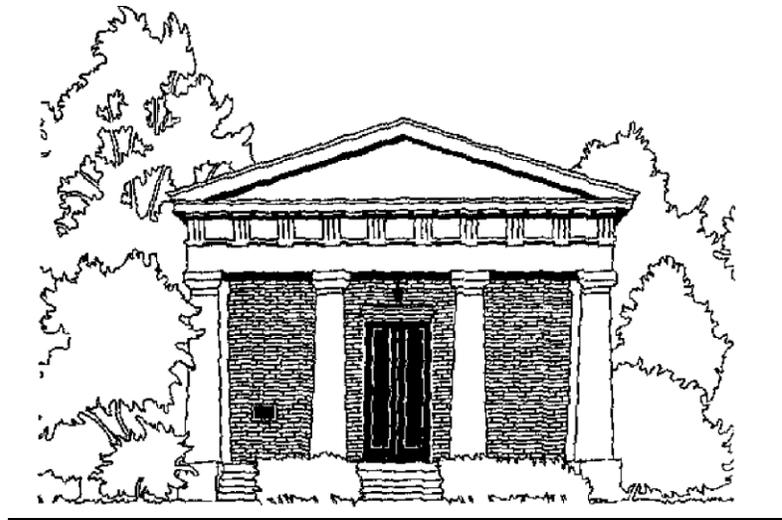


UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF MEADVILLE 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

UNISON AFFIRMATION OF COVENANT AND MISSION

Our **COVENANT** is to be a loving, joyful community that nurtures spiritual growth, promotes compassion, social responsibility, and service in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Our **MISSION** is to be a faith community devoted to love and respect, reason and justice.

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Call to Meeting and Agenda

Call to Order - Establish quorum

Approval of Minutes 2015 Annual Meeting

Minister's Report

Approval of Reports

Election of Officers for 2 year term 1/17 - 12/18

Mission and Outreach - Carlin Almes

Clerk - Ariel Denman

Treasurer - John Stewart (to complete term of begun by Mike Wilcox to end
12/31/17)

Election of Trustee

Current Board members serving second year of 2 year term:

President- Deb Lehman

Vice President - Dave Anderson

Stewardship - Peggy Bell

Member at Large - Stewart Rothman

Approval of proposed By-Law changes - see attached

Approval of Budget. - see attached.

New Business.

Resolution: Whereas the healthy financial state of the congregation did not necessitate the withdrawal of funds from the endowment in 2016 and the proposed budget for 2017 does not rely on a withdrawal from the Endowment for operating expenses, the congregation authorizes the Board to withdraw 5% of the Endowment in 2017 to be used for necessary maintenance and capital improvements and budget short falls- if necessary.

Adjournment

2015 Annual Meeting Minutes

December 6, 2015

Quorum = 30

Present = 36

Approval of Annual Meeting 2014 Minutes:

A correction was proposed by Corinne that Rich and Joan are added to the list of Strategic Planning Team members. Amelia motioned to accept the minutes with the correction, Mike seconded, the motion passed.

Reports:

Lana's report was accidentally omitted from the packet. Jana summarized for the congregation. Lisbet raised the question of who was in charge of restricted fund spending. After a discussion of how to handle these funds, it was made know that the treasurer is ultimately in charge of spending. Deb offered to publicly post committee jobs so that the people involved were better able to perform their duties.

Rich moved to accept the reports, Emmy seconded, the motion passed.

New Business:

Mike informed the congregation of a letter he received from UU headquarters in Boston a month ago stating that they are forming an LLC to handle endowment funds. We have the option to transfer our fund to theirs, which would protect us from law suits from losses of our money. However, in Mike's opinion, because of the high fees and with the UUA in charge of bookkeeping, we are left in the dark and wouldn't know our balance for a month. Refinancing indicates a 3.4% loss in UUA funds but an increase in earnings in our new Vanguard account. The loss seems to be largely due to administration. We need a Finance Committee of 5 members (we currently have 3). Mike nominated Corrine and Rick and he also asked that we renew the current committee members. Rich moved to close nominations and Joyce seconded. Nominations were approved. The Finance Committee intends to recommend who oversees the endowment and will recommend to move our funds out of the UUA account. Mike moved to allow all six people to serve in the committee.

Budget:

Mike presented the budget for next year. The current pledge level was \$92,000 and did not account for the 22 people who pledged to pay dues. Mike considered these pledges additions to the budget and these funds (\$101 for each pledging member) would appear as restricted gifts and placed into an escrow. Mike expressed that if pledges to not come in, he reserved the right to utilize this money for purposes other than dues in late December. However, since dues are due in June, he agreed to use the approximately \$2K pledged for dues to pay dues and reserve the budget live until December 31st. To do this, members are required to indicate money given for pledges and money given for dues somehow, such as a note on the memo line of a check. Sue M. asked about restoring a salary for the Music Director. Mike stated that with

restricted gifts specifically for Amy's salary of \$4,800 or for Rachel's salary of \$7,200, we could restore these positions. Joan offered that Worship Committee have a discussion with Rachel and perhaps solicit the membership for these gifts. Mike expressed that we would still need to plan according to the budget, but that these funds would need to be an addition to the budget. Rick H. indicated that while endowment funds would be better suited to fulfill our long-term goals that we could use endowment money to make up money for these salaries. Rick moved that we use endowment money to cover the \$8,760 (to restore these salaries to the 2015 level), Amelia Carr seconded the motion. Mike pressed concern that the endowment had lost money in the previous year and that we needed this money for emergencies, roof repairs over the Arthur Room, and exterior repairs, etc., and since we receive about 10% less the pledged funds, we cannot afford to do this. After a lengthy discussion, Joyce supported the motion and called to end the debate. So moved. The official motion was to raise spending to \$8,760 for DRE and Music Director salaries to the 2015 levels and use funds from the endowment if necessary. The motion carried with 5 oppositions. A motion was made to approve the budget and was seconded by Karen. Budget approved with the agreed modifications.

Slate of Officers:

Dave Anderson presented the slate, including those nominated for the Finance Committee with an understanding that more committee members were needed. Corrine moved to approve the slate, Mike seconded, and the slate was approved.

Lisbet thanked the board members for their service. A motion was made to adjourn, seconded, and so moved.

Ariel Denman, Clerk

2016 Minister's Annual Report

Friends,

It's hard to believe I have only been amongst you for three months! In such a short time, I've come to know many of you and experience your hospitality, your zest for your community, your proud history, your disappointments and losses, and your hopes for the future of the UU Church of Meadville.

As your Interim Minister, I've been observing, participating and initiating, in collaboration with staff, congregants, and leaders. The Board, Transition Team and myself gained some new and helpful understandings from our retreat with Evin Carville-Ziemer of the UUA Congregational Services staff.

We've moved forward with plans for monthly "Thinking it Through with the Transition Team" listening circles to prepare for a ministerial search; the Board has approved new signage to more broadly proclaim our identity to the community, and we'll be using social media such as Facebook, the Meadville Tribune, and a new website to further that effort.

I had so much fun accompanying Peggy Bell on our circuit ride to the Stewardship dinners in October. The smashing success of these dinners and of the stewardship campaign as a whole bodes well for the ongoing re-energizing of the congregation. You should all be proud of this success and what a funded budget will enable us to do as a community.

In collaboration with the worship committee, RE committee, and our excellent staff, we've initiated some small changes to Sunday morning that will increase the time in the classroom for our excellent curriculum and offer more flexibility in worship. In January, I will begin a monthly Adult Faith Development course called Soul Matters to which all will be welcome. And, a women's retreat is scheduled (and in the planning stages) for February 4.

A big thank you to all of the volunteers who are giving their time and talent to Sunday morning efforts such as pulpit assistant, flowers, sound team, coffee hour and ushering. I feel well-supported whenever I am in the pulpit. And to those who cook and clean for your fabulous social gatherings!

Beyond our congregation, I've begun meeting with one of the local clergy groups and we're discussing collaborations such as a series called "Sacred Conversations on Race." On this topic, I've offered my support to the local SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice) group and its representatives in our church such as Lisbet and Shayna.

Deep gratitude for making me feel so welcomed and for opening yourself to new ministry once again. Let's make 2017 another year of growth, joy, hospitality, love, and spirit.

In faith,

Rev. Robin

2016 Board President's Annual Report

2016 was a year of rapid change and growth for UUCM congregation. Early in the year we learned that our interim minister, Pam Allen-Thompson was diagnosed with early onset dementia. With her retirement and the ending of her ministry, our trial in sharing a minister with the Erie congregation also ended. Both churches proceeded independently to hire part time interim ministers.

UUCM was fortunate to have the opportunity to hire a Robin Zucker as our part time interim minister. Already Robin has helped us to pull together to manifest the promise of our UU tradition. She has galvanized the Board and congregation to begin to follow through on the recommendations in the Strategic Plan by lifting up UU Principles through better signage. Over the next few months Robin will help to create opportunities to revive covenant groups. Together with our minister and Transition Team the congregation will begin the tasks of the interim period, including discernment about the type of minister we want and can afford.

My personal journey this year included attending my first General Assembly. Of the many inspiring speakers and workshops the one that resonates with me still is the Ware Lecture by Krista Tippet. In the current polarized political climate her words are even more timely and relevant. Tippet observed that we may never come to common ground with members of some thought communities. She urged us to find ways to calm the fear and learn to cultivate a robust common life. She asked we each deeply consider how what it means to be human is connected to how we are in relationship with the other. In keeping with our UU Principles I believe we can together take the mission of love, respect, reason and justice into our community and beyond.

Tippet asserts that in the quiet spaces of everyday life there is the immediate possibility for the power of loving conduct to overcome hate and discord in relationship. This staying in relationship is important practice for us to use in the conduct of the common life and in the life of the congregation. This past year UUCM has been visited by an abundance of resources human and financial. We are presented with an opportunity to really live our values in the community. Together, with Rev Robin we are a 'beacon for freethinkers '.

Deb Lehman, Board President

2016 Treasurer's Annual Report

In spite of the events of 2016, the financial condition of the UUCM remained strong.

I took over the job as treasurer after the early retirement of Rev. Pam Allen-Thompson and the resignation of former Treasurer Mike Wilcox effective May 31, 2016. The church's checking account balance had a balance of \$11,417.22. The church endowment, which had been moved from the UUA Fund to Vanguard, had a balance of \$320,551. The painting loan to Marquette Bank had been paid in full. The contract with Rev. Allen-Thompson required the Meadville and Erie churches to continue to pay her salary and benefits through the end of July.

Pledge payments and other income have been more than sufficient to meet the financial obligations of the church with no withdrawals from the endowment. As of 11/21/16 paid pledges totaled \$85,846.50 which is 94% the \$91,000.00 pledged. Income from fundraising and rent receipts exceeded the budget and an unexpected refund from our insurance carrier Church Mutual of \$631.00, also helped with cash flow. Expenses were also lower than planned because of less activity by the church committees and Rev. Zucker's benefit costs are significantly lower than Rev. Allen-Thompson.

The Endowment balance as of November 11th was \$327,643.14 with investment returns of \$26,012.74 YTD. As stated above there were no withdrawals from the endowment in 2016.

The proposed budget for 2017 allows for more spending by committees and for activities with no planned withdrawals from the endowment. Income in the budget exceeds expenses for a net margin (or cushion) of \$2,544.54. In addition the Bylaws allow a withdrawal from the endowment of 5% or approximately \$16,000 which could be used to cover capital projects or unforeseen expenses if necessary.

As of this writing the church checking account has a balance of approximately \$25,000. This includes over \$1,000 in prepaid pledges and some restricted funds. Also there will be a payment for insurance of over \$3,000.00 in December. I also expect pledge payments to be lower for the remainder of the year. Taking all things into consideration I estimate that the yearend checking account balance will exceed \$6,000.00 at the end of the year.

To sum up our financial position, the church has no debt, an endowment of over \$320,000 from which we can withdraw up to \$16,000 if needed, and we projected cash flow from pledges and other income to meet our needs in 2017.

John A. Stewart, Treasurer

2016 Proposed Budget

INCOME:	2016 Budget	YTD 10/31/16	Budget vs. YTD	2017 Budget
Fundraising	\$3,000.00	\$3,790.65	\$790.65	\$4,000.00
Endowment Receipts	\$8,000.00	\$0.00	-\$8,000.00	\$0.00
Non Pledge Receipts	\$3,000.00	\$2,716.52	-\$283.48	\$3,000.00
Other Income	\$0.00	\$631.21	\$631.21	
Pledges-Budgeted	\$91,000.00	\$79,246.50	-\$11,753.50	\$98,000.00
	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Rent Receipts	\$3,000.00	\$3,592.50	\$592.50	\$4,000.00
Restricted Gifts	\$2,146.00	\$540.00	-\$1,606.00	
12/31/16 projected cash balance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$110,146.00	\$90,517.38	-\$19,628.62	\$115,000.00
EXPENSE:				
Minister Gross	\$30,411.00	\$22,735.08	-\$7,675.92	\$30,931.68
Minister Benefits	\$4,109.00	\$2,913.80	-\$1,195.20	\$282.53
Minister Discretionary	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$1,500.00
Ministers Pension	\$2,825.00	\$2,118.78	-\$706.22	\$2,825.00
Minister Prof Exp	\$2,825.00	\$2,103.37	-\$721.63	\$2,825.00
TOTAL MINISTER	\$40,170.00	\$29,871.03	-\$10,298.97	\$38,364.21
Keyboardist + FICA	\$3,230.00	\$1,991.58	-\$1,238.42	\$3,392.00
Music Dir. FICA + Prof. Exp.	\$5,374.00	\$4,675.13	-\$698.87	\$5,633.00
Music Special	\$600.00	\$75.00	-\$525.00	\$600.00
TOTAL MUSIC	\$9,204.00	\$6,741.71	\$2,462.29	\$9,625.00
RE Director +FICA	\$7,682.00	\$6,401.40	-\$1,280.60	\$8,066.00
DRE Pros. Exp.	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$300.00
Total DRE	\$7,982.00	\$6,401.40	\$1,580.60	\$8,366.00
Office Administrator +FICA	\$13,995.00	\$11,998.16	\$1,996.84	\$14,695.00
Pension	\$1,300.00	\$1,126.68	\$173.32	\$1,365.00
Total Office Admin	\$15,295.00	\$13,124.84	\$2,170.16	\$16,060.00
Custonan + FICA	\$3,445.00	\$2,814.01	\$630.99	\$3,617.25
Child Care	\$500.00	\$596.00	-\$96.00	\$1,000.00
	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Total Employee Expense	\$76,596.00	\$59,548.99	\$17,047.01	\$77,032.46
	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	

Total Budget for Committees*	\$3,400.00	\$2,035.82	\$1,364.18	\$9,350.00
*Committee budget details pg. 2				
OMD/UUA Dues**	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Utilities	\$9,450.00	\$5,790.71	\$3,659.29	\$9,923.00
Proprieties Exp.	\$5,200.00	\$5,675.11	-\$475.11	\$5,200.00
Insurance	\$7,200.00	\$3,905.50	\$3,294.50	\$7,200.00
Office Expense	\$3,000.00	\$2,638.24	\$361.76	\$3,000.00
Other Exp	\$0.00	\$139.90	-\$139.90	\$0.00
Search Committee - Startup Exp				\$750.00
Painting Loan	\$3,300.00	\$3,300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Expense Total	\$33,550.00	\$23,485.28	\$10,064.72	\$35,423.00
Total Expense	\$110,146.00	\$83,034.27	\$27,111.73	\$112,455.46
Net Margin	\$0.00	\$7,483.11		\$2,544.54

**Paid from OMD/UUA dues pledge

	2016 Budget	10/31/16 YTD	Remaining	\$2,017.00
COMMITTEES				
Religious Education	\$300.00	\$30.00	\$270.00	\$1,600.00
Justice Ministry	\$0.00	\$68.00	-\$68.00	\$300.00
Board Expense	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$300.00
Fellowship	\$300.00	\$700.28	-\$400.28	\$1,000.00
Leadership Development	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Fundraising Expense	\$200.00	\$70.83	\$129.17	\$250.00
Membership	\$300.00	\$335.19	-\$35.19	\$350.00
Pledge Drive	\$300.00	\$485.67	-\$185.67	\$750.00
Publicity	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$300.00
Worship and Music	\$1,500.00	\$345.85	\$1,154.15	\$3,000.00
Denominational Affairs				\$1,000.00
Total	\$3,400.00	\$2,035.82	\$1,364.18	\$9,350.00

2016 Stewardship Chair's Annual Report

Congratulations everyone! You have fully funded the Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville PA with resolve, with commitment and zeal—not to mention EASE... that brought all those same qualities to the budget planning board meeting last week. Those plans are reflected in other reports so I will focus on Stewarding aspects of 2016.

We knew we needed to enliven fundraising and tried some new things in winter and spring with the Sunday FUNdraisers; they were fun, easy and I hope the people who took the mostly recycled items home with them after our Sunday morning ticket auctions were happy for their acquisitions. I am so grateful for those of you who remember the UUCM when you have good items you no longer wanted—because that is mostly what we used for those ticket auctions on those monthly Sunday FUNdraisers. Thing is—they only raised about \$250.00. Hey but we experimented☺.

We were also the recipients of church families in flux as Jan Day, Amy and Bill Miller and others scaled –down for moves and donated their excess to our UUCM multi-family garage sale. That fundraiser earned us an initial \$4000 and it continues to bring in constant trickle funding via the on-line sale that our own Michele Baker offers through a Facebook page. For instance, since September, that figure is about \$350.00! People continue to contact Michele and me with various pieces of furniture, antiques, musical instruments and other items to see if they would be a fit for Michele's "market" and we are also accepting items more fit for a 2017 garage sale on an ongoing basis.

The big news though, is the pledge dinners. Rev Robin gave me the idea for "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" and about 70 people attended those events. A HUGE thanks to Corinne and Rich Chafey, Pat McDaniel, Rob and Michelle Sharp, Sue Gum and Rachel Weir, Lisbet Searle-White, Bill and Fran Smith and Deb Lehman for opening their homes for the evening dinners. Attendees had a chance to enjoy the foods created for us by Drogo and Tuck Owner and Chef, Michael Reed. Please remember to support his business and tell him if you enjoyed his foods. These dinners were multi-purposed gatherings: first we wanted people to commune together and learn about how diverse and fabulous everyone is in their own way. We, who serve on the board know many of you better than you know each other and in light of our sputtering through some difficult months, we figured the best way to grow a congregation is to everyone to know one another more deeply. Secondly, the evening is a way to introduce our fundraising goal for the upcoming year. Here's what we found out. Mostly, you liked the intimate setting of a private home and despite a national trend of less actual human interaction, you did wonderful work of opening to one another; some of you got home pretty late that night! So THANK YOU for bringing yourself so fully to "satsang" the Sanskrit term for sharing your truth in community. For many of you that was the first night you met Rev Robin and you must have seen all the ways she can lead and support our goal of hiring a settled minister as she spoke of her dreams for us. For some of you, it was a fresh incarnation of a long standing tradition to open your heart and wallet to fund what you believe in. Whatever it was for you, it was an honor and dream come true for me as your board stewardship chair to be so graciously

received when I asked you to increase your pledges by 15% to fully fund our goal. As I write this, our pledges for 2017 are \$99,800. We are a church community living in abundance.

You will be seeing a beautiful sign that we are looking to fund in excess of budget- that will be very visible and be a changing vignette with a varied palette of color visible to the many daily passersby on the sidewall of the Parish House. Our 7 principles will be shown one at a time to encourage continued interest and reading. This is who we are—this is some of what we stand for—this is part of our ever changing life vibrancy. May all who are looking for such a community find their way to it.

With gratitude,

Peggy Bell, Stewardship Chair

2016 Religious Education and Faith Formation Annual Report

A big thanks goes out to Jane Anderson, Lisbet Searle-White, Sue Gum, Michele & Mike Baker, Ariel Denman and Mary Lynne Peters for their time and caring.

We finished up with our Harry Potter themed curriculum in the spring and have begun working on the UUA's **Toolbox of Faith** curriculum starting this fall.

About the Toolbox of Faith Curriculum (from the website)

The expectations of life depend upon diligence; the mechanic who would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools. — Confucius

- Toolbox of Faith invites participants to reflect on the qualities of our Unitarian Universalist faith, such as integrity, courage, and love, as tools they can use in living their lives and building their own faith. Each of the 16 sessions uses a tool as a metaphor for an important quality of our faith such as reflection (symbolized by a mirror), flexibility (duct tape), and justice (a flashlight).
- Reflecting on the qualities (tools) of our faith, children and leaders gain insight into what makes our faith important in their lives, and how they can grow in our faith.
- Each session includes a Taking It Home section for the religious educator or leader to customize and share with families as a handout or e-mail. Taking It Home sections summarize each session's goals and describe stories, activities, and other aspects of the session to provide background for family conversations and activities at home.

Also, the children have been singing in church. We have been working closely with Mary Lynne Peters to prepare our musical offerings.

We are planning to continue with this curriculum as well as continue singing for the congregation as a whole into the New Year.

Rachel Meerson, DRE

2016 Worship Committee's Annual Report

During this season of gratitude, we have much to be grateful for, with many the contributions of creativity, time, effort and positive energy, which keep our worship service music and messages vital and uplifting.

For the 10 months of Sanctuary Services, a typical service requires a pulpit speaker, a pulpit assistant, a pianist, the RE instructor, 2 ushers, a sound system coordinator, and monthly, our choir director and the choir.

During the 2016 winter, spring and fall, 17 of our church members (2 of whom speak regularly), 2 guests, 1 regional UU representative and 3 of the present and past ministers of this church have filled the pulpit.

Recently, we are seeing more new volunteers serving as pulpit assistants, and every Sunday members step up to usher for the service and to provide coffee and refreshments to support us during and after the service.

Every Sunday a beautiful arrangement of flowers graces the table in front of the pulpit. One of our members has taken the flower ministry as hers, as passed on from Miriam Bowman, while she and many of our members contribute flowers, and the owners of Cobblestone Cottage provide a generous discount for flowers purchased for our Sunday services. Recently one of the Cobblestone Corner owners has volunteered to help with the Hanging of the Greens, and every year many people step up to contribute a huge Christmas tree, homemade decorations, greens, candles and a sea of poinsettias to warm the Sanctuary with beauty and light during the cold, dark Christmas season celebrations.

Supported by our recently upgraded sound system, our sound team insures that someone operates the system to provide both amplified sound and weekly recordings of the service for our website.

Our weekly services continue to be enhanced and uplifted by music. Our pianist contributes weekly our prelude, offertory, postlude and hymnal accompaniment and is also coordinating with our RE director and choir director to plan and rehearse joint choral offerings with the adult choir and the RE children, and both groups love singing with each other. Our choir director and choir members rehearse every Sunday before the service, and our director guides and encourages our small but mighty choir with challenging and varied selections that fill our sanctuary with the celebration of sound. Also, one of our regular speakers brings "The Band," in which 3 church members and 6 friends, from as far away as California, have come to sing and play.

During the 2 months of Summer Services, informal services are usually held in the Parish House. This past summer of "Embodied Spirituality," forms of mind/body worship including music, tai chi, drumming, progressive relaxation, mandala coloring, yoga and breath work were offered by 5 church members, 2 staff members and 2 friends. There was strong summer attendance, and based on positive survey results, Embodied Spirituality II will be offered in the 2017 summer services.

The Worship Committee, whose mission is to assist in providing these offerings to the congregation, is supported by 2 longtime UU members, whose experience and wisdom guides and encourages us. Our 2 music staff members, who initially came “just to coordinate,” and who continue to volunteer for many duties beyond music, strengthen us with creativity and enthusiasm. The Committee is working to coordinate meeting times with Rev. Robin when she is in town, and will create electronic meetings when she isn’t.

In conclusion, the Worship Committee is grateful for the many openhearted and creative contributions mentioned in this report and also for the easy coordination and cooperation we find among each other in our work. It is our wish that this positive energy will continue to grow and expand as we journey together as a church family.

Karen Schreiber-Mason, Worship Committee Chair

2016 Fellowship Committee's Annual Report

Started in 2001, the UUSC Coffee Project is a collaboration between Equal Exchange and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee to involve more Unitarians in supporting small farmers around the world.

For each pound of fairly traded coffee, chocolate, tea, and foods Unitarians purchase through the UUSC Coffee Project, 20 cents per pound goes to the UUSC's Small Farmer Fund. That Fund amounted to \$12,600 in 2015 alone!

We continue to use Equal Exchange Coffee for all church functions. It is a social action commitment that supports small farmers, the environment, and the UUSC. By providing coffee and tea, we also reduce the cost for members who volunteer for coffee hour.

We also planned a public program: Kalé Haywood, chair of the Department of History at Allegheny College, will give a free public presentation on "Cuba in Images and Stories" at 7 p.m. on Saturday, January 30 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville. It was well attended.

The Fellowship budget also supports church receptions, picnics, potlucks and such. The non-capital improvements to the kitchen also fall under this unofficial group. (Linens, supplies, equipment.)

Cynthia Burton, Fellowship Committee Chair

2016 Proposed Changes in Bylaws

The essential changes to the bylaws are that, since we had so many committees, some of which did not even have a committee chair, and others which had a "committee" of one, we decided to combine functions and shrink the committees to a lesser number. We are calling these "functions" vs. "committees" since most people would rather help out in a specific way rather than attending meetings. The chairs of these functions will be calling on individuals as needed to help get the work of the church done. Also note that we have a functioning Caring Committee that is not included among those needing approval for the bylaws.

Rationale: Currently there are 16 Committees listed in the bylaws. There are three issues with this: (1) Sixteen is far too many and there is duplication; (2) "Committees" as such are hard to fill, with the "chairperson" often being the only member; (3) Some committees continue to be unfilled and have no chairs.

Therefore, the language is to be changed to "functions" with a Chair or Coordinator who will report to the Board. This individual will be responsible for recruiting help from other members and friends on an as-needed basis.

The standing functions/chairs that are proposed are:

1. Religious Education
2. Worship
3. Membership
4. Fellowship
5. Social Action/Public Relations
6. Short-term financial issues (annual fund drive, fund-raising). This incorporates the current role of Stewardship.
7. Long-term financial issues (planned giving, investments)
8. Properties (focus is the monitoring everyday needs of property management---financial planning re: properties would be the responsibility of the short-term and long-term function/chairperson)
9. Personnel. This committee will meet as need to review salaries and job descriptions.

In addition:

- A. The audit will be conducted once a year, and is the responsibility of the Vice President of the Board. The individual actually doing the audit will be other than the Treasurer, to avoid any potential conflict of interest.
- B. Chairpersons of each of the above nine functions will assist the Treasurer in preparing the following year's budget, through budget requests.
- C. "Information technology" is not needed to be stated as a separate function.
- D. There is a "Caring Committee" which is functioning, but does not need to be named in the bylaws. The distinctive aspect of this committee is the confidential nature of its work.

- E. There is not a need for a “Bylaws Committee.” The revision of the bylaws, every five years at the most, is a function of the Member-at-Large, who can gather others to review and recommend and present to the Board and Membership.
- F. It is proposed that the bylaws remove the phrase “a mix of growth and income funds”, while retaining the phrase “moderate amount of risk”, in order to provide the investment chair with greater flexibility.
- G. “Leadership Development” is an ongoing Board responsibility, and the Board can appoint someone to head the search for developing new leadership capacities within the membership. The phrase “Leadership Development” would be eliminated from the bylaws. Leaders are to be selected from members who are currently active, (but not from among first year members.
- H. With the proposed structure above, temporary chairs/coordinators would be appointed by the Board.
- I. There are two areas with a priority need for detail in the Procedure Manual. These are: procedures to train new members for leadership roles; Properties – there is a need for a list of routine tasks to be done and when they need to be done.

Respectfully submitted

Stuart P. Rothman, Member-at-Large

Bylaws

Article 1. Name and Affiliation:

The name of this congregation is the Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville, Pennsylvania. In the deed to the church, its name is the Independent Congregational Church.

This congregation (church) is independent in polity and organization; it is affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), its Ohio Meadville District (OMD), and other organizations as the membership shall decide, in order to provide services that this congregation cannot provide for itself and to strengthen and grow.

Article 2. Purpose:

This is a congregation which celebrates diversity and welcomes all. We share values that allow this congregation to come together as a nurturing, caring community committed to a democratic and liberal outlook, spiritual and educational growth, fellowship and community outreach.

The purpose of these Bylaws is to establish the over-arching rules of governance for the church. All documents in the church must abide by and be in compliance with these Bylaws.

Article 3. Membership:

Any person 16 years of age or older who is in sympathy with the spirit and purpose of this church, and can demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities of membership, may become a voting member of this congregation by signing the membership book in the presence of the Minister or a member of the Parish Board. An annual financial contribution of record is a requirement of membership in the church. A person under the age of 16 may become a member upon obtaining the recommendation of the membership chair and consent of the Parish Board. No subscription to creed or ceremonial participation is required for membership. Any person who so desires may be listed as a friend of the congregation in the church records.

Members may hold office and vote on church business. To vote as a member for any purpose, a person must be a member for 30 days preceding the date of the ballot or signature. All members shall have the right to reasonable expression of their respective views, including the right to request and receive hearing at meetings of the church organization. Any interested person who is not a member may serve on committees or participate in the activities of the church other than holding office and voting on church business.

Withdrawal of membership may be made by written request to the Minister or the Secretary of the congregation. Such a notice will be transmitted to the Board and noted in the Membership Book (the official record of membership) and other records of the church. At least annually, the board, on the recommendation of the Membership Committee, will delete from membership those individuals who have died within the year. Reasonable attempts will be made to contact those individuals who have ceased contact with the church or who have not made an annual financial contribution of record. They will be asked to positively reaffirm their interest in remaining members of the congregation. The board, with input from the Minister, may remove from membership those who do not respond.

Article 4. Fiscal Year:

The church's fiscal and administrative year runs from January 1 to December 31.

Article 5. Congregational Meetings:

The Annual Meeting of the congregation will be held during the first week of December at a time determined by the Parish Board. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to elect officers, the Leadership Development Committee, the Investment Committee, and Trustees for the upcoming fiscal year, to receive reports of the current year's activities from the Board, Minister, Director of Religious Education, and committee chairs, to adopt a budget for the upcoming year, and to discuss such other business as may come before it.

The President of the Parish Board will prepare and submit an agenda to the Parish Board far enough in advance so that the agenda can be discussed, approved and published in the newsletter at least two weeks before the meeting. Any five members may request that an item be placed on the agenda for the Annual Meeting by requesting it in writing of the President in sufficient time to meet the above congregation notification schedule.

Special congregational meetings may be called by the President, by the Parish Board, or by written request to the president signed by 10 lay members of the congregation. Only such business as indicated in the call for the meeting may be transacted at any special congregational meeting. At least seven days' notice of all special congregational meetings must be given to the membership by mail, e-mail, or other electronic notice; and all meetings will be announced at regular worship services, on the website, and in the *Oracle*, whenever possible, prior to the meeting.

A quorum for congregational meetings described above is constituted by 25% of the membership. When a quorum is present, the congregation at its meeting may conduct business by majority vote. Members must be present to vote. **34 | Page**

Article 6. Parish Board

The Parish Board manages the affairs of the church between Annual Meetings. The Parish Board shall meet monthly whenever possible, with no fewer than six meetings per year. These meetings shall be open to any member who wishes to attend. It is expected that the Parish Board shall delegate many day-to-day activities to committees as defined in Article 8. Other duties that the Parish Board is expected to accomplish include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Develop and present an annual budget to the congregation for a vote at the Annual Meeting.
2. Oversee the finances of the church to ensure appropriate fiduciary responsibilities.
3. Appoint committee chairs
4. Establish and implement policies and practices that support the programs of the church.
5. Develop a long-range plan for the church.

The UU Parish Board will consist of seven officers of the Church: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Coordinator of Mission and Outreach, Stewardship Chair, and Member-at-Large. Each of these must be bonded for at least \$5,000. The Board requires a quorum of four

officers to do business, and affirmative votes by a majority of those present are required to carry a motion in the Board.

The Minister will also serve as a non-voting ex officio member of the Board. Officers will be elected by the Congregation at its Annual Meeting for two-year terms, beginning January 1st. The terms of the Church officers should attempt to ensure both continuity and new blood among Board members. No two Church officers may be members of the same household. An individual may serve no more than four years of any six consecutive years as a member of the Board.

Article 7. Officers

President

The **President** conducts all business meetings of the congregation and Parish Board. The President schedules all meetings of the congregation and the Parish Board. The President is a member ex officio of all committees of the church. The President implements and administers the policies of the Parish Board. No person may be nominated to serve as President without having served at least one year on the Parish Board, preferably the year immediately previous. The President's term of office is for 2 years and begins on January 1st. The President serves as liaison to the Personnel Committee, the UUA and Ohio-Meadville District, and to any Search Committees. The President is authorized to sign checks in the absence of the Treasurer.

Vice President

The **Vice-President** serves as liaison to the Board for the administrative functions of the Church, including Properties, Public Relations, Information Technology, and Leadership Development. The Vice-President assumes the duties of the President in the President's absence. The Vice-President oversees the conduct of the annual audit of the church's books.

Secretary

The **Secretary** is responsible for keeping a record of all church and Parish Board meetings and ensuring that topics discussed at board meetings are communicated to the congregation. The Secretary maintains the permanent records and documents of the Church as well as being the primary correspondent on behalf of the Congregation and the Parish Board. The Secretary will also maintain the list of all committees, their membership, and a description of their functions and normal procedures; The Secretary is responsible for keeping the Bylaws up to date and serves as liaison to the Bylaws Committee.

Treasurer

The **Treasurer** oversees the funds of the church to ensure that the annual cash flow is sufficient to meet the operating needs of the church. The Treasurer prepares accurate financial reports, advises on expenditures and financial policy that assist the Parish Board and congregation in decision-making, and signs the checks for the day-to-day operations of the church including payroll and tax obligations. The Treasurer may supervise the activities of a church bookkeeper and accountant. The Treasurer will serve as liaison to the Investment Committee. The Treasurer will serve as a non-voting ex officio member of any committee relating to the stewardship of the church, as needed.

Coordinator of Mission and Outreach

The **Coordinator of Mission and Outreach** serves as liaison to the Board for those areas of the Church that put faith into action: Membership, Religious Education, Worship, Fellowship, and Social Action.

Stewardship Chair

The **Stewardship Chair** serves as liaison to the Board for the functions of the Church that grow, nurture, promote, and build the gifts and resources of the Church: Annual Budget Drive, Fund-Raising, and Planned Giving.

Member-at-Large

The **Member-at-Large** carries out tasks as assigned by the Board.

Article 8. Committees

Many Church functions are carried out by committees whose chairs are appointed by the Board, usually at the first meeting of the year, and whose activities are monitored by the Board. A list of all committees, their membership, and a description of their functions and normal procedures, will be maintained by the Secretary, made available in the Church Office, and published in the Oracle. Each chair is responsible for recruiting individuals from the congregation to serve on the committee, except for the Investment Committee and the Leadership Development Committee, the members of which are elected by the congregation. A committee is responsible for managing its resources, requesting annually a budgeted amount from the Parish Board, and reporting regularly to its Board Liaison on the activities and concerns of that committee. Additionally, each committee will submit a report on its year's activities at the Annual Meeting. Committee chairs are required to meet as a group with their Board Liaisons at least twice a year for purposes of coordination and long-range planning.

The President is an ex-officio non-voting member of all committees of the Parish Board. Board members are ex-officio non-voting members of all committees for which they serve as liaison. An individual may serve no more than five of any seven consecutive years as chair of the same committee.

The following committees are an integral part of the Church and should be considered standing committees:

1. Leadership Development Committee, as described in Articles 5 and 9
2. Investment Committee, as described in Articles 5 and 15
3. Bylaws Committee, as described in Articles 7 and 16
4. Audit Committee, as described in Articles 7 and 11
5. Membership Committee, as referenced in Article 3
6. Personnel Committee, as referenced in Articles 7 and 13
7. Properties Committee, as referenced in Articles 7 and 15
8. Worship Committee, as referenced in Article 13
9. Public Relations, as referenced in Article 7
10. Information Technology, as referenced in Article 7
11. Fellowship, as referenced in Article 7
12. Religious Education, as referenced in Article 7
13. Social Action, as referenced in Article 7
14. Annual Budget Drive, as referenced in Article 7

15. Fund Raising, as referenced in Article 7
16. Planned Giving, as referenced in Article 7

Article 9. The Leadership Development Committee:

The Leadership Development Committee is comprised of the Vice President of the Parish Board and two other members of the church. Each year at the Annual Meeting, one member of the congregation shall be elected to serve on the Leadership Development Committee for a two-year term. The Leadership Development Committee will meet as soon as is reasonably possible after a new committee is formed to select a chair from among its members. It shall make nominations at the Annual Meeting to fill elected positions according to these Bylaws (appropriate officers, trustees, members of the Investment Committee, and a member of the Leadership Development Committee). Except for the Vice President, Leadership Development Committee members may not succeed themselves.

The Leadership Development Committee shall solicit recommendations from each current officer and committee chair for persons to fill each position. In addition, the committee shall seek recommendations from the congregation at large through the newsletter and at Sunday services well before it makes a final decision.

The Leadership Development Committee must publicize its selection of candidates one month preceding the Annual Meeting. The committee may present to the congregation more than one candidate for any of the above described positions. The names of anyone else wishing to stand for an elected position are to be announced at the same time as the Leadership Development Committee selections. The committee will make every effort to assure that each of its nominees is clearly aware of the duties of the position for which nominated. Nominations may be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting with a second. In all cases, those nominated must consent to stand for election, and written consent must be provided if those nominated from the floor are not present.

Article 10. Vacancies:

If an elected position becomes vacant, the Parish Board, with the concurrence of the Leadership Development Committee, shall appoint a member of the church to serve in the position until the next Annual Meeting.

Article 11. Auditors:

The Vice President will select an Audit Committee to examine the financial records of the church as soon after the close of the yearly books as practicable and submit a report to the congregation. The Audit Committee should consist of three members of the congregation, if practical, or an outside accounting firm

Article 12. Trustees:

Five members of the congregation serve as trustees who are entrusted with the responsibility of signing all documents relating to the sale, transfer and alienation of all church real estate. The trustees are elected at the Annual Meeting for staggered five-year terms. A trustee may be re-nominated at the end of his/her term. If a vacancy occurs, the Parish Board, with the concurrence of the Leadership Development Committee, shall appoint an interim trustee to fill the vacancy until the next Annual Meeting, at which time a trustee is elected to complete the term.

Article 13. The Minister:

The Minister shall be responsible for the conduct of worship within the congregation and the congregation's spiritual interests and affairs. The Minister keeps records of namings, weddings and deaths. The Minister provides spiritual guidance and practical counsel to those in distress. Our Minister will maintain and exemplify the church's faith in the free and respectful sharing of ideas. The Minister shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as freedom to express his or her opinion outside the pulpit.

The Minister shall be an ex-officio member of the Parish Board and of all committees except the Leadership Development Committee. The Minister is also chief of staff of the church. As such, the Minister—acting within the framework of the budget, and with the advice and consent of the Personnel Committee—manages the administrative affairs of the church; may hire, train, evaluate and terminate staff; and recommend salary actions and recommend policy changes.

The Minister will report matters of church life and operations to the board on a regular basis and to the congregation at the Annual Meeting.

The Minister represents this church in the community at large.

In the event of a ministerial vacancy, the Parish Board and the Worship Committee will provide for temporary ministerial services. At the direction of the congregation, a Ministerial Search Committee may be created, consisting of four members selected by the congregation and three members selected by the Parish Board. As far as possible, the search committee is to follow UUA search and selection guidelines.

A Minister shall be called to serve upon recommendation of the Ministerial Search Committee by an 80% majority of qualified members of the congregation present at any congregational meeting legally called for the purpose. A quorum for such a meeting is to be constituted by 40% of the voting membership, rather than the 25% of the voting members, as called for in Article 5, Congregational Meetings.

The Minister may be dismissed by a majority vote of the qualified members of the church present at any congregational meeting legally called for the purpose, the quorum for such a meeting to be constituted by 40% of the voting members rather than 25% of the voting members as called for in Article 5, Congregational Meetings.

Article 14. Financial Matters

The Parish Board shall administer and manage the business of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville.

At each annual business meeting, the Parish Board shall submit an operating budget for the coming fiscal year. The budgeted expenses may not exceed the anticipated income. A budget is adopted by a simple majority vote of the voting members present at the meeting. Once a budget is approved, the Board may authorize and expend the funds as budgeted. Committee chairs and Staff are empowered to spend amounts as budgeted annually. Although each committee normally administers the funds budgeted to it, the Board may set an amount above which a committee may not spend without prior approval of the Parish Board. The Board may reallocate budgeted funds, as long as the reallocation does not exceed five percent (5%) of the

approved budget. No committee of the church or the Parish Board may enter into a contract involving an expenditure of more than \$5,000 except for approved budget items. The membership must approve any expenditure or obligation for indebtedness that exceeds \$5,000.00. The membership must also approve the purchase, sale, or mortgage of real property.

The right or authority to make contracts or binding promises for monetary outlay on behalf of the Church, whether oral or written, rests with the Parish Board, or its designated representatives. Checks and other orders on the funds or credit of the church, and all contracts and instruments in writing by the church, shall be valid and binding upon the church only when executed by such officers or other representatives as shall be designated and authorized by the Board.

Article 15. Endowment and Investment Funds

Oversight and management of endowment funds is vested with the Investment Committee of the church. At least five church members will act as investment managers for endowment funds: the Investment Committee Chair and at least four other members elected by the congregation who are knowledgeable of finance and investments. All decisions and recommendations of this committee require the approval of at least a majority of the entire committee.

The endowment is invested in a mix of growth and income fund(s) which carry a moderate amount of risk; these terms being generally accepted definitions in the banking business. The details of management shall rest with the Investment Committee, which acts in consultation with and with advice from professionals of the investment company. The yearly withdrawal from the endowment may not exceed 5% of the amount at the end of the previous year.

The endowment also should provide a financial cushion which enables the church to pay for unexpected emergency capital expenditures prior to mounting a specific fundraising campaign. If an emergency arises where time is of the essence to protect the health of the congregation and/or the value of the church's real property; at least four members of the Parish Board, on the recommendation of the properties chair, may approve spending an amount up to 5% of endowment principle. This action must be immediately announced and explained to the congregation and plans put in action to repay the endowment over a reasonable time frame.

Article 16. Bylaws Review and Amendment:

These bylaws, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or replaced at any Congregational Meeting (as described in article 5) by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting. In years divisible by 5, and more often if needed, the President will appoint a special committee to review these bylaws and recommend changes to be approved and presented by the Parish Board to the congregation.

Once the Board has approved the proposed changes, the members of the church should be given an opportunity to review them and present additional suggestions for the Board's consideration. A full copy of all proposed changes shall be contained in the call to meeting. Only amendments as proposed in the call to meeting may be adopted at any given Congregational

Meeting. No changes (other than corrections of grammar or spelling that do not affect the meaning of the document) may be made to the proposed amendments prior to a vote.

Article 17. Dissolution:

In the case of dissolution of the congregation, all of its property, real and personal, after paying all just claim upon it, shall be conveyed to and vested in the Unitarian Universalist Association or its legal successor, and the trustees of the congregation shall perform all action necessary to effectuate such conveyance.

Other unexpected expenditures must be brought before a special meeting of the congregation as defined in Article 5, Congregational Meetings, and approved by a vote of two-thirds of the members present. These funds generally should be no more than 20% of the principle amount of the endowment and treated as though they, too, are loans from the endowment to the congregation. An amortization plan also must be presented and approved at the special meeting.

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