

*Welcome to Our
142nd Annual Meeting
June 8, 2008*

Board of Trustees

Terms Expire in 2008:

Eve Bendezu
Carrol Gensert
Jeff Hummel
Wilfred (Fred) Isaacs
Tom McKenna

Terms Expire in 2009:

Barbara Bradley
John Gibbon
Steve Sanford
Wendy Macklin

Terms Expire in 2010:

Esther Bockhoff
Kim Littell
Ann Millette
Kevin Ortner
Chuck Segall

Terms Expire in 2011:

(to be voted on at Annual Meeting on June 8)

Deanna L. DiPetta
Ray Gonzalez
Maureen Harrington Maas
George McGaughey

Nominating Committee

Terms Expire in 2008:

Helen Gutin
Don Stimpert

Terms Expire in 2009:

Teri Eagan
Laurie Holmes

Terms Expire in 2010:

(to be voted on at Annual Meeting on June 8)

Ernie Anderson
Bonny Chirayath

Church Staff

Daniel Budd, Parish Minister
George Buchanan, Minister for Religious Education
Doug Aubin, Administrator
Fern Jennings, Music Director
Christine Kozlevcar, Office Manager
Kathie Kitchingham, Membership Coordinator
Kay Kindice, Religious Education Assistant
Bob Romeo, Head Custodian
Eric Houston, Part-time Custodian
Tonya Dixon, Part-time Custodian

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Minutes of last year’s meeting provided at the back.

Ministry

Parish Minister

Greetings from Sabbatical Land! No, it's not a new amusement park, though one could go out on a limb and claim it is a "muse-ment" park of sorts. Thus do we take as our text for today this line from Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass: "I loafe, and invite my soul...." And invite my soul I have, grateful to all of you for this time of sabbatical. Thank you. This time has provided me with an opportunity to step away from the day-to-day dealings of our church's life and do some reading (depth psychology, poetry, and of course, some Rumi), some writing (mostly what I hope is poetry), and to simply stare into space - meaning to have the gift of time to look inward and study, feel and experience what I have come to call one's "inner weather." The value of such time, of such an opportunity, is priceless. And, again, I am deeply grateful.

There have been other advantages as well. This time enabled me to be fully present to Patricia as she prepared for, had, and began the long process of recovering from major surgery (she had an implant on the left side of her jaw replaced). It also gave us the time to search for, and find, a new home - just three streets away from where we have lived so far. By the time you read this, we will be moved and in the process of settling into our new digs at 3402 Dellwood in Cleveland Heights. Last, but not least, I have also been able to attend a bit more to my father who is ninety years old and lives just southeast of Columbus (in Pickerington). Again, having this kind of flexibility has been invaluable.

I want especially to thank three groups of people. First, our staff; they have carried on superbly in my absence and helped keep our church running smoothly and effectively. Particularly, I want to thank my colleague, George, who has taken on all the tasks of ministry to our congregation in my absence with skill and graciousness, and also the other member of our Staff Leadership Team, Doug Aubin, who has continued to offer us his attentive and efficient administration of our church. Second, our Board and our congregational president, Tom

McKenna, who have worked with dedication to carry forth and strengthen the vision that makes us the vital and growing community we are, and who have called upon so many of you to help make that vision the reality we live. Third, I want to single out one group who have helped make this time of sabbatical a restful one for me and an exciting one for you: the Sabbatical Services Committee, lead by Mary Ellen McNulty. They have brought both creativity and persistence to their task of keeping the pulpit filled in my absence, and I hope you take a moment to thank them for their wonderful efforts.

I will return to the office in August, ready and rested to prepare for our coming year together. I am looking forward to reuniting with you all this Fall, as we continue together as a community to embody the ideals of our liberal faith and to support and encourage one another in the living of that faith in our daily lives.

May the blessings of this Life, and the love that we share, sustain and encourage us all.

Daniel Budd



Minister for Religious Education

Staff Leadership Team - 2007/2008

The Staff Leadership Team includes Daniel Budd our Parish Minister, Doug Aubin our Administrator, and the Minister for Religious Education – that is me. We follow the policy guidance of the Board. Using this guidance, we coordinate the day to day operations of our congregation and supervise the work of paid and volunteer staff.

On the Staff Leadership Team, we rely heavily on our paid staff to carry out this work. And we also rely completely on dozens of volunteer teams and committees for these operations – worship, lifespan religious education, covenant groups, social justice ministries, pastoral care, communications, denominational connections, and many more too numerous to list.

We have relied even more on volunteers this year, with Daniel Budd on sabbatical from January to June 2008. The Sabbatical Committee, under the leadership of Mary Ellen McNulty, arranged six months worth of interesting ministers and speakers. I offer the members of the Sabbatical Committee our deepest thanks.

Other than Daniel's sabbatical, the biggest operational challenge in the past year was the emergency replacement of our boiler last fall. In September, the Board asked us to replace this boiler before winter - a very short turn around time. Our Administrator Doug Aubin and head Custodian Bob Romeo deserve our thanks for getting this done so effectively.

Doug and Bob also supervised the upgrading of our sanctuary roof and the ventilation for that roof. They used part of the proceeds from a Small Cheerful Campaign (a capital campaign) in December of 2007 for this roof upgrade. We expect this repair will mean no more drips into the sanctuary.

The past year has been eventful in lots of other ways. The whole congregation worked together to handle the Durall report meetings with support from staff. We coordinated your wonderful volunteer help to support our teenagers as they ran a successful district youth conference. Paid and volunteer staff supported the very successful Stewardship Campaign, and the successful "Small Cheerful Campaign" already mentioned. We coped with snowstorms. All this came in addition to the usual round of worship services, forums, newsletters, Sunday School classes,

small group meetings, Christmas services, Easter Services, pot lucks, and parties.

All in all, I think it has been a good year. And Daniel will be back with us beginning in August, refreshed from his sabbatical. I look forward to another exciting year beginning in September, building on the strengths we have already demonstrated, and drawing new ideas and energy into our community.

Minister For Religious Education Responsibilities

As Minister for Religious Education, I am responsible for programs in three major areas of our congregational life – Covenant Group Ministry, Adult Religious Education, and Youth (aged 0-19) Religious Education.

Our Covenant Group Ministry provides small group interaction for members and friends. I thank all our volunteer Covenant Group facilitators; our small groups succeed only with your skilled help. Wendy Macklin and Susan Underhill ably shared the chair in our Covenant Group Steering Committee. I offer my deep appreciation to Susan and Wendy and all the members of this Steering Committee for their hard work – advising on policy, handling registrations, running our annual party, and providing creative suggestions for new groups.

For Adult Education I relied on the Adult Education Committee to plan and staff our successful "Sunday Forum" series in 2007/2008. The Committee did a wonderful job, under the able direction of Mark Weber. Mark has now retired as Adult Education Committee chair after three solid years in that post. Thank you, Mark, for your skilled and careful leadership over the past three years. Susan Alcorn and Wayne Jennings stepped forward and now serve as co-chairs for this committee.

For Youth (aged 0-19) Religious Education, we counted on our excellent volunteer teachers and youth advisors. Again, these wonderful volunteers brought their presence to our children and teenagers. The members of the Youth Religious Education Committee provided support for our youth programs, and advice on program direction and curriculum. I offer my deep appreciation to all. Chuck Segall is retiring as committee chair – thanks for your excellent leadership this year, Chuck.

George Buchanan
Minister for Religious Education
"Open Minds, Helping Hands, Loving Hearts"

Covenant Group Steering

The committee, in its fourth year, continues to support a Covenant Group Ministry (CGM) program in the church, under the leadership of George Buchanan, Minister for Religious Education. The Committee works with the Church ministers, Daniel Budd and George Buchanan, to develop policy and evaluate the efficacy of the CGM program. It forms new groups while supporting existing groups in fulfilling the mission of CGM. The ministers recruit and train group facilitators and provide ongoing leadership development with the support of the Committee. The Steering Committee provides the registration process for the various groups with the assistance of the Church staff.

Covenant Groups consist of up to ten people who gather around an interest, affinity, activity, or set of topics to meet regularly for spiritual growth, community building, and Church participation. Group meetings follow a specified format. Each group is led by a trained facilitator who also participates in a facilitators' group led by the ministers. Each group establishes a covenant which includes ground rules for the group's relationship and interaction, commitment to welcome new members to the group, and service to the church and the community.

More than 110 Church members and friends have participated in the 11 Covenant Groups active this year.

- Exploring the Sacredness of Creating Friendship for Women
- Young Family Activity Group
- Post Retirement...Now What?
- Second Wednesday Topics Group
- Spiritual Values in Everyday Life
- Bereavement and Beyond
- Chapter by Chapter – Writing a Spiritual Autobiography
- A Sustainable World – An Exploration of Personal Actions, Feelings, and Goals
- Walking the Outdoors*
- Knitting Covenant Group*
- Aging and Becoming Elders: A Covenant Group for Men*

*First meetings in September, 2007

Registration for the groups is ongoing, as space permits, and “drives” are held at the beginning of the Church year in September and again in January. Our second annual Potluck was again a success and a time to say “thank you” to our facilitators.

Committee members include, Bill Alcorn, Wendy Macklin, Nancy King Smith, Jack Ulman, and Susan Underhill. Betty Root and Nancy Hammond joined our group in May.

Susan Underhill and Wendy Macklin, Co-chairs

Chancel

The charge to this Committee is to facilitate the ordering of flowers for Sunday services. For one Sunday, there is an average of 5-6 phone calls and/or emails.

There is considerable coordination required and this would not be possible without the consistent help of Christine Kozlevcar, who deserves special thanks.

In addition, the Committee oversees the supply of candles and oil for the chancel, chalice lighting, and remembrance lightings. Carol Gibson and the Alliance each made cash gifts to the Chancel this year. This is so helpful. We have a new pair of candle sticks and I'm looking for a new container.

For Easter and Christmas we arrange the special holiday plants.

This year Gali's florist on Chagrin Road (at Bolvoir) has supplied our flowers. Members have been delighted with the variety and quality of the arrangements. Gali's has been a pleasure to work with. I urge our members to call Gali's when shopping for floral arrangements.

The Chancel Committee members are Elke Chodorow, Nancy Saada, Susan Underhill, Marge Wilson

Marge Wilson

Music

Music Director

The highlight of this year was the appearance of noted composer, conductor and teacher, Alice Parker. Alice was with us for a week-end in December rehearsing with the choir, leading Sunday morning worship and leading a concert and sing. The concert was marred by a blizzard which was at its height during the afternoon. The choir is to be commended for 100% attendance in spite of the weather. The pieces performed were Christmas arrangements by Alice Parker and Robert Shaw, legendary conductor and First Church Director of Music in the 1960s. Thanks to all who contributed to make this weekend a success.

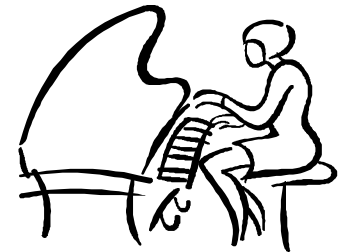
Other notable Sunday morning musical events this year were the Tropical Winds Steel Drum band for Ingathering; Tina Bergman and Brian Thomas, Hammered Dulcimer and Bass for Christmas; Brian Henke, Guitar and Howie Smith, Jazz Saxophone. Music Sunday in April featured music of Felix Mendelssohn. Music was a prominent part of the Earth Day service with anthems based on Wendell Berry texts featured.

The main activity of the Music Committee, chaired by Tom Gibson, was presenting "Musical Surprises" the church's concert series. This year's concerts included our own Women's Ensemble who performed with The River Valley Ringers; Diana Cohen's piano trio; Oberlin Conservatory of Music students; Les Delices, early music ensemble and Karl Lo, piano. The Cleveland Chamber Society sponsored a concert by the Prima Trio in our Sanctuary. This year we added receptions following the concerts in Fellowship Hall. Thanks to music committee members and others who assisted with these receptions. Thanks to Christine Kozlevcar for designing fliers and programs.

My special thanks and gratitude go to the wonderful members of the Chancel Choir and Women's Ensemble. These committed singers rehearse every Wednesday and come early on about three Sundays a

month to sing for morning service. It is humbling to me personally that these busy people choose to spend their free time singing with me. Ah, but what glorious use of time!

Fern Jennings



Leadership & Finance

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for financial oversight and strategic guidance of the church. Committees of the church that report directly to the Board include Finance and Membership. Various ad hoc task forces are occasionally established to handle specific issues or questions that the Board may need such a smaller group to investigate.

First Unitarian Church operates under a Policy-Based Governance (PBG) model. This governance model provides the Staff Leadership Team (SLT) of the church, which consists of the Parish Minister, the Minister for Religious Education and the Administrator, the authority to act on a daily basis to run the church. As part of PBG the Board has established Limitations on the actions of the SLT that it has determined are appropriate to guide the daily actions of the SLT in the efficient operation of the church. Most of the other standing committees of the church report directly to the SLT. The policies and procedures for PBG will continue to be developed and modified as needed by the Board.

Beginning in June and July of 2007, the First Unitarian Board of Trustees was busy and challenged with significant discussions and decisions about our church's future. A proposal by the Future Search Finance and Development Task Force was presented to the Board requesting the hiring of parish consultant Michael Durall to help the church take a fresh look at various aspects of our future. Since the new Board members who joined the Board at their first meeting in June had not had a chance to study and understand the proposal, a special Board meeting was held in early July to consider and vote on this proposal. The proposal was subsequently approved and plans were made to have Mike Durall begin his engagement in the fall.

Through the gracious invitation of Kathleen and Mark Binnig, the Annual Board Retreat was held on a Saturday in late August at their farm in Thompson, OH. The peaceful setting was conducive to various discussions about the Board plans for the coming year and allowed Board members to get to know one another a little better.

The first Durall weekend was held in early October. The weekend consisted of sessions on Friday night, all-day Saturday and concluded Sunday with Mike leading the worship service, speaking to the congregation from the pulpit and then hosting a short summary luncheon following the service. Mike's challenges to the congregation and leadership were exhilarating to many and disquieting to some. Mike followed the weekend with a preliminary report which was distributed to the members of the church in December, a follow-up visit in early March (with 30 dedicated members attending during a late winter blizzard!) and a final report distributed to the congregation in May.

The Board continued its debate and discussions about the issues and questions raised by the Durall report and its recommendations and ideas. One of the primary challenges to the church was to consider doing more, financially and collectively, outside the four walls of the church. In this spirit the Board approved a theme of the Stewardship Campaign committee focused around Outreach with a significant commitment of financial support for Outreach as part of the proposed 2008-09 budget. While not universally popular among church members, the Board believed that this approach was worth the risk and the Stewardship campaign was subsequently one of the more successful ones of recent years.

As we conclude the church year, the Board will continue to have significant debates about how to grow the church in many ways: financial, membership and its standing in the communities to which it is connected. These debates will continue at least over the next several years and the solid ground-work done by this board cannot be underestimated. The respect and good humor that Board members showed to each other, to the church staff and SLT and to members of the congregation along with the thoughtful consideration of issues important to the future of the church makes me proud to have been able to serve with them. Please join me in thanking the Board members for their time, effort and leadership.

Tom McKenna
President, Board of Trustees

Finance

The Finance Committee meets each month one week before the Board meeting. We review the monthly income and expenses as well as the investment performance. We discuss upcoming significant expenditures to determine if they are appropriate given the money available in the budget. Our other major activity is to develop a proposed budget to present to the Board in April. As I write this report, we are preparing for the first of two congregational meetings for discussion about the proposed budget. The budget will be voted on at the annual meeting in June.

This year the Board created an ad-hoc committee that I chaired to review the policies around the investment fund. This small committee met several times and also led a well-attended congregational meeting to discuss our findings and solicit suggestions. We presented our recommendations to the Board in April. Some recommendations relating to financial transparency have already been adopted. Other recommendations are being evaluated by the Board, and most of these will require modifications to Board or Governance policies.

Don Stimpert
Treasurer

Investment

The final meeting of the Investment Committee for the fiscal year 2007-08 was held on April 10, 2008 with our advisors from the Private Financial Group of Huntington Bank. The goal of our financial portfolio is to provide a dependable stream of income to support Church operations, preserve capital, and promote long-term growth of the investment funds. Established guidelines approved by the Board set the investing parameters for the Advisory Group and are regularly monitored by our Committee. The current portfolio represents a well-diversified balance of equities and fixed income investments. Over the preceding twelve months the overall portfolio continued to perform well with equities surpassing their benchmarks. See below table for a summary of investment returns.

The current members of the Investment Committee are: Wallace Adler, John Barber, Herb Buckman, Richard Dietzen, Luther Stevens, Don Stimpert, and David Youngs, Chair.

Submitted by David Youngs

First Unitarian Church of Cleveland

Class	Benchmark	Portfolio Allocation	Last 3 Years		Last 5 Years	
			Class Return	Benchmark Return	Class Return	Benchmark Return
Money Mkts. & Equivalents	Lipper Money Market Index	1.86%	3.89%	4.11%	2.55%	2.78%
Taxable Bonds	Lehman Bros Intern Govt/Credit Index	29.01%	5.05%	5.67%	3.80%	4.36%
Equities	Standard & Poor's 500 Stock Index	69.12%	7.44%	5.84%	11.63%	11.31%
Total Net Fees		100.00%	5.99%	N/A	8.39%	N/A

Stewardship

This year's Stewardship Campaign was "Reach Out and Touch." After our Future Search weekend and Mike Durall's visits, it was decided to do a theme that would help us fulfill a goal to take care of ourselves as well as others in the larger community - namely, to be become more generous as a congregation. We suggested an all church read of Stephen Post's book, *Why Good things Happen to Good People*, and gave that book as gifts to our major givers. We did have a major giver's kick-off event and an all church gathering with a talk by Stephen Post. Both events were well attended and generated lots of discussion.

We encouraged people to be Prime Givers, Aspiring Prime Givers, and Charitable Giving Tithers, as well as to move one step up on our Stewardship Giving Ladder. The results were very encouraging: 31 Prime Givers, 9 Aspiring Prime Givers, 8 Charitable Giving Tithers and 62 families moving up at least one step on the giving ladder - many went up more than one step. So, it appears that the goal of increasing generosity was reached. Our goal was \$500,000. At this point, our estimated pledges are \$470,000, a 15% increase over last year.

Thank you all for your participation and generosity - hopefully, we will be able to have an impact in our own community and outside our church walls because of it.

Mary Ellen McNulty and David Kantor

Heritage

The Committee prepared and printed for distribution to the Congregation a pamphlet entitled "For Our Tomorrow's." The Committee also sponsored a discussion with an estate planning attorney for all interested Church members and friends. Next year the Committee will sponsor a similar discussion with a financial planner.

John Gibbon, Chairperson

Administrator

Much progress has been made on the appearance and maintenance of the church over the past twelve months. Last summer, the church exterior, excepting the windows, was painted. The north basement wall was waterproofed as well. Last fall the Board made the decision to replace our 54 year-old boiler for a new efficient model. With natural gas prices projected to double this year, we will be thankful for the Board's decision.

This spring, we insulated and ventilated the attic over the sanctuary. This should prevent the ice dams from forming in extremely cold weather. We will also be repairing the gutters involved with the ice dams. We also transformed the Groom's Room this spring. I invite all of you to come by this summer and see the tremendous improvement made to this space.

This summer will be extremely busy as we work with the Aesthetics Committee on the appearance of the church. The maintenance staff will continue the work on the Groom's and Bride's Rooms this summer.

The list of projects for this summer includes:

1. Painting the exterior of all the windows.
2. Installation of "at the source" water heater in the kitchen.
3. Tree Surgeon trimming of all the trees surrounding the church.
4. Stripping and waxing of all tile floors.

Other projects will present themselves and will be accomplished as the summer months progress. I hope all members have a great summer and I look forward to another productive church year.

Douglas A. Aubin

Congregational Affairs

Membership

Mission

The mission of the Membership Committee is to address issues of fellowship and community within the church community, establish and monitor membership procedures, welcome visitors and prospective new members, create an overall atmosphere of hospitality within the church, provide a pathway to membership in the church, and support the work of the church staff.

Membership

Membership on the committee is open to anyone who wishes to participate. Currently there are 20 persons serving on the committee.

Activities

- Three new member orientation sessions and book signings September thru June
- One new member orientation session during summer
- Round Robin potluck dinners and events
- Hanging of the Greens/Downing of the Browns
- Distribution of simple posters
- All-Church Cookbook (in progress) of diverse recipes primarily those used at church functions over the years
- Ongoing efforts at hospitality and consciousness raising about making everyone feel welcome and valued
- Planned for fall - hospitality workshop
- Welcome and Announcements Calendar for weekly worship services, and annual party to plan and organize that calendar

Goals for Future

Much of the energy of the committee was devoted this year to studying, considering, and discussing the findings and suggestions of Michael Durall. The great majority of the time at all of our meetings was devoted to this. No conclusions were drawn or consensus arrived at, but the ideas were very well-digested. So now it is time to move on to the next step and that step is the critical one that the Durall Report lays out - identifying a constituency of the

future. When that constituency/cohort is identified, then it is time to direct our energies toward attracting that constituency.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Wilson, Chairperson



Aesthetics

Newly formed in the spring of 2008, concerned members have met to discuss reasonable ways in which our building can be made more attractive, less cluttered, less messy. We have met with Doug, George, and Board President, Tom McKenna and received positive support from them.

In particular, we are looking at the parking lot, the entry way, Fellowship Hall, the re-cycling and collection area, and the hallway in RE wing. Broken and mismatched furniture will be replaced and the profusion of signs will be toned down.

We made some small changes; we painted and planted the flower boxes, removed an 8-month old sign from the wall, and removed the rusty old Ohio Special Olympics collection bin in the parking lot, which was attracting piles of material outside the box.

Members are encouraged to share their thoughts, concerns and suggestions regarding our Church's aesthetic message.

Marge Wilson, facilitator

Communications

In its third year, the committee continued to provide a structured forum for the discussion and implementation of church communications policies and procedures. Members of the committee are Alison Bashian, Paul Breitzmann, Maureen Maas, Anne Sanford and Alison Whitney.

As part of our print advertising, the church was listed every Saturday in the Plain Dealer "Worship Directory." We also published four special ads in the Plain Dealer and Sun Press for Opening Sunday (early September), Christmas, Easter and the Music Service in late April.

Our newspaper ads received a slight facelift. A chalice replaced the church steeple, so First Unitarian wouldn't be confused with Parkside Church, and "A Welcoming Unitarian Universalist Congregation" was added below the church name. This print advertising is where we spend our entire \$2600 annual budget. We feel it is as basic as listing the church name in the phone book.

The committee wrote a brochure entitled "Remember Me," an update of the old "My Wishes" brochure. This is the third in a series, the first two being "Weddings"(2006) and "Memorial Services and Funerals" (2007). It allows church members to inform family members and our ministers of their own memorial service wishes. The brochure is available in the literature rack.

The committee also produced a flyer inviting college students to join us. It was posted on college campus bulletin boards last fall. Our current project is the updating of the light gray visitors' guide in the pew racks. The section on church history is being tightened up a bit, and brought up to the 21st century.

The church's modest web site was maintained throughout the year by our Web Steward, Paul Breitzmann. Behind the scenes, Paul is designing a new "content-managed" site, with help from the committee and staff members. We hope to unveil it this summer.

Our primary design focus for the new site is to attract visitors to the church. Our secondary focus is to

inform church members of current news and events. Our third focus has been drummed into us by a certain Administrator who reminds us, "They want lots of photos!" We hear you, and are working hard to include photos of church activities.

As always, the committee welcomes your observations and suggestions.

Anne Sanford

Newsletter

The newsletter has cruised along well this year continuing as a monthly issue for the fourth year so I think we can safely say the membership has adjusted! It is also placed on the website after publication.

Christine and I are in our second year of our new editing process – she emails me the copy, I edit it that evening, and drop it off at First Church the next morning. Although we miss seeing each other, the system is working very well with my full time work schedule.

Now that the Newsletter is officially part of the Communications Committee, I envision being able to more effectively use it as a tool to grow our membership and inform our members.

Maureen Maas, Editor

Cary Alburn Library

The library is open and welcomes visitors before and after services every Sunday. Secondly, the library is used as a comfortable small meeting space.

Our catalog is now on line at www.librarything.com/catalog/firstuuclevelib.

We are on the Interesting Library List of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Toronto and the UU church in Little Rock, Arkansas.

We now send electronic overdue notices to members with e-mail. Post cards are sent out to those without e-mail.

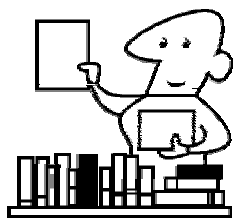
We have requested a budget of \$400.00 from our temporarily restricted funds, and an extra \$175.00 to cover our expenses for the coming year.

The church library has 718 titles. Our selection focuses on books covering current and historical information about the denomination, topics in philosophy, theology, Bible study, and social issues of interest to our congregation. Authors and topics which are frequently mentioned in sermons are also added.

We continue to cancel books that are dated, worn out, or not relevant to our mission. We are grateful for the donations that have been left in the library mail box or on the desk. If a donated book does not suit the purposes of our collection, it is passed on to a public library.

The committee has received many positive comments from members of the congregation. We will continue our efforts to improve the library. We are looking for more committee members.

Kathleen and Mark Binnig



Adult Education Programs

Our church has a strong tradition of inquiry, in which we examine our place in many communities, including our family, neighborhood, region and the world. Adult education programs address issues that are personal as well as global, secular as well as spiritual.

The main purpose of the Adult Education Committee is to complement the efforts of our ministers and other committees by providing community forums on Sunday mornings with speakers, panels, and discussions on issues of interest to the community, including church members, friends, and people responding to publicity notices. Attendance varies from 40 to 100.

Forum topics this year included Universal Health Care; Religious Humanism; Race, Class and Diversity in the Heights; UU Ministry for the Earth, Libertarianism; The Foreclosure Crisis, Today's Online Culture, and many other topics for a total of 22.

The committee also provides additional opportunities to discuss issues, including evening salons in homes, which started in April.

Susan Alcorn and Wayne Jennings, Co-Chair

Off Campus Studies

After a historic record-making 30 years of heading the Adult Education Program Committee offered by the CWRU Off Campus Studies, Peter and Heidi Spencer took a well-deserved rest and Joan Harris volunteered as coordinator. The 2007 fall course was Darwin: The Life of a Tormented Evolutionist led by Michael Petit; the 2008 spring offering was Dorothy Parker and the Algonquin Round Table led by Suzanne Gold.

The program at the church is now coordinated for CWRU by two non-church members, Marilyn Brooks and Melvin Phillips.

Joan Harris

Ushers

This was my second year as Usher Coordinator. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our ushers, with special thanks to our Usher Captains, and a special welcome to our ushers Francoise Rolland and Cynthia Tayler. The following list of 16 ushers includes their years of service (to the best of our knowledge):

Joanne Billiar	10 years!
Sally Miller, Captain	8 years
Gordon Maas	6 years
Maureen Maas, Usher Coordinator	6 years
Nancy Hammond	6 years
Julie Short	6 years
Eric Hsi, Captain	5 years
Diane Christensen	3 years
Wayne Jennings	2 years
Kelli McKenna	2 years
Barbara Glauser	2 years
Erin O'Connor	2 years
Betty Root	2 years
Laurene Smith	2 years
Francoise Rolland	1 year
Cynthia Taylor	1 year

As my sixth year of ushering comes to an end, I have found myself ready to move on to new adventures. As they say, timing is everything. As I realized was I ready for a change, I was asked by the First Church Nominating Committee if I would be interested in serving on the Board, which I am looking forward to doing.

Laurene Smith has graciously agreed to become the new Usher Coordinator. I am aware of the need to replace three ushers as of now and will help Laurene recruit new ushers. I will also help her set up the new schedule and make recommendations for new ushers to be placed with seasoned captains.

It was another good year.

Maureen Maas

Social Justice

Social Justice Ministries Council

The Social Justice Ministries Council coordinates and supports the congregation's Social Justice Ministries by setting policy, allocating the Social Justice budget allotment, facilitating the establishment of new Ministries and providing networking opportunities. The Council also serves as a communication link with the Ohio-Meadville District and Unitarian Universalist Association social justice committees and departments, the congregation and the community. We currently have seven active Ministries: Adopt-A-School, HIV/AIDS Action Committee, Multiracial Action Committee, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Open Doors After School Program, Ministry for Earth (environmental initiatives), and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Our congregation participates in additional community projects through Interreligious Partners in Action of Greater Cleveland (InterAct Cleveland). This year's collaborations included an expanded winter Homeless Stand Down, offering four days of shelter and essential services to homeless men, women and children. Our partnership in InterAct also provided opportunities for inter-religious dialogues and collaborations.

Our Social Justice Ministries offer opportunities to put our principles and values into action. Through the Ministries we are an active and positive presence in the community and the world. You are invited to add your energy and inspiration to the Ministries or to the Council by contacting the chair or a member of any of them.

Sharon Sternberger

Adopt-A-School

Adopt-A-School will complete its 24th year at John W. Raper. This has been a challenging year at the school which has had three principals and five secretaries. We are especially fortunate to have volunteers who are devoted to supporting the staff and students at the school in their goals. Ten of our members have volunteered throughout the year in the classroom and during our three RIF (Reading is Fundamental) book distributions. Six non-members have been participants in the RIF program. In addition we are fortunate to have Eve Bendezu, current Sixth Grade Teacher and Church Member, who is able to identify ways we can be most effective.

During Adopt-A-School meetings, it became clear that our volunteers need a better understanding of the culture at Raper. A "Do's" and "Don'ts" list is being prepared for new volunteers.

Kevin Ortner's recent visit to the school as Principal -for-a-Day inspired both students and staff, and highlights the need for career sharing by adult roll models. We invite more of our members to consider visiting the school and sharing with a student group.

Our church contributed \$388 as our share for the RIF grant. The Heinens Fund donated \$110 for additional 100 storybooks. Approximately 1570 books will be in students' hands by the end of the school year. The Religious Education 5th and 6th grade classes' book collection has made it possible for classrooms to add to their libraries. The congregation's two collections for Raper are meeting a need for activities for 7th and 8th graders. First Unitarian has continued its commitment to this inner city school and is one, if not the last, of the original congregations in the Adopt-A-School Program.

Further details on volunteer opportunities will be listed in articles planned for newsletters in the future. It is clear that there continues to be a strong commitment to continuing First Unitarian's involvement at John W. Raper.

Sally Miller, chair

AIDS Action

The events and activities listed below involved myself and others from First Unitarian Church:

- September: AIDS WALK. Donations collected and delivered.
- November: PRE WORLD AIDS DAY CONFERENCE in Columbus, Ohio.
- December: HIV-AIDS Healing Weekend at Widewater Methodist Camp.
- December - January: Annual Holiday Cookie Collection; donations from many, including children. Distribution of homemade hats, scarfs and gloves from Happy Hookers to Proyecto-Luz, The American Indian Center and the new Metro Homeless Youth Program.
- December: Items from the RE grades 1-3 MITTEN TREE were taken to Proyecto-Luz, The American Indian Center and a few other children from needy families.
- April: At the Music of the Black Church Concert Kim Dennis, spokesperson for TAKE CHARGE: TAKE THE TEST talked with people during refreshment time in Fellowship Hall.
- April: The Annual Ohio Dept. of health - Ohio AIDS Colition HIV-AIDS Leadership Conference in Columbus, Ohio.
- May: Spring Methodist Healing Weekend Retreat at Widewater Camp.
- May: Jim Price was nominated for another two year term as a Community Co-Chair of the Cuyahoga Regional Advisory Group for HIV Prevention. (election in June)
- June: We are asking all who walked in the PRIDE PARADE in previous years to do so on June 21 and bring along a few others. Parade Route: Assemble on W. 3 St. off Public Square North to lakeside Ave. East to E. 9 St. North to Voinivich Park. Festival to follow all afternoon.

Jim Price

Open Doors Program

The Open Doors After School Enrichment Program had a dynamic year!

We registered over 25 students and saw an average group of 10 to 12 7th and 8th graders from Shaker Middle School each day.

Highlights include movement workshops with members of Verlezza Dance Company and numerous service learning projects including: a fall food drive, a shoe drive to benefit an orphanage in Tanzania, preparing a meal for IHN families, and doing service work at Ronald McDonald House and the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

Creative expression and team building were two main components this year, and the students really shined onstage reading original poetry and presenting their projects for African American History Month. We also had ongoing discussion groups focused on the issues that teens must face every day.

We took the students on field trips to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Notre Dame College for a play, the Nature Center, Fun and Stuff, and Hiram House Camp where students climbed a 35 foot wall.

Our incredible group of 10 volunteers had a good experience this year writing, creating and cooking with the students.

Amy Rosenbluth, Director
Vontrice Jones, Assistant Director

Multiracial Action

The Multiracial Action Committee is comprised of members from First Unitarian Church and East View United Church of Christ. The title of our Committee describes our purpose and our activities. We strive to bring members of our congregations and the greater community together to further understanding of our racial, religious, and cultural points of view both through working together on common projects and through support of other organizations which further goals and values consistent with our mission. We also provide opportunities for members of the Church who wish to help occasionally with outreach projects without the need to join our Committee formally.

This year we welcomed a number of new members and we hope to continue attract more people interested in our outreach efforts and fellowship. We welcome anyone who would like to join us. The fall season found us planning several projects. In October, the committee was introduced by one of our members to La Jean Ray, director of the Fatima Family Center. After Ms. Ray visited our meeting and gave us an overview of the history, services and programs of the center, the Committee decided to consider ways to support this facility. The Fatima Family Center serves, primarily, the Hough/Central neighborhood of Cleveland and provides emergency services and educational and recreational programs for members of the community. The Center is working with the problem of gangs and is attempting to strengthen academics of residents and to address unemployment of young men.

In December, Committee members collected and donated toys for the Fatima Family Center's Christmas Toyland, Joyland program where financially stressed parents shop for toys for their children. The committee later decided to also support the Fatima Family Center with funds raised through the Music of the Black Church Benefit Concert.

On February 24, 2008, the Multiracial Action Committee joined with Open Doors and some casual volunteers to stage a Soul Food Dinner as a fundraiser to support the Open Doors After School Program. Open Doors provides enrichment,

mentoring and tutoring, directed by professional staff, for students from the nearby Shaker Heights Middle School. Chef Horace Reese directed preparation of fine food which proved to be extraordinarily popular. Attendees were entertained during dinner by Open Doors students. This dinner was very well attended and raised about \$1,090.00 of much-needed funding, considerably more than our last year's fundraiser for Open Doors.

We successfully held our 11th Annual Music of the Black Church Benefit Concert on Sunday, April 6, 2008 with the help of non-Committee volunteers from both First Unitarian and East View. This year we staged a mix of nationally known and lesser known acts, all from the local area. Reverend Valentino Lassiter from East View narrated the program. The audience particularly enjoyed the highly professional Concert Choir of the local magnet high school, Cleveland School of the Arts. This year the concert raised the most money ever and the net proceeds, about \$2,000.00, will be split evenly between the Cleveland School of the Arts and the Fatima Family Center. Committee members greatly enjoyed working together along with other volunteers to plan and stage this popular event.

Committee members also helped with Interfaith Hospitality at First Unitarian in both March and October and will help again in May. Members from both of our churches prepared dinners and helped host the homeless families staying at First Unitarian.

We are now preparing for our potluck planning picnic to be held at the home of Barbara Cox. We will elect new leadership and explore possible new projects for next year.

Alan Sharp Co-chair
First Unitarian Church

Jim Donald Co-chair

UU Ministry for Earth

The UU Ministry for Earth Committee (UUMFE) had an active and exciting year as we made progress towards applying to be a candidate for Green Sanctuary. The committee is aligned with the national UUMFE whose purpose is to support and promote the 7th UU Principle: “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” It focuses on the theological, spiritual, and ethical implications of human behaviors and activities that affect the health and sustainability of the living Earth.

The environmental assessment, including an energy audit, was completed and a survey of individual congregational practices was created using Survey Monkey to establish a baseline. The audit revealed that the church was already doing many things to be more sustainable, and that congregational awareness and interest is growing. The energy audit led to the purchase of a new boiler and a less expensive solution (and hopefully more effective) to the leaking roof by insulation and venting.

The assessment gave guidance toward developing a draft action plan that is intended to transform the congregation’s relationship to the earth and all its species as it moves through the Green Sanctuary certification process over the next two to three years. The action plan covers all aspects of church life including building and grounds, religious education, worship and celebration, and environmental justice. It was presented to the congregation following the April 13 Earth Day service for discussion. The committee intends to submit the application for Green Sanctuary candidacy in June.

UUMFE sponsored the Earth Day service which was led by the Sustainable Practices Covenant Group and featured, to great acclaim, an intergenerational dramatic play reading, “Mother Earth vs. the World’s People.” Following the service, the committee offered lunch featuring local foods, followed by the presentation and discussion of the Green Sanctuary action plan.

The committee arranged a forum on Faith Communities as Agents of Environmental Change presented by Aaron Godwin of the Renaissance

Group who conducted the energy audit. Compact Fluorescent bulbs were sold on a regular basis.

The committee helped expand and consolidate the various recycling activities in the church, including mercury thermometers, CFL’s, cell phones, ink cartridges, batteries, eyeglasses and soda can tabs, in addition to cans and bottles. The Abitibi paper recycling program continues to bring in income. Kitchen composting was initiated, using the newly constructed compost bins on the west side of the parking lot.

Nancy King Smith

Interfaith Hospitality Network

First Unitarian Church hosted homeless families three weeks this church year. We served over seven families so far, with more to come at the end of May. We have over 126 active volunteers providing meals, conversation, entertainment and their presence to assist these families. We need about 70 volunteers for each host week.

At Christmas we sponsored two families, recent IHN guests, in apartments. We were able to provide gifts and gift cards for food and household items to the families.

Park Synagogue assists us with volunteers and contributions. The IHN Committee invites you to ask how you can contribute to hosting or being a part of the IHN Committee.

Carol Gay and Kim Littell, Co-chairs

Fun and Service

Bookstore

The Bookstore committee offers for sale a selection of books on religious and non-religious topics based on suggestions from our ministers, committee members and friends. The Bookstore is open in Fellowship Hall after the Sunday service whenever there is not a conflict with another use of the hall. Profits from book sales are donated to the church.

New committee members are always welcome. The only commitment is to work at the bookstore once a month. Members receive the UUA Bookstore catalog and other sources to keep abreast of current books of interest. Please contact us at the book table if you are interested.

Steve Bottorff
Peter Spencer
Mark Weber
Dick and Mary Dietzen

Women's Dance Circle

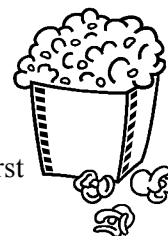
Music and dance are universal languages that allow us to tap into a special part of ourselves. The Women's Dance Circle has met for over 25 years on a unique spiritual journey. Moving expressively in the same room with other women engages us and opens our bodies and spirits to new forms of communication. Wednesdays from 4:00-5:00 in the Worship Center is also a special time for us to listen to eclectic music, have fun, and learn new ways of expressing ourselves without words in a supportive group. Once a month Lesley Keller, a gifted teacher, helps us center ourselves, and explore the dance of ourselves unfolding in the present moment. Cost is \$15.00 per person from 4:00-5:30. Otherwise the weekly sessions are free. Questions? Contact susanalcorn1@gmail.com.

Susan Alcorn

First Friday Flicks

Since November of 2007, we have viewed five movies, each one on the first Friday of the month at 7:30 pm. The March showing had to be cancelled, however, because of a snow storm. Our lowest attendance was 14. No movie was shown in May and as of this writing, the June movie has yet to be viewed. This is truly a bargain evening. Good movie, popcorn and relaxation for only 50 cents per evening. Members, friends and guests are all welcome.

Betty Root



Alliance

The Alliance, the longest-standing organization of our Church, includes both men and women. We meet regularly for fellowship and for service to our Church and community.

Our major service this past year marked the conclusion of our 3-year commitment to install the automatic handicapped accessible door at the R.E. entrance. A donation to Open Doors funds some dance activities with our Verlezza Dance Studio. The Alliance also contributed to the service auction effort to provide some book bags with supplies to students at John Raper School.

Jack Ulman planned a wide variety of interesting programs. The programs are announced in the monthly *Unitarian*.

We welcome visitors and newcomers to all programs.

Jean Moss, President

Book Group

The First Unitarian Church's Book Discussion Group began meeting monthly in January 2005. We meet the second Sunday of the month except August and December from 7:00-9:00 pm, usually in Fellowship Hall. At our July meeting, we have an extended meeting and picnic when we select books for the next year. We alternate fiction (F) and nonfiction (NF) titles. We've had 10 meetings in the past year, with the following titles:

- *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (F)
- *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* by Vali Nasr (NF)
- *Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal* by Christopher Moore (F)
- *The Last Days of Europe: Epitaph for an Old Continent* by Walter Laqueur (NF)
- *Thread of Grace* by Mary Doria Russell (F)
- *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins (NF)
- *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodie Picoult (F)
- *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole* by Benj. Barber (NF)
- *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khalid Hosseini (F)
- *Gertrude Bell: Queen of the Desert, Shaper of Nations* by Georgina Howell (NF)

We have a core group of about 8 or so "regulars," and others have come out of interest in a particular title or topic, including persons who are not members of First Unitarian. Please join us.

Laurie Albright and Brian Larson

Couples Bridge Group

The long-standing Unitarian Couples Bridge Group, with records dating back to 1965 when it was chaired by Winifred Brown, decided last year amidst ever-shrinking numbers to become the Unitarian Duplicate Bridge Group. We met in our church on 4th Sundays this year. But it has remained difficult to manage numbers and schedules, so after a potluck in June, we will be folding our tent. Our bank account will be donated to the church along with some new, high quality card tables.

Jackie Stimpert

ArtsNet

We bring art ... to teach,
to touch. to heal,
to inspire.

The ArtsNet Committee had a successful year, starting with the Real May Art Show, with great art by members and friends. Our Holiday Gift Sale brought wonderful arts and crafts for us to buy as holiday gifts.

We opened Gallery One in Fellowship Hall where we are able to display paintings and sculpture for all to see. Our opening featured the paintings and drawings of Horace Reese. Our second showing was the photography of Jim Giannelos. We are fortunate to have artists of such high caliber in our membership.

Our "SPIRIT: Art and Spirituality" program brought Sabatino Verlezza and his dance company to a church service in October. They presented a new composition by Sabatino, "Illuminations," choreographed for our sanctuary. And Sabatino spoke to us about the unique language of dance to express our deepest feelings.

Thanks, Horace, Jim, and Sabatino!

We look forward to a new church year ... and we welcome your help. Let us know if you are interested.

Pete Spencer