting and, because of the sofas in the room, still provides a place for families with small children on Sunday if they need a little “quiet” time.

3. Rev. Colleen’s office was moved from the South end of the building into the former Music Director’s office in the North (RE) end of the building which brought her closer to all the activity of Sunday mornings. With her departure, there will be new discussions about the future and best use of this room. In the meantime, our new RE Assistant, Lisa, will have her desk here to assist Rev. Colleen through June.

4. The office space previously occupied by Rev. Colleen was repurposed to a small meeting space (again helping to relieve the lack of same). It has also been used by the weekly volunteers who collate the Orders of Worship and some mailings and had a dedicated desk for our Interim Music Conductor.

5. Commissioned Peggie Graves to paint our Ministree on the north wall of Atherton Hall. Peggie did such a wonderful job (people have asked if it is 3D!) that we are taking our time figuring out how we will promote each of the Ministries using this fantastic image as our backdrop. Possibly we will project words and images on the white wall beside the Tree and use different colors to highlight one Ministry per month. Do you have any ideas you’d like to share?

6. We are continuing to work on designing an innovative solution to the issue of making a more desirable rental space of Atherton Hall, being mindful that it will also need to continue to serve our congregational needs on a weekly basis. As funds allow, painting the room a softer, creamier white will help warm the room.

7. This summer we hope to hang a curtain at the AV window in the Sanctuary to block the glare that makes it difficult to see the AV equipment during services. We have been “making do” with sundry screens that are not only ineffective, but also are not very attractive! The hardware and drapery have already been purchased we just need the right time to complete this necessary task.

In speaking to our activities that serve the larger community, this past year saw friends from the Palatine Opportunity Center (one of our six Outreach Partners) provide enormous help in preparing Atherton Hall for our annual Time & Talent Benefit. We returned the favor by helping to decorate the POC for Christmas. We all had so much fun, and through these efforts are creating a lasting, mutually beneficial, relationship. Lois, Tracy and Larraine have been intimately involved with helping our friends at the POC create the atmosphere of Cinco de Mayo for their major fundraiser which will be held on April 30.

Looking to the future…….

Our closet spaces will be reviewed (annually) to ensure that we are getting the most out of every last bit of storage that we have. If there are folks who (like me!) are a little OCD and have the time to share, please contact Lois so we can set up a plan!

Posting pictures of how our spaces are supposed to look may help relieve questions about where to return things when you weren’t the one who took them out. Do you want to take those pictures? The church has a digital camera and we can print and post pictures easily.
We would also like to create a “How To Set Up” binder using schematic drawings of Atherton Hall and the Sanctuary with different configurations depending on the event; i.e. this is how to set up for the Seder, this is how to set up for a wedding reception, this is how to set up for Time & Talent (although this one can be trickier, let’s get some basics on paper!), this is how to set up for the maximum legal number of people in Atherton Hall, this is how to set up for Movies With Meaning, this is how to set up for Music With A Mission, this is how the Sanctuary is set up for a Gong Meditation or a more casual evening service. This way ANYONE can feel confident about volunteers arranging the space for their particular event!

Thank you for trusting us to work on your behalf. Please feel free to contact Lois Phillips with your questions, comments and suggestions. (lois.k.phillips@gmail.com or 847.991.5300).

Gratefully submitted by Lois K. Phillips

**AUDIO-VISUAL TASK FORCE**

Greetings, Friends! The AV committee is organized by me, and staffed by volunteers, who fill the very important role of making the audio and visual aspects of Sunday services happen smoothly and reliably. Volunteering for Sunday AV duties is rewarding, and I’d ask anyone who is interested to simply sign up via our web-volunteer app, and I’ll make sure you get the training you need. Art Paton has written a very good reference guide, too, so that AV staffers are never stuck.

Enormous thanks this year to Tony Pretto, who is our most frequent Sunday Service AV person. Tony has become savvy in the ways of AV, and also of reading Hilary’s slide-notes-Shouts-out to Mike Gilley, John Evans, Dan Huntsha, Larrane LeBlond, Elizabeth & Guy Vesto, Alan Greenland, Rob deHaan, Colin Tysoe, Art Paton and Tom Dempsey, for being bold and volunteering to serve in this important way. I apologize if I missed anyone—know that you are appreciated!

AV’s role in all CCUU’s offerings and activities might be obvious to you… there is not a service, movie night or special event that doesn’t rely on AV. Our rooms rent more frequently, because they include technology that is reliable and easy to use. Classes and Religious Education are made more effective and memorable when AV is employed. Do you expect that the future will employ more or less technology? More, of course! Thus, we’ll continue to expand our capabilities.

This year has mostly been uneventful from an AV systems perspective. We have had two notable gear failures though. In the fall, our 12-year old CD recorder finally quit. We replaced it with an audio recorder which records directly onto SD cards. Debbie Lee, in her capacity as office volunteer, keeps an archive of the recorded services, meaning that we no longer waste any CDs—we only burn CDs when members or guests request them.

Our second failure is a bit of a mystery. Our sanctuary wireless touch screen has stopped working. Nobody can tell me when or why. I assume that it was dropped, although there is no physical damage. It is in for repair right now, and I’ve installed an older wired touch screen in the sanctuary for now.

These failures got me thinking that that I ought to put together an inventory of all AV equipment we have, when and how acquired, life expectancies and replacement cost. This inventory—just recently given to the board—shows a total replacement value of about $75,000, with about $8,000-worth exceeding its expected life each passing year. The majority of what we own has come to CCUU by way of donation, and yet, we might consider establishing a fund to cover inevitable replacements, so as to maintain the standard of AV utility that we currently enjoy.

In March, I attended a day-long course in modern wireless microphone management. It was mostly aimed at operators of tour-sound professionals, yet it held wisdom and information applicable to CCUU Sound. I learned that, this fall, there will be an auction of the 600 MHz spectrum. How much of this spectrum is sold off by the FCC remains to be seen. It could be that our current wireless microphones become illegal to use as early as March 2016. If this sounds like déjà vu, it’s because this very same thing happened to us about six years ago, causing us to have to replace all of our wireless mics! I will monitor the situation, and hope that our wireless units remain unaffected. If we have to vacate the frequency bands we’re currently using, then there will be a manufacturer-sponsored trade-up offer that will save us money, yet there will be an outlay needed to amend the situation. Stay tuned (pun intended!)
Thanks again to all our AV volunteers!

Submitted by Jeff Phillips

GROUND COMMITTEE
Last summer and fall, in conjunction with the Green Sanctuary Committee, members of the church were involved in helping with the landscaping. They were arranged in teams and advised by those Church members who have the designation of Master Gardener. Countryside Church is remarkable in the beauty of our grounds that surround us. A well cared for landscape makes a first impression on visitors and creates a certain wellness for we who are the membership of Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist.

Starting in September of last year, the grounds committee used some of our funds to pay someone to help with the maintenance of the grounds. The person who cuts our grass is also paid directly from this same budget. However, to defray some of the expenses involved with maintenance, Judy Miller and Beth Gerson have volunteered considerable time to maintain the grounds last fall and this spring.

Because of the severe droughts that we have experienced for the past several years, and the fact that we don’t regularly irrigate our landscaping material, we have to replace some material with new plantings in order to refresh the landscape appearance. Trying to stay within our budget and yet be able to make such landscaping purchases, Beth and Judy have given considerable hours of volunteer maintenance work. We will continue to use outside help now that most of the spring cleanup work is completed. We will also purchase replacement material and have it planted. A well-cared for landscape makes a first impression on visitors and creates a certain wellness for we who are the members of Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist.

Submitted by Judy Miller

CHURCH HISTORIAN
The church historian’s job is to keep the historical records of Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist organized, easily accessible, and up-to-date by adding information as it occurs.

Gayle Shampine Barr has graciously agreed to help me organize the church's records as well as investigate ways to put some information on CDs or thumb drives in order to reduce the amount of bulk in the files.

We would appreciate newspaper clippings of anything about Countryside Church, but be sure to put the date and the newspaper on it. Pictures of church activities are also welcome, but date and names of people in the pictures are necessary. You may place all in the Historian's mailbox in the office.

Our biggest challenge is getting names and dates for the many pictures we have of people, most in bulky albums, and going back many years. If anyone has any ideas as to how we can accomplish this, please contact me at kaygredell@att.net.

Respectfully submitted by Kay Gredell, Church Historian