ANNUAL REPORT 2013



The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley



UUCLV ANNUAL REPORT 2013

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Additional Materials:

- * Annual Meeting Agenda
- * Proposed Covenant
- * Treasurer's Report
- * Budget
- * Capital Improvements Review
- * Minutes of Annual Meeting, June 10, 2012
- * Minutes of Congregational Meeting, November 11, 2012

UUCLV Board of Trustees' Annual Report For the 2012-2013 Program Year

The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley has enjoyed a great many moments of fellowship, inspiration, education, music and outreach in the twelve months since our last congregational meeting. Some highlights of the work of your Board of Trustees for the program year just ended include the following:

- Approving the annual meeting minutes as submitted;
- Voting to accept the revised job descriptions (*following much hard work by the Personnel Committee*);
- Authorizing the establishment of a Memorial Garden (*thanks to the committee Mark Albright, Mary Kiester and Phil DiPietro*)
- Approving a policy on alcoholic beverages for building renters
- Appointment of Bob Kriebel and Linda Brown to the Personnel Committee
- Appointment of Rory Marushak to the Committee on Ministry
- Adding a youth representative to the Board (*thanks Emma*)
- Holding a successful and meaningful Board retreat at the church in August 2011
- Approving the appointment of Jan Phillips to be interim Treasurer and Allen Zinnes to assume the duties of Treasurer effective July 1, 2013 ;
- Unanimously endorsing the 2013-2014 budget as proposed by the Finance Committee for adoption at the annual congregational meeting;
- Endorsement of the proposed Congregational Covenant for adoption at the annual congregational meeting
- Our biggest project of the year Building Foundation for our Dreams working with the Capital Campaign Committee (*thanks to Judy Claps, Ilse Zinnes, Bob Kriebel, Ellen Bell, Cecilia Eberhard, Margo Dixon*) and the late Dave Rickard as our incredible consultant on a successful Capital and Stewardship Fund Drive. We will now be able to do complete most of the project on our list to refurbish and update our wonderful building.

As of the submission of this report for publication, it appears that we are in a position as a congregation to end the year "in the black" for the ninth year in a row, an accomplishment in which we can all feel some measure of pride. Another source of justifiable pride and appreciation is the collegiality, professionalism and effort *well* above and beyond the call of duty of our awesome staff – the Rev. Don Garrett, Kate Scuffle, Jansen Wendell, Dr. Larry Lipkis, Tara Stephenson and Bob Sclafani. Each do dozens of things outside their job descriptions – and do them without fanfare or even adequate recognition – to keep this place humming and make for a more pleasant experience for *everyone* here at 424 Center Street.

In addition to our staff, the UUCLV owes a debt of gratitude to the scores of volunteers whose commitment to the congregation makes things happen. In particular, we are grateful for the folks who have chaired standing and ad hoc committees and task forces of the church this program year, as well as the many members and friends whose considerable labors behind the scenes cause so many good things to come together: from worship associates to ushers and

greeters, from dedicated RE teachers and assistants to hospitality angels, from 'Second Sunday Concert' folks to Spaghetti Dinner sauciers, from H.A.V.E.N. volunteers to homeless shelter coordinators, cooks and chaperones, not to mention *Coming of Age* staff, nursery and child care helpers and the committed folks who handle the innovative and critically important *Our Whole Lives* (OWL) curriculum.

HAVEN ANNUAL REPORT 2013

HAVEN is the teen group for gay lesbian bisexual transgender and questioning youth and their friends, ages 14-20. Haven was founded by the UUCLV about 9 ½ years ago and has been going strong ever since. The meetings are open to the entire teen community and are at the UUCLV every Wednesday from 7-9pm rain or shine including holidays. Meetings are facilitated by trained volunteers who are members of the UUCLV as well as caring adults from the wider community. This year's activities included:

- Training three facilitators
- Sending 60+ letters of HAVEN trifold to area therapists
- 1 graduation party, 2 goodbye parties, 1 Halloween party
- Adam Miller benefit concert and raised over \$200
- One sleepover
- Prizm Prom #10 (120+ attending) at the Banana Factory
- Mailing letters and posters to 223 high school guidance counselors
- Guest speakers from St. Luke's and Turning Point
- Expanded steering committee to four
- Booth at Pride in the Park at Pridefest

For the prom they came from the Lehigh Valley and surrounding region. It was a fabulous event. Several members of the UUCLV were chaperones. Pride of the Lehigh Valley sponsored the catering, we received donations from PFLAG, several church members. Thank you!!!

Most of the youth attend for the great sense of community and friendship and to have a safe place to meet on a regular basis. Attendance averages about 15 youth each week. As last year we will again participate this summer in the Lehigh Valley Pride Fest in Allentown. We had 20 teens participate last year and hope for participation again this year.

We trained 3 new facilitators in the past year. Anyone interested in becoming a trained facilitator, please contact the co-chairs. We did two mailings of brochures as well as the Prom announcement to guidance counselors at middle / high schools of Lehigh, Carbon, Montgomery and Northampton counties.

Thank you to the UUCLV to continue to see the importance of this program and to all who had a part in last year's events and in the future.

Peter Pellegrino [peterp10@ptd.net] Ilse Stoll Zinnes [Zinnes@verizon.net] Co-Chairs

EMERGENCY SHELTERING PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

During the winter season of 2009 the Unitarian Church of the Lehigh Valley joined with seven other Bethlehem churches to provide emergency shelter for homeless men and women in our community. 2012 -13 was our fifth year to participate in this program and our first as part of the newly formed Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering Inc. with a board of directors and a non-profit status. Providing shelter Wednesday nights, we saw a significant increase in the number of guests from 25 - 30 per night to 40 plus men a night. The total number of individuals who registered during the 2012-13 season was 100, almost double last year's registration.

We began the season utilizing sleeping bags, cots, and pads that had been collected during previous years. These were augmented as needed throughout the season either through donations or purchases. 68 volunteers assisted us during this season with only 3 not from our congregation. Church support consisted of food preparation, serving meals, kitchen clean up, donations of money, gift cards, clothing, personal hygiene items and sleeping gear.

This Shelter Program brought our church family together: individuals, families, various RE groups, plus friends of church members. All contributed to the success of this outreach program. To learn more about Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering, Inc. go to their website at http://bethlehememergencysheltering.org/

Respectfully submitted: Ann Gastinger, Barbara Forry, Ginnie Blocker

COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS 2012

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children and Youth

• There were 84 Infants, Children and Youth participating in RE and the nursery this year, virtually unchanged from last year with new participants balancing out those that have left. As with some congregations, populations are unevenly distributed between classes.

• Classes:

The senior high youth group was large and very active again this year. Their move to room 308 was needed and greatly needed and appreciated. Their leadership skills were demonstrated when they hosted a youth conference here in May, with over 50 youth and 12 adults staying from Friday night through Sunday morning. There were a few glitches but the weekend went smoothly as a rule. It was a very positive experience. They managed their budget very well, ending up with a \$400 surplus, which will go into their holding account.

7th & 8th grade (*Our Whole Lives*): participation was consistent through the year. In two years we will need new teachers because several of the current team will have children in the class. It is highly preferable that parents not teach so that the students can feel comfortable raising issues that might involve their family.

The 5th & 6th grade (*Amazing Grace*): This course proved to be popular and engaging. Attendance remained high for most of the year.

3rd & 4th grade (*Faithful Journeys*): The class was challenged by low numbers this year. Several parents whom we hoped would teach and bring their children dropped out, so we leaned heavily on the three parents who brought their children regularly.

1st & 2nd grade (*Creating Home*): The class was large at times and small at others, which was a challenge to the teachers. They enjoyed the lessons as well as the labyrinth they walked each Sunday at the start of class.

PreK & Kindergarten (*Chalice Children*): Attendance was low this year, often 3 or less. This curriculum is a tried a true program. We expect a larger class next year

The nursery was once again coordinated by Shana Johannessen. She had a bigger team of adult volunteers this year, so she was in the nursery on Sundays slightly less often. The committee will search for a new coordinator for the fall. Heidi Jimenez and Diana Aguilar were excellent and dependable as nursery staffers. Heidi will stay on. Diana has moved on but her sister has started and seems to be just as dependable.

• Family Choir: The family choir sang four times this year, with a fifth performance added on June 9 for the Flower Communion. The intent is for anyone to be able to participate in singing at whatever level of ability they have, to learn UU hymns and other songs that contain UU values, and to have an enjoyable experience so that singing becomes a commonplace activity both at home and in church. I have developed some innovative methods for families to hear and

practice the music in their home before our rehearsals. The choir makes a nice addition to multigenerational services. It is gathering interest as the members develop confidence.

• Games night: After a hiatus for a couple of years, we had one games night this winter and because of its success, we will schedule 2 for next winter.

Looking Forward

• Summer RE: We are returning to UU World Travelers for our summer curriculum. We are about 50% complete in recruiting "tour guides"

• Coming of Age: Next year the graduates of OWL will either join the senior high youth group or participate in Coming of Age. I expect about 8 students in COA. Recruitment for teachers will begin in June. They are starting with about \$800 in their holding account, so the Boston trip should be easily funded.

• Spirit Play: This innovative teaching method is in use in a growing number of UU congregations. It allows for teachers to bring more spirituality into the classroom, offers a structured, respectful environment while allowing more freedom of choice for students to pick activities that suit their learning styles. Challenges include the need for more training of teachers, higher start-up costs for materials and more intensive preparation of lesson materials, especially in the first year. Additional benefits are the need for less teachers, increased participation of children, less preparation time for the teacher and flexibility in class sizes.

Adult RE

• Adult RE Survey: Last fall I conducted a survey of members to determine levels of interest of various programs. The incoming ARE committee chair, Robin Capoor, and I will use that information to create programming in the upcoming year.

• UU History Film Series: After screening the 4 films on Tuesday nights in the winter to a small but appreciative group, I have screened two of the films for the Breakfast Forum. Feedback from attendees was highly positive. I have been lending out the films to people that request them. The third film on American Unitarianism will be screened in July. I hope to follow up these films with some sort of discussion of some of the key characters as a program.

• Spiritual Parenting discussion group: This group has been meeting monthly to talk about how to bring spirituality into the home and dealing with parenting challenges in general. We meet for about an hour after Sunday service, with children playing in the next room supervised by a youth.

Jansen Wendell, Lifespan Education Coordinator

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

From July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013, about 25 new members joined the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley. They included 18 who joined between July 1, 2012 and June 1, 2013. A group of seven (7) or more will join on June 16.

We lost three (3) members to death. Ten (10) members resigned. Two (2) moved away and two (2) were expunded due to inactivity.

We cut the number of NewUU classes from 6 per year to 3. Classes are now held in December, May, and September. New Member signings went from 6 to 3 per year. They are now held in January, June, and October.

We established Hospitality Teams within the congregation, dividing by geographical areas, using zip codes. The four areas are defined as North, East, West, and South. There are approximately 50 households in each group. Facilitators were selected for each of the four neighborhoods.

The goals of the Hospitality Teams are to build community, involve more and different members of the Congregation in the Sunday morning work of the worship experience, to retain members, and to provide opportunities for members to meet, interact with and get better acquainted with those from the congregation who are geographic neighbors. Leadership development is an incidental outgrowth of the teams, as well.

Janet Busse, Nancy Hersch and Del DeLaurentis have each taken a turn alongside Cheryl Ann Lombardi as Facilitators for the North group. Dora Davenport and Renae Orban are Facilitators for the East group. Jean Davis and Jackie Simone serve as West Facilitators. Robin Brumfield, Lorraine Bujnowski and Linda Hanna are South's Facilitators. We give thanks to this wonderful team of Facilitators for continuing to serve.

The Hospitality Teams fill the Sunday Morning tasks for the "beloved community." Greeters, Ushers, Flowers, and Snacks are now provided by volunteers from the neighborhood assigned to any given month.

We distributed 220 copies of the 2013 Directory, one to each family listed. We revised the newcomer's guide, the "User's Guide" and the directory. We continue to work to find ways to attract, integrate and retain members.

Thanks to the five members of the Membership team, Dora Davenport, Del DeLaurentis, Margo Dixon, Linda Hanna and Ilse Stoll Zinnes, for their hard work and dedication to the goals of Membership for the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley.

Respectfully submitted, Margo Dixon, Chair

CHURCH FAMILY COMMITTEE

The Church Family Committee is dedicated to service within our own church community during times of need or crisis. It coordinates volunteer help from the congregation to respond to situations which already exist or which arise. The committee, in cooperation with the congregation, acts much as a loving family does to extend a hand to members and friends in times of need.

In the 2012-13 church year, the CFC issued requests for cards, food, rides, calls and visits for 31 members of the UUCLV. Two memorial services were announced, with requests for reception donations for both. There were eight total notifications of deaths of members or relatives of members. There were 2 other notifications/requests of a "miscellaneous" nature. Sue took one member to the ER and stayed until that person was admitted.

Transportation was provided or coordinated for 4 people .Grateful appreciation is expressed to all who so generously volunteered to provide comfort, food, financial assistance and transportation when needed by members and friends of the congregation.

We would especially like to thank the "John Brennan team" for continuing to see that his affairs are in order. It is also important to acknowledge that there are many members of our congregation who operate "silently," helping on their own initiative. Thank you all.

Co-chairs: Sue Phillips, Janet Warren

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

In its role as a vision and oversight group focused on all aspects of the church's ministry, the Committee on Ministry has met on a monthly basis with Rev. Don. We have regularly made recommendations for dealing with governance and organizational issues with the aim of improving ministry effectiveness and in some cases resolving misunderstandings before they become conflicts.

Beyond addressing current issues, we have discussed areas where the church's ministry might be improved upon. These include strengthening governance by the Board and Program Council of all official church activities, introducing greater variety into our Sunday services, making more use of social media for outreach, providing ministry for members who cannot attend services such as those in nursing homes, and carrying out a church-wide evaluation, including a survey of members and friends, to discern what we do well and how we could do better, specifically looking at the degree to which we are a compassionate community, nurturing personal growth and working for justice.

Additionally, members of the Committee on Ministry joined with the Long Range Planning Committee to create the Covenant Task Force. With approval of the proposed covenant by the Congregation, the Committee on Ministry expects to play a role in helping our Beloved Community live our covenant.

Respectfully submitted, Ellen Bell

BUILDING USE COMMITTEE

The committee consists of three church members and two staff members. The church committee members are: Frank Claps, Maggie Brown, and Pat Herring – Chair. The staff members are: Bob Sclafani – Sexton, and Kate Scuffle – Administrator.

The purpose of the Building Use Committee is to oversee long term and one time rentals. The Administrator and Sexton manage the day to day details.

We currently have 10 long term renters who rent either a classroom, the gym, or the kitchen on a continuous basis which could be anywhere between weekly and once a month. Two renters occupy a room on an exclusive basis and are in the building on a variable basis. The Headstart program known as Community Services has the use of two rooms and the gym. We no longer rent to the Gateway School.

One time rentals include weddings, birthday parties, meetings, and other social functions. These usually take place in the Sanctuary, the Community Room or the gym.

The rental income from July 1, 2012 through the end of April, a period of 10 months is \$31,205. This amounts to \$3,120 per month or on a 12 month basis amounts to a projected \$37,440 per year.

Our rentals from the one time renters appears to be increasing. The loss of the Gateway School reduced our long term rental income considerably as compared to last fiscal year.

Pat Herring Building Use Chair

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

"The Unitarian Universalist Association shall devote its resources to and exercise its corporate powers for religious, educational, and humanitarian purposes. The primary purpose of the Association is to serve the needs of its member congregations, organize new congregations, extend and strengthen Unitarian Universalist institutions, and implement its principles."

Let me first thank our dear member Henry Davis, who passed away recently, and his wife Chris for serving UUCLV as Denominational Affairs Representatives for several years. I was honored to be asked to succeed them last fall.

UUCLV is a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and its district office, the Joseph Priestly District, which serves dozens of congregations in the mid-Atlantic states. These organizations provided a variety of opportunities to connect with other UU's and learn from other congregations things that help us improve and grow our own beloved community in the Lehigh Valley. Because our congregation pays its full share of contributions to support UUA and the Joseph Priestly District, we are recognized as a **"Fair Share Congregation"**.

Last fall four members of our congregation and Rev. Don were privileged to attend the "Creating Covenantal Communities" workshop along with members of other churches in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The experience helped us understand the value of a covenant in

living our core values and prepared us to create our own covenant, which is being considered for approval at our Congregational Meeting.

Other opportunities for learning and linking with other UU's drew our members throughout the year as well. The Worship Arts Festival, held in Cherry Hill this past March, exposed us to the wonderful variety of worship and music styles used in other congregations, while the recent Joseph Priestly District Assembly in Wilmington allowed us to spend a day with members of other congregations, sharing experiences and participating in various workshops to provide tools and techniques for improving our churches. One emphasis from both of these meetings was the importance that other congregations are placing on using digital media to reach out to younger people. Five members also attended the weeklong summer experience for families, Unitarian Universalist Mid-Atlantic Community (UUMAC) last July at DeSales University in Center Valley.

During the last year 28 members of UUCLV were "**Chalice Lighters**" who made contributions to the Joseph Priestly District's program for helping congregations implement projects to help them grow. Funds raised were given as grants to two churches in Pennsylvania: the UU Church of Delaware County received \$30,000 to expand and renovate space for their religious education program; the Thomas Paine UU Fellowship in Collegeville was given \$19,000 to air condition their worship space. Many thanks to our Chalice Lighters!

Our congregation will be well represented at this year's UU General Assembly, to be held in Lousiville, KY in mid-June: at least four members will join Rev. Don to carry our banner at the opening ceremony on June 19. Dozens of workshops are offered, and the Assembly will elect a Moderator to preside at future General Assemblies.

Finally, it was just announced that the Joseph Priestly District will merge with three other UU districts (Metro NY, Ohio-Meadville, and St. Lawrence) in creating the Central East Regional Group (CERG). If you're interested in this or any other aspect of UU Denominational Affairs, please contact me at 908-565-2707 or *redlaces21@gmail.com*. I would also be happy to talk with you at coffee hour following our service.

Respectfully submitted, Tom Repasch

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

As chair of communication, I have \$2000 to spend in my budget. Currently, the only paid advertising I am doing is in the Morning Call for about \$300 yearly and I am doing advertising for events for free. The main event that is advertised is the plant sale in the spring and fall.

Dan Hazelton and John Kennedy are sending me the forum topics which are entered free each week under community events in the Morning Call. Cease Blocker is sending the topics to radio stations to be put on the air.

Thanks for all you do, Jane Benning

GREEN COMMITTEE

We held a fall and a spring native plant sale and sold close to 1500 native perennial plants into gardens of the Lehigh Valley. Any plants remaining were planted at the Sand Island Native Plant Preserve and the Native Meadow on the Greenway in Bethlehem. We raised over \$2,200 for the UUCLV and about \$900 for green projects in the Lehigh Valley. A lot of effort was spent in publicizing the sale including giving 3 presentations to different community groups.

We participated in Earthday on the Bethlehem Greenway building a straw bale garden with the Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife Group. We also worked with that group to get the city of Bethlehem NWF certified as a wildlife habitat as the first city of Pennsylvania last October.

We maintained the award winning UUCLV native garden and planted 5 new native plants.

We held a family garden RE session and planted with the children a new penstemon and coneflower garden and a RE class building another labyrinth.

Janet Busse and Ilse Stoll Zinnes Green Committee Chairs

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE / CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

We combined the annual and the capital pledge campaigns. We trained 40 visiting stewards who contacted a total of 170 members and active friends. Thanks to all who pledged and especially those who gave their time and efforts as visiting stewards.

The capital campaign pledges resulted in \$485,000 from 107 pledges. From those pledges \$452,000 was from members and \$33,000 was from 10 non-members. The mean pledge was \$4,534 and the median pledge was \$2,500 payable over 3 years. The capital campaign pledges included \$23,500 forgiveness for loans made to repair the RE roof several years ago.

The annual stewardship campaign pledges resulted in \$225,000 from 147 pledges. From those pledges \$218,000 was from members and \$7,000 was from 12 non-members. The mean pledge was \$1,530 and the median pledge was \$960.

Dave Rickard was our UUA fundraising consultant and it was very helpful to have him in the process. We were very sorry to hear of Dave's sudden death shortly after the end of our fund drives.

Ilse Stoll Zinnes Stewardship Chair

LONG RANGE (CHURCH) PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Long Range Planning Committee along with members of the Committee on Ministry worked with the congregation in developing a congregational covenant. This will be submitted to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting and is proposed as below:

In holding our relationships sacred, we the people of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley make promises about how we treat each other as we pursue our religious journey together. In this spirit, we affirm and covenant that –

We welcome and accept all who enter.

- ✤ Greet all warmly
- ✤ Treat our differences as opportunities for greater understanding

We communicate with kindness and respect.

- ✤ Assume all have good intentions
- Listen with an open mind
- Honor boundaries
- Disagree without criticism or judgment

We participate in our church community with generosity and good humor.

- Freely share our time, talent, treasure and energy
- ♦ Welcome others to join in our activities while honoring their right to decline
- ✤ Honor all levels of service to the church

We work together to resolve conflicts.

- Give people the benefit of the doubt
- Stay engaged even in the midst of difficult issues
- ✤ Assume responsibility for our own feelings and actions
- ✤ Be slow to anger and quick to forgive
- ✤ Gently call each other to account for hurtful behavior

We support each other in times of happiness and sorrow.

- * Recognize talents and nurture spiritual and personal growth
- ✤ Be open to accept help and give help when needed
- Practice gratitude and appreciation
- Celebrate the joy of being together

Acknowledging that this covenant represents lofty goals toward which we strive, we empower one another to remind us when our actions fall short of our ideals.

Respectfully submitted, Cecilia Eberhard

UUCLV NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT NOMINATIONS FOR 2012 – 2013

UUCLV NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT NOMINATIONS FOR 2013 - 2014

Position Officers:	Vice President	<u>Nominee</u> Jan Phillips	<u>Term</u> 1 year	Current Officeholder Marie Tweed-becomes President	
	President Past President Clerk	Marie Tweed Sue Weber Pete Pellegrino	Automatic promotion from Vice President Automatic promotion from President Continuing to 2014		
Trustees at Large:		Bob Kriebel	2 year	Erica Hoelscher	
		Tom Zimmerman	2 year	Hope Wesley Harrison	
		Sarah Johnson	2 year	Sue Weber replacement	
		Bill Vogler	Continuing to 2014		
		Jan Forse	Continuing to 2014		
		John Kennedy	Continuing to 2014	4	
Committee Chairs:					
	Church family	Sue Phillips & Janet Warren	1 year	Sue Phillips & Janet Warren	
	Church Planning	Frank Claps	1 year	Cecilia Collura-Eberhard	
	Communications	Jane Benning	1 year	Jane Benning	
	Denom. Affairs	Tom Repasch	1 year	Christine & Henry Davis Bernie	
	Finance	Cease Blocker	1 year	Bujnowski	
	Membership	Margo Dixon	1 year	Margo Dixon	
	Music	Rich Brooks	1 year	Bob Cohen	
	Property	Pat Herring	1 year	Mark Moseng	
	Social Action	Gene Hunter	1 year	Gene Hunter	
	Stewardship	llse Zinnes	1 year	llse Zinnes	
	Youth RE	Kerri Finckel	1 year	Robin Capoor	
	Worship	Robin Capoor	1 year		
Nominating Committee:		Chris Johannesen	3 years	Jean Davis	
		Julie Brooks	Continuing to 2014		
		Allen Zinnes	-	Continuing to 2014	
		Kathy Stagl	Continuing to 2015		
		Barbara Diamant	Diamant Continuing to 2015		

Note: Bold type indicates nominees.

Submitted by Nominating Committee: Jean Davis, chair Julie Brooks Barbara Diamant Kathy Stagl Allen Zinnes