



UNITARIAN CHURCH OF MONTPELIER (UCM)

REPORT FOR ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 20, 2012

UCM Mission:

*We welcome all
as we build a loving community
to nurture each person's spiritual journey,
serve human need
and protect the earth, our home.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Art by Frank Woods	1
Table of Contents	2
<u>Business to be Decided</u>	
Warning of this Annual Meeting: May 20, 2012	4
Minutes of Last Year's Annual Meeting: May 22, 2011	5
Highlights of Proposed Budget for Next Church Year (FY2013, July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013)	8
Details of Proposed Budget Compared with Current Budget	10
Nominations of Committee Chairs and Officers	15
<u>Background Materials</u>	
Minister's Report to the Congregation	16
Executive Committee (<i>and Governing Board</i>) Report	18
Executive Team Report	20
Committee on Ministry Report	21
Lay Pastoral Care Ministry Report	21
Small Group Ministry	22
Membership Committee Report	22
Leadership Development Committee	23
Program Committee Report	23
Social Responsibility Committee Report	24
Living Lighter Committee Report	24
Welcoming Congregation Task Force Report	25
Report from Local Organizing Committee (LOC) of Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA)	25
The Women's Alliance Report	26
Music Director and Music Committee Report	27
Worship and Arts Committee Report	28

Director of Religious Education	29
Religious Education Committee Report	30
Safe Congregations Task Force Report	30
Treasurer's Report	31
Report about Auditing Done in FY2012	34
Finance Committee Report	34
Stewardship Committee Report	35
Church Administrator Report	36
Administration Committee Report	37
Personnel Committee	37
Property Committee Report	38
Church Historian Report	38

Warning to members of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier

An Annual Meeting is called for Sunday, May 20, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary to see if members will vote to:

1. Approve the minutes of the May 22, 2011 Annual Meeting.
2. Adopt the General Fund budget for the 2012-2013 church year.
3. Adopt the Capital Fund Budget for the 2012-13 church year with the contingency that loans from congregational members are secured to cover all costs over and above the amounts otherwise available in the Capital Fund prior to making commitments to having the capital projects done. {The projects are fixing the underpinnings of the Vestry floor and painting the exterior of the church.}
4. Elect officers and committee chairs.
5. Conduct any other new business.

Copies of the 2011-2012 Annual Report will be available at church on Sunday May 13, 2012. Please take a copy and read it before the Annual Meeting.

Brenda Bean, Clerk

Minutes of Annual Meeting May 22, 2011

Executive Committee (EC) Co-Chairs Paul Ohlson and Susan Koch opened the Annual Meeting. Paul encouraged the congregation to read the Annual Meeting package to learn details of the many impressive accomplishments of the past year. He expressed appreciation for our Minister and many volunteers and then introduced Gail Falk, Acting Moderator. Gail Falk asked active members to raise their hands and – because at least 25 active members did so - declared a quorum.

Approval of Minutes: Dee Montie moved and Tina Ruth seconded that the minutes of the May 23, 2010 Annual Meeting be approved; the motion passed unanimously.

Kenric Kite moved and Priscilla Fox seconded that the minutes of the April 17, 2011 Special Meeting be approved; the motion passed unanimously.

Amendments to church bylaws:

- A. Judith Hinds referred people to page 8 of the Report for this Annual Meeting. She explained that the Executive Committee is proposing to change the Nominating Committee to a new Leadership Development Committee to broaden the scope of duties related to identifying and preparing leaders for our growing church. This year-round committee would encourage members and friends to take on leadership roles and offer and/or publicize leadership training opportunities (perhaps from the UUA, the Northern New England District, the Alban Institute, etc.). This new committee will need a Chair and at least 3 committee members, none of whom have yet been identified. If you are interested, please tell the EC Co-Chairs or Judith. Paul Hartman moved and Hedi Ballantyne seconded to approve this change in practice and bylaws. Tina Ruth spoke in favor of the change and moved to amend the proposed language by adding at the end of item 5.g. “whenever such vacancy occurs between annual meetings.” Norma Raymond seconded this. Paul Hartmann and Hedi Ballantyne accepted Tina’s amendment, for which there was unanimous consent. Then the amended motion to change the bylaws passed unanimously.
- B. Alex Thayer referred people to page 9 of the Report for this Annual Meeting. She is proposing 2 amendments about membership to address, in different ways, non-discrimination and to offer specifics about how the UCM will act in accordance with its new Mission Statement to “welcome all”. Alex moved and Mary Alice Bisbee seconded approval for both of these amendments.

Melissa MoonGoddess moved that the term “gender-orientation” be inserted between “gender” and “affectional” in both Article Two and Article Ten. Bernadette seconded this addition to both proposed amendments. Alex and Mary Alice Bisbee considered this to be a friendly amendment. Kenric suggested replaced “gender-orientation” with “gender-identity”. Melissa, Bernadette, Alex, and Mary Alice accepted this suggestion, which was agreed by consensus.

Paula Gills suggested adding disability as a category for non-discrimination. Alex replied that the State has recently passed a law about using respectful language and Alex is waiting to hear what language might be recommended in reference to disabilities. Bernadette Rose moved that the phrase “differing abilities” as the final category under both amendments. Mary Alice Bisbee agreed with and seconded this motion to amend the proposed language. Stuart Russo-Savage pointed out that when hiring, we do take into consideration “differing abilities” in order to choose the most qualified candidate. Darcy suggested replacing “differing abilities” with “people who need accommodations.”As the discussion became increasingly complex, the Moderator concluded that the two proposed amendment should be handled separately.

1. Amendment to Article Two: Membership: The congregation voted to approve adding “or differing abilities” at the end of the amended proposed sentence for Article Two. Then the amended proposed sentence was unanimously approved by the congregation to read: “It is specifically understood that membership in this congregation is not, and cannot be, predicated upon race, color, gender, gender-identity, affectional or sexual orientation, class, national origin, or differing abilities.” Jack McGinnis mentioned that we may need conscious-raising about what “class” means.
2. Amendment to Article Ten: Non-Discrimination: The congregation voted to NOT approve adding “or differing abilities” at the end of the amended proposed sentence for Article Ten. Since the proposed amendment offers no protection against discrimination on the basis of disabilities, and since the word “disability” is used in the federal ADA language related to hiring practices, Paula Gills moved that the word “disability” be added after “class” in the proposed sentence. Meredith Tredeau seconded this motion to amend the proposed language. After further discussion, Peter Bluhm moved to table discussion of the motion to amend the proposed language to allow study of its implications related to employment law. Meredith seconded his motion, which was passed by the congregation. The Moderator inquired if Peter’s motion could be understood as seeking to table discussion on the proposed language as a whole. Peter agreed, and the congregation concurred. Therefore, the amended (by “gender-identity”) Amendment to Article Ten was tabled for further study.

Budgeting: Paul Wallace-Brodeur thanked Peter Bluhm for his fine job as Treasurer. Paul then described the major revenue changes for the operating budget for the coming year:

- The Canvass raised \$10,000 more this year than ever before.
- Except for the Keve Funds used for Religious Education, the long-term care funds are now being used entirely for capital instead of operating costs. The Finance Committee has reduced reliance on the funds from 5% to 4% per year and is aiming to drop to 3% in the future to avoid depleting them.
- The Administration Committee has a plan to use some of the revenues gained from church rentals to hire “Event Coordinators” to oversee use of the church for major events.
- There is sufficient funding to cover the summer expenses.
- There are some reserves (under \$10,000) from prior year surpluses that can be used for unexpected expenses.

Paul described the major expense changes for the operating budget for the coming year:

- Application of the Fair Compensation Guidelines means approving different salary increases for different staff to bring the long-timers closer to where they should be in their salary ranges.
- There are increased expenses for committee work to better support UCM programs, such as for leadership training.
- We will continue to fully pay the UUA/District dues.

For the capital budget, the big expense is replacement of the roof, which will be paid from both FY2011 (ending June 30) and FY2012 (starting July 1) capital funds.

Paul moved approving the budget; Priscilla Fox seconded the motion. Dee Montie asked about the reserves. Paul explained that the reserves have accumulated over the years as a result of generous giving and prudent spending. Dee also asked about the Sexton wages. Paul said the proposed increase is not a reflection on the high quality of the Sexton’s work, only that his salary is already disproportionately high in the approved salary range compared with his length of time employed.

Peter Bluhm proposed an amendment to the budget to increase the salary (and retirement and FICA) for the Music Director to bring her closer to where she should be in range. He and Paul agreed that the Finance Committee had intended to do this but overlooked adding it. These changes will increase the expense of the budget by \$950. Dee Montie seconded the amendment, which was approved by the congregation. Then the amended budget passed unanimously.

Nominations: Susan Koch referred people to page 19 of the Report for this Annual Meeting and added the following information:

- No one has volunteered to Chair the new Leadership Development Committee.
- Rhoda Chickering has agreed to continue acting as the Alliance Representative to the EC.
- Ginny Sassaman has volunteered to Chair the Social Responsibility Committee.
- Rob Chickering is still looking for a Co-Chair for the Property Committee.

A congregant asked about voting for a chair (or co-chairs) of the Stewardship Committee and was told the Stewardship Committee has historically been a sub-committee of the Finance Committee without an elected Chair. *[Clerk's note: This is not evident from the Bylaws.]* Susan moved and Norma Raymond seconded approval of the proposed nominees as presented on page 19 with the additions mentioned above. The congregation unanimously approved these nominees.

New Business: Johanna Nichols asked about election of delegates to represent the congregation at the UUA General Assembly (GA) and Northern New England District meetings. She was told that interested people have been appointed by the EC to be representatives. Dee said we could appoint up to 4 people. John and Janet Poeton are interested in attending GA and have offered to include others in their car as they drive to Charlotte, N.C. near the end of June. Paul Wallace-Brodeur moved and Susan Koch seconded that John and Janet Poeton be elected to be the official delegates to GA this year; the motion passed. The EC can still appoint additional people if they express interest. Jack McGinnis asked that the church consider offering financial support for people to attend GA. Judith Hinds said there is money in the budget for this already. People who want this assistance to attend GA should ask the EC.

Kenric Kite mentioned the need for a wheelchair –accessible bathroom and signage (including Braille) to indicate where to find the bathrooms. He asked the Property Committee to address this in the coming year. Valerie Bluhm said the bathroom in the pre-school classroom (off the Vestry) was made wheelchair-accessible years ago when we added the elevator.

Adjourn: Paul Ohlson moved and Meredith Tredeau seconded that the meeting be adjourned, with thanks to Gail for moderating! The congregation agreed.

Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Highlights of Proposed 2012 – 2013 Church Year (FY2013) Budget
May 20, 2012 Annual Meeting

I. GENERAL FUND: The General Fund is intended to pay for one year of church operations.

Income for FY2013:

- ☐ Our wonderful budget drive resulted in pledge income increasing from \$190,000 to \$207,500 (\$17,500 over current year).
- ☐ All of the Long-Term Invested Funds (4%) will be used for capital projects;
- ☐ The Stewardship Committee has pledged to raise an additional \$1,000.
- ☐ We will have a small deficit (\$2,194) between income and expenses in the General Fund, which - if necessary - can be covered with available cash savings.

Total General Fund income: \$263,360.

Expenses for FY2013:

- ☐ Salary Increases: the Minister's compensation is increased by 3% (salary and housing allowance combined); the Music Director has been moved up from the mid-point of her salary range to 75% of her salary range; the RE Director is set at 50% of her salary range; the Administrator's increase is based on the amount allowed under Social Security's "Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)" guidelines; and the Sexton has been given a 3% increase to the top of his range. These changes are in accord with the Church's Fair Compensation Guidelines.
- ☐ The budget will cover 80% of family health insurance coverage for our Minister beginning in January of 2013.
- ☐ The budget funds the RE Director's position at her current 3 days per week.
- ☐ We have been able to reduce the amount proposed for RE teacher training by \$1,000 as the OWL training will be conducted at the Church this coming year (thus saving costs related to attending that training elsewhere).
- ☐ We will add a Children's Choir Director (\$1,000).
- ☐ We are able to reduce copier expenses due to leasing new copier.
- ☐ We are proposing to add a Rental Coordinator who will assume responsibility for managing rentals to alleviate the work load of the Administrator. The "Assistant for the Administrator" line item and funds from the current budget have been moved into the new Rental Coordinator line item for next year.
- ☐ We have reduced proposed committee expenses from \$12,400 to \$10,200 based on current year spending and recommendations from the committees.
- ☐ The budget provides \$3,500 for general building maintenance. This is not a new line item but has been moved back to the General Fund out of the Capital Fund.
- ☐ As we have done over the past few years, the budget includes a transfer of \$12,500 from the General Fund to the Capital Fund
- ☐ UUA and District dues funded at 100% (196 members - \$75 per member). This is \$1,200 more than in the current year due to membership growth.

Total General Fund Expense: \$265,555.

II. CAPITAL FUND: The Capital Fund is intended to accumulate funds from year to year to pay for significant repairs and/or improvements to the church buildings and grounds. Maintaining this church (an historic structure in a highly visible location downtown in the State's capital) is an ongoing challenge which requires long-term planning and budgeting.

Projects which have been or are expected to be completed by the end of this budget year are:

1. Replacement of Vestry doors to meet fire protection rules (\$5,000 authorized by the Executive Committee), and
2. Remediation of the pigeon guano problem in the steeple – completed.

With the completion of these projects, by the end of this Church/fiscal year (June 30, 2012), we expect to have essentially depleted the Capital Fund.

Income for FY2013: There are typically two sources of funds for the Capital budget. The first is an annual transfer from our Long-Term Invested Funds; the second is an annual transfer from the General Fund.

1. Four percent (4%) of our Long-Term Invested Funds is available for transfer to the Capital Fund (\$11,640), and
2. \$12,500 is transferred from the General Fund.

These two income sources total \$24,140 for FY2013.

You will also notice a line item showing \$26,000 in loans. (See the Recommendation below). Adding the loan(s) brings the income total for the FY2013 Capital Fund to just over \$50,000.

Expenses for FY2013: Two major projects are proposed for next year:

1. Fixing the sagging of the Vestry floor, estimated at \$38,000.
2. Painting the exterior of the Church, estimated at \$12,000.

These expenses total \$50,000.

Recommendation

After considerable deliberation, we recommend borrowing the additional \$26,000 needed to do both projects in FY2013. It is believed that members of the Congregation may be willing to loan the Church these funds on a short-term basis at no or low interest. The Church would pay back the loan(s) by using a portion of the annual contribution from the General Fund to the Capital Fund. This would reduce the funds available in the near future to fulfill capital projects so does carry some risk, but the Property Committee has not identified other substantial projects that will need to be addressed in the immediate future beyond the floor and painting. In the absence of any loans, the Church will have sufficient capital funds to complete the painting project.

Nominations

The Governing Board presents for consideration at the May 20, 2012 Annual Meeting the following nominations for Committee Chairs/Officers for election until their terms expire or until the congregation adopts revised bylaws, whichever occurs first:

Committee/Officer	Chair(s)	Term Expires
Leadership Development Committee	Bill Doelger	May 2014
Executive Committee	Rob Chickering	May 2015
Finance Committee	Paul Wallace-Brodeur	May 2015
Administration Committee	John Poeton	May 2015
Worship & Arts Committee	Ron Cameron	May 2015
Property Committee		May 2015
Social Responsibility Committee		May 2015
Programs Committee	Jo Romano	May 2015
Membership Committee	Judith Hinds	May 2015
Committee on Ministry	Pam Cameron (member)	May 2015
Committee on Ministry	Dick Riley (member)	May 2015
Historian	Peter Thoms	May 2015

The following Committee Chairs/Officers will continue in their present positions for the rest of their terms or until the congregation adopts revised bylaws, whichever occurs first:

Committee/Officer	Chair(s)	Term Expires
Auditor	Ted Allen	May 2013
Clerk	Brenda Bean	May 2013
Moderator	David Grundy	May 2013
Women's Alliance Representative	Rhoda Chickering	May 2013
Committee on Ministry	Bonnie Steuer (member)	May 2013
Committee on Ministry	Sue Stukey (member)	May 2014
Committee on Ministry	Stuart Russo-Savage (member)	May 2014
Religious Education Committee	Jen Miller- Arsenault	May 2014
Treasurer	Deb Robinson	May 2014

Minister's Report to the UCM Congregation 2011-2012 Church Year

Looking back, this past church year has been one of both delightful blossoming and transformation at the Unitarian Church of Montpelier (UCM). The lively energy and spirit of vitality, which I have experienced at UCM since arriving nearly three years ago, continue to breathe through our congregation's life. The staff and committee reports that follow tell the tale in more detail, but here are a few highlights:

*After much study and preparation, the church has embarked on an exciting transition in how it governs itself, which will continue on next year. As your minister, I began to work with the transition Executive Team (ET) to help manage the day-to-day life of the church; I attended the Council of Chairs, which is developing its role; and I, along with other ET members provided linkage to the transition Governing Board.

*Our children's religious education program, with the fine leadership of Sally Armstrong, our Acting Director of Religious Education, and the RE Committee, has grown in numbers and vitality. [We are also blessed that Sally will continue on as our settled DRE.] Classes had strong teaching teams. Also in the realm of lifespan faith development, we launched the Coming of Age Program for youth and offered a spring class for adults led by Brenda Bean and Rev. Johanna Nichols. Both of these opportunities should provide us with good insight and learning for future programs.

*Thanks to the leadership of our Stewardship chairs, committee, and visiting stewards (and all of you who made a financial commitment to the church), our annual pledge drive yielded its highest total ever. It is significant that, while many congregations' budgets are shrinking due to the recession, we have continued to see growth in financial support, which makes our ministries possible.

*As a congregation, we continued to nurture our connections with the larger UU world. Three of our youth attended a Northern New England UUA District conference this past fall and two have applied to attend a well-regarded UU youth leadership program this summer. And, in recognition of the bold work we have done in recent years, we received an award from the district at its annual meeting in April.

*We have begun to think about what it means to live out our new congregational mission. From saying it together every Sunday to beginning to let it guide our budgeting process, the mission of our congregation is already coming alive in various ways in our shared ministry. I am looking forward to seeing how the congregation's vision of its future develops, and what that might translate into in terms of our ministry and programs, in the year to come.

With regard to the minister's ministry, in addition my "regular" roles—leading Sunday worship, providing pastoral care and working with our lay pastoral care program, teaching the "New UU," and supporting small group ministry, and working with the transition Executive Team—this year, I was also privileged to work with our 8th, 9th, and 10th grade youth as part of the Coming of Age coordinating team. In November, I attended the first-ever clergy conference of PICO, the national umbrella organization of our own Vermont Interfaith Action, in New Orleans.

I also spent time in the months leading up to my maternity leave preparing for being out for twelve weeks this winter/spring, meeting with church leaders to plan for my absence and recruiting some of my favorite preachers to fill our pulpit. Speaking of maternity leave, it is fair to say that I have had quite a transformation in my own life this year, as Ben and I welcomed our son Dean into the world this February. It is especially delightful that our little guy arrived as part of a mini-Montpelier-UU baby boom this winter. At the

close of this church year, UCM will have welcomed several new lives among us; it is a joy to see the rocking chairs filled with parents and babes on Sunday mornings.

I am tremendously grateful to you, the congregation, for all of your support before, during, and after my leave. Thank you for allowing me the space to embark on this new journey as a mother and for warmly welcoming us back in May. Thank you, also, for “keeping on” this winter—coming to Sunday services and RE, attending small group ministry and committee meetings, making financial commitments, welcoming newcomers—and all the various ways you support the ministry of this congregation. It was a joy to come to worship during my maternity leave and find such a full house!

I am particularly indebted to Ron Cameron and the Worship and Arts Committee for their fine work coordinating and hosting Sunday services; Patty Crawford and the lay pastoral caregivers for providing quality pastoral care; Rev. Johanna Nichols for being on deck for pastoral care back-up and rites of passage; the members of the transition Executive Team and Governing Board; committee chairs; and last but not least, the church staff, for their continued leadership and their ministry while I was away.

As the writer Anne Lamott says, one of the best prayers she knows is “thank you, thank you, thank you.” And so, in that spirit of gratitude, I close this report. It remains a true blessing and privilege to serve as your minister.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Mara J. Dowdall
May 2012

Executive Committee (EC)

(This report also encompasses the work of the Governing Board- GB)

-- submitted by Paul Ohlson and Susan Koch

Since identifying a need for a new governance system within the past several years, the Executive Committee (EC) appointed a task force to review various models of church governance, read books and publications, and review survey responses from congregations throughout the United States that have transitioned to a Policy Board Governance (PBG) model. This task force used the services of Rev. Mary Higgins, a consultant with the Northern New England District (NNED) of the Unitarian-Universalist Association (UUA). A final recommendation was made to the EC in the spring of 2011. The congregation was informed about this model at a meeting in the fall of 2011, where the EC discussed its intention to pilot the model as a “trial” during the 2011-2012 church year.

What’s happened most recently?

- Spring 2011- UCM Adopts a mission statement
- August– the EC delegates authority to a Governing Board (GB) and an Executive Team (ET) to participate in an “as if” trial year.
- September– the EC meets to determine which members will participate on the GB, which will be on the ET, and which will be on the Council of Chairs.
- October- New PBG model begins.
- November- GB develops “Executive Limitations Policies”.
- December - The EC reconvenes to evaluate the trial year. A decision is made to continue into a second trial year. Another date is set in March to monitor progress.
- January- GB develops “Governing Board and Executive Team Linkage Policies”.
- February- GB and ET develop “Financial Management Policies”.
- March- The EC reconvenes to evaluate the trial year and affirms its earlier decision to continue with the pilot into another year. GB and ET meet to discuss policies.
- April- GB begins work on “Ends” statements- Informational meeting with congregation about progress and need for continuation of pilot “trial” period into a second year.

What’s next? The GB appointed a Transition Issues Task Force to identify issues and make recommendations for the coming year. Some key activities for the next few months include: finalizing draft GB policies, recommending any bylaws changes that may help us to function more effectively, holding (with the ET) linkage events to hear from the congregation and provide updates. During this transition, we will continue to operate “as if” we have officially adopted a PBG model.

Think of this as a time for us all to learn and allow ourselves to risk making mistakes on our way to living out our mission, values and ends more fully. With patience, faith and trust in one another, we will put into place a system that will help us make even greater differences for our members and in our world. It is important during this transition time for church members to ask any questions and express any concerns directly with the ET or with the GB if they cannot be adequately addressed through the standing committees. For a list of the GB and ET members, go to the church website to read the short article about the Governing Board and Executive Team Approval of Policies at: <http://www.unitarianchurchofmontpelier.org> and look under Resources > Executive Committee > Governing Board.

As you can see from the picture on the next page, we are excited! At each step of the way in the planning process we have become more convinced that this is the form of governance for UCM which will best position our congregation to carry out our mission. Thumbs up!



Transitional Executive Team (ET)

Team Members: Rev. Mara Dowdall, Rhoda Chickering, Judith Hinds, Donna Russo-Savage, Emily Seifert, Paul Wallace-Brodeur

The role of the Executive Team (ET) is to manage the affairs of the Church at an operational level. Unlike the Governing Board (GB), the ET does not make broad policy or set goals for the Church. It may establish procedures or operational policies as long as they are not in conflict with the GB's policies.

For this first transition year, the ET chose not to have a chairperson and to operate by consensus rather than voting. Mara convened and led meetings from September to January. Each member acted as liaison to a "ministry team" consisting of staff, committees, task forces and/or programs, with the intent of fostering two-way communication between those ministries and the governing bodies. Reviews of this liaison model have been mixed. We plan to evaluate and perhaps modify it during the second transition year.

Issues we discussed and acted on this year include:

- creating the ET's internal covenant;
- devising ways to support task forces and new committees;
- discerning how best to support the Council of Chairs, and what its role should be;
- receiving semi-annual and annual reports from all church ministries;
- planning management roles during Mara's maternity leave;
- defining/refining the ET's role (when does the ET make a decision and when does a committee/ task force/ministry make its own decisions?);
- compiling the Church's financial management policies in one document in response to a request from GB;
- reviewing policies written by the GB to ensure our clear understanding and provide the GB with feedback;
- developing a hiring process and an *ad hoc* committee to interview candidates for the Director of Religious Education (DRE) and recommend a candidate to the Executive Committee (which still has hiring authority under the old model in the Bylaws); and
- identifying what other big issues related to church growth will require our attention in the near future.

Some of us participated in meetings of the Executive Committee (old model) for periodic evaluation of the transition process. We took turns attending GB meetings during Mara's maternity leave to ensure good communication between the GB and the ET. One member participated in a Transition Issues Task Force which was charged by the GB to identify remaining unresolved governance issues and make recommendations to the GB for how those issues should be addressed, particularly through any needed bylaws revisions.

- submitted by Judith Hinds

Committee on Ministry (COM)

Members: Meredith Tredeau and Ruth Wallace-Brodeur, Co-Chairs; Stuart Russo-Savage ; Bonny Steuer; Sue Stukey

- So far this year COM has focused on our mission to serve as a resource for all UCM ministries to foster healthy process, relationships, and decision-making; address conflicts or troubles that negatively affect ministry; and consult with the Minister on matters of ministry.
- We have developed our skills as a resource for managing polarities by working on Polarity Management Maps as presented in "Managing Polarities in Congregations" by Oswald and Johnson.
- We spoke with the Council of Chairs about the value of covenants in all UCM ministries and offered support and resource material for developing them. We also wrote an article on covenants for the Communicator and posted two UCM covenants involving the congregation on our UCM website.
- We studied and discussed the UUA webinar on Safety Policies, "Drawing the Line: Disruptive Behavior Policies and Procedures." We reviewed the policies of other UU churches as a guide to formulating one for the UCM.
- We served as a reflection group for Mara on matters of ministry and wrote a piece for the Communicator about supporting the continued vibrancy of our church during her maternity leave.
- We reviewed *Raising the Roof: the Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition* by Alice Mann.
- We are submitting to the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee the third and final new minister evaluation for Mara.

The COM's work with covenants and disruptive behavior policies and procedures acknowledges the importance of holding each of us accountable for behavior that fosters a welcoming, loving community, nurtures each person's spiritual development, serves human need, and protects the earth.

--submitted by Ruth Wallace-Brodeur

Lay Pastoral Care Ministry

Members: Patty Crawford, Leader; Pam Cameron; Rob Chickering; Joanne Crowley-Watkins; Rev. Mara Dowdall; Michele Leno; Tina Ruth; Ginny Sassaman; Art Stukey

Challenges come our way in life. Some are pretty manageable. Others leave us feeling very alone and overwhelmed, or require great contemplation. Lay Pastoral Caregivers provide an ongoing, caring and listening presence with compassion and understanding during difficult times. The Lay Pastoral Care Ministry respects your spiritual needs and cares about your distress. Among other things, this year we:

- assumed pastoral duties during Mara's maternity leave
- printed a brochure to help congregants know when to ask for pastoral care, and
- trained two new members.

--submitted by Patty Crawford

Small Group Ministry

Coordinators: Jim Abrams; Pam Cameron; Mary Jane Ohlson; Deb Robinson; Sue Stukey; along with the Rev. Mara Dowdall

The Small Group Ministry Program provides time and space for church members and friends to come together in facilitated groups of 6 - 10 people, twice a month, to build personal connections and facilitate individual spiritual growth. Participants ponder a topic provided by the minister or coordinating team, in a guided format that allows time for both reflection and sharing in a non-judgmental and intimate atmosphere. Each group also takes on a small service project for the church or community, serving a current need. Groups are formed twice a year, in September and February, and run for four months each. Over the past year, more than 80 people have participated in this vital ministry, weaving a web of community, connection, and caring throughout the church.

--submitted by Sue Stukey

Membership Committee

Members: Judith Hinds, Chair; Hedi Ballantyne; Abby Colihan; Paula Gills (Vice Chair); Sue Gilmore; ; Dave Peters; Art Stukey

Committee mission statement: *The Membership Committee provides welcoming and outreach to newcomers, members and friends of the Church with the intention of fostering a sense of belonging in our spiritual home.* Our mission statement supports and complements UCM's mission to "welcome all as we build a loving community to nurture each person's spiritual journey."

We held the usual series of potluck dinners in people's homes last Fall and supported the Program Committee as they took over this function in the Spring. We held New UU classes in November and March. Thanks to Rev. Mara Dowdall, Rev. Johanna Nichols, Brenda Bean, and the church officers and staff who supported and participated in these classes. New members joining UCM were welcomed into the congregation on New Member Sundays.

With help from numerous volunteer callers, we contacted everyone in the church directory during the Fall. The 2012 directory was published in January. Many thanks to Church Administrator Sam Rossier for his key role in producing the directory.

We continue to manage ushers, greeters, and coffee hour supplies with lots of help from Rhoda Chickering, Patty Crawford and Tom Delaney. We maintain the Welcome Table and provide name tags for all. Thanks to former committee member Bill Pelton for refurbishing the name tag pegs in the vestry last summer.

--submitted by Judith Hinds

Leadership Development Committee

Members: Bill Doelger, Chair

The committee lost two members in the Fall, and as a result has not yet been able to fulfill its mission to match congregants with leadership training opportunities. With help from Bronwyn Fryer, however, we developed and distributed a survey to gather information about congregants' interests and skills. The results will be used to help develop a talent pool for future leadership needs. We are still actively looking for additional members.

--submitted by Bill Doelger

Program Committee

Members: Jo Romano, Chair. Other members called upon as needed.

There are numerous programs happening in our church community. Individual, small group, full church opportunities to learn, connect with each other and build our church community to meet its mission. See an updated calendar put together by Deb Van Ness with consultation from David Mears, Marianne Mullen, Nancy Mears, and Jo Romano. A special thanks to Alex Thayer who through last year kept a monthly calendar of events posted in the back hallway. This year's common calendar will be posted in the church vestry so all members of the church can inquire about programs they may not be aware of. The Program Committee is taking a collaborative approach this year. As chair, Jo will meet with other committees to help facilitate maintaining current and initiating new events. Jo will recruit program committee support members as needed.

The Program Chair:

- Meets with the Religious Education Committee to facilitate intergenerational opportunities for families, children, and all church members (*e.g.*, March Mystery Madness).
- Will take the lead in the Fall and Spring Community Pot Luck planning. Thanks to Hedi Ballantyne for coaching Jo and for coordinating the community pot lucks through the years.
- Will take the lead on the annual church picnic.
- Will be collaborating with Annie Cameron and others to facilitate a planning session for a Spring art show this year.

--submitted by Jo Romano

Social Responsibility Committee (SRC)

Members: Ginny Sassaman and Andrea Voyer / Sky Yardley Co-Chairs; Mary Alice Bisbee; Jane Dwinell; Monike Gadre; Dan Jones; Fran Krushenick; Denise McMartin; Harris Webster

- Working with Minister Mara Dowdall, Committee Co-Chairs Ginny Sassaman and Andrea Voyer established monthly topics. Mara addressed the topic in one of her sermons that month, we used the topic to select the Community Pouch recipient for that month, and we established a monthly series of presentations/workshops to address the topic. All of the topics and recipients fit within our mission's desire to "serve human need" and/or "protect the earth, our home."
- The workshops were the following: 1) Victim Offender Dialogue, presented by Judy Gibson from the Montpelier Community Justice Center; 2) Climate Change and What You Can Do About It, presented by scientist Chris Granda and Kathy Blume from 350.org/Vermont; 3) Environmentally Conscious Eating, presented by Vermont Law School expert Jason Czarnecki; and 4) Compassionate Consumerism, featuring "The Story of Stuff."
- In January, the SRC launched a series of films on immigration, tied in to Mara's immigration sermon. The series was put together by the VT Migrant Farmworker Solidarity Project. It began January 8th and continued through mid-April.
- In December, as Andrea Voyer prepared to move to Sweden for six months, we replaced co-chairs. Sky Yardley agreed to serve as the new co-chair.
- We have been working with Corey Chase to use the UCM website for more effective and immediate communication. Committee member Monika Gadre met with Corey to learn how to use the listserv capacity for timely messaging re: social justice action opportunities. We hoped to get that up-and-running by spring.
- The committee worked with Sam, Mara, and John Poeton to make sure information re: each month's Community Pouch recipients is printed in the order of service; to make sure the checks are sent to recipients; and to share information about recipients from the pulpit when necessary.
- We held two mini-retreats and may propose a bigger SRC project for the whole church for next year.

--submitted by Ginny Sassaman

Living Lighter Committee

Members: Dave Grundy, Chair; Bill Doelger; Priscilla Fox; Dan Jones; Melissa MoonGoddess; Mary Jane Ohlson; Peter Watt

This year, the Living Lighter Committee:

- Prepared the application for re-certification of our Green Sanctuary Status
- Prepared articles for the Weekly Announcements on some areas of living lighter
- Prepared articles for the Communicator on some areas of living lighter
- Continually monitored the Church's adherence to policies governing recycling
- Evaluated various ways of reducing energy needed to heat small rooms like the Fireplace Room and the small classroom on the second floor as an alternative to heating all of a large heating zone. An electric space heater was purchased to be used in the small classroom on the second floor when it would be the only space being used.
- Prepared for the living lighter service on April 22, Earth Day

--submitted by Dave Grundy

Welcoming Congregation Task Force

Members: Melissa MoonGoddess, Chair; Debby Tapper, Guy Tapper

The Welcoming Congregation Task Force is off to a great beginning this year. Despite the loss of two members who moved away in the Fall, the remaining core group has sustained its energy and moved forward.

We met with Jane Dwinell, who has worked with a number of UU congregations in New England, helping them become certified Welcoming Congregations. Jane brought home to us the importance of doing the full process recommended by the UUA. She stated that without that solid foundation, further work would be difficult. She also stressed the importance of not rushing this work and strongly encouraged us to consider this a two-year process. This first year would be dedicated to going through the series of workshops outlined in the Welcoming Congregation Handbook and developing a larger, more sustainable core group.

We proceeded to do just that. We held 8 workshops from February to May, with about a dozen enthusiastic participants. We have solidified as a group, and there is a great sense of camaraderie among us; we laugh heartily and work together well. Plans for the second year include more programs for the whole congregation and more outreach in the larger community.

--submitted by Melissa MoonGoddess, Chair

Local Organizing Committee (LOC) of Vermont Interfaith Action(VIA)

The LOC Inner Circle: Ginnie Humphreys; Johanna Nichols; Harris Webster

Middle Circle Helpers for Specific Tasks: David Abbott; Hedi Ballantyne; Brenda Bean; Mary Alice Bisbee; Marty Flanagan; Heather Moz, Bill Paine; Brian Prendergast, Deb Robinson; Paul Smith, Ruth Wallace-Brodeur, Ellie Webster; Marj Zunder

The LOC has worked mostly successfully, partially successfully, and not so successively on several goals:

Completing one-to-one conversations of a sampling of UCM members suggested to us by Mara by listening to their social concerns and explaining about community organizing and VIA: partially successful.

Creating and keeping up to date a VIA Bulletin Board and putting articles in the Communicator and Weekly Announcements to keep the congregation informed: partially successful.

Working on the previously selected issue of health care by partnering with Washington County legislators, doctors, business people, and state officials to hold a Health Care Forum at our church explaining the State of Vermont Health Care Initiative: partially successful. (The program for the Forum was mostly successfully carried out but the getting members of our congregation to attend was not so successful, disappointingly so.)

Working on the previously selected issue of safe sidewalks and complete streets through a) monitoring and reporting sidewalk hazards both in the Fall and Spring to the Department of Public Works, b) submitting and following up a written report to the City Manager and Director of Public Works about winter maintenance of sidewalks , c) developing an infra-structure for having personal relationships and being in contact with all 7

members of the Montpelier City Council including the Mayor and attending open public meetings: mostly successful.

Attending both a workshop and an Action for all VIA put on by Burlington's Ohavi Zedek Synagogue in Burlington and Christ Church: mostly successful. As follow-up, a VIA clergy press conference in the State House: not so successful.

Maintaining a relationship with the Social Responsibility Committee and the Living Lighter Committee to listen to each other and coordinate our work: partially successful.

Informing and consulting with Mara, Rhoda Chickering of the UCM Executive Team, and Melissa Shettleroe, VIA's Central Vermont Organizer: mostly successful.

Carrying out a VIA fund-raising Brunch Feast in January: mostly successful.

--submitted (and progress toward goals evaluated) by Harris Webster

The Women's Alliance

Members: We have about 25 members and many individuals attend our meetings who are not members.

The Women's Alliance holds monthly potluck dinner meetings, where we welcome all church members. This year we invited the Governing Board to eat with us prior to their meetings. There is a short business meeting as well as a program, usually led by a member of the church community, which follows dinner. The dinners nourish our bodies and the programs, our souls. We have sung together, learned about: donating our bodies to UVM, nutrition, and the world of Wall Street. We share recipes and good tastes helping to build a loving community. We are creating a church cookbook and appreciate contributions of 'family recipes' from everyone. At our meetings we share rituals to nurture each person's spiritual journey. One way we help to protect the earth, our home is by bringing our own place settings to our dinners. Serving human need is exhibited by:

- A Fall rummage sale providing low cost items to the community with half the proceeds going directly to the church treasury as well as supporting the Living Lighter Committee with the Spring Soft Rummage Sale.
- Sales of soup during the winter months raising funds that we spend to support the needs of the church. This year new padded chairs for the vestry were purchased as well as a new energy efficient refrigerator for the kitchen and two small adjustable chairs for the preschool room.
- Preparation of about 65 quarts of pea soup each winter for the food shelf.
- Working with the youth groups to make 'stone soup' with donated fresh garden produce which then is given to the food shelf.
- Monthly treats given to the Stone Soup Community Lunch for the individuals who come to enjoy the meal and donations for their weekly meal in the form of canned goods and fresh potatoes.

Submitted By: Janet Poeton, Alliance President

Music Director and Music Committee Report

Music Committee Members: Catherine Orr, Music Director; Eric Oberg, chair; Duffy Gardner, Jack McGinnis, Joan Stepenske, members.

Choir Members: Linda Abbott, Hedi Ballantyne, Sarah Braun-Hamilton, Didi Brush, Darcy Buret, Ludo Buret, Sam Clark, Betty Davis, Murray Evans, Gail Falk, Bronwyn Fryer, Paula Gills, Darlene Grundy, Dave Grundy, Bob Hawk, Sarah Hooker, Ed Hutchinson, Anne Jameson, Kip Jones, Kairn Kelley, Maveret McClellan, Jack McGinnis, Dee Montie, Heather Moz, Eric Oberg, Mary Jane Ohlson, Bill Paine, Elaine Parker, Brooke Pearson, Bill Pelton, Ted Richards, Dick Riley, Susan Bull Riley, Deb Robinson, Ginny Sassaman, Yona Shahr, Cecile Sherburn, Nancy Smith, Joan Stepenske, Sue Stuke, Harris Webster, Offie Wortham, Jonah Zablow, Nora Zablow

What our program has been doing to further the UCM mission:

Music serves to deepen, inform and illuminate our spiritual/physical lives. The music program at UCM seeks to provide uplifting music at our church services and beyond. We offer a broad range of types of music so as to touch people with differing tastes and at different times of life, old, young and in between. Together, the Choir, the Music Director, and members of the Music Committee have worked to integrate music into the life of our church community.

During the year we have held special services with music playing a key role: *Dia de los Muertos* Oct. 30 with Latin music & musicians; Thanksgiving with our Mega-Choir singing Gospel song *Power Lord*; Winter Solstice on Dec. 18 with music composed by Melissa MoonGoddess; two Christmas Eve services, one for children with a young women's choir, the other with our choir and Jon Gailmor; a Singing Meditation service on Jan. 1st; a Buddhist service on Feb. 12 with singing crystal bowls of Jan Sandman; Music Sunday on March 18 with the newly composed UU mass, *Missa Pro Serveto*; an Earth Day service by Living Lighter featuring Jim Scott and his music; and a Welcome Back Mara service with special music by Paula Gills.

The UCM Choir sings at every service from September into June, averages 20 singers per Sunday, and consistently inspires us all with their beautiful and interesting music. They are their own 'small' group (actually more of a 'large' group) ministry, celebrating each others' birthdays monthly and having an annual retreat in late August. The choir has welcomed several new singers as well as visiting singers for special occasions. Our own State & Main men's barbershop quartet entertains us all from time to time.

SACRED WOMEN'S SINGING CIRCLE meets once a month on Sunday nights. UCM Recorder players serenaded us on Dec. 11 and have continued meeting and rehearsing every two weeks. UCM Drummers started meeting many months ago and continue to drum together once a month, with lots of good rhythms. SINGING MEDITATIONS gathered the first Friday of every month from October to February until discontinued due to low participation. HOSPICE CHOIR meets at UCM twice a month and sings for people who are ill or dying.

We continue to host Capital City concerts and Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble, plus other recitals and concerts throughout the year, as a center for good music in the community.

--submitted by Catherine Orr, Music Director

Worship & Arts Committee

Members: Leslie Parr, Meredith Tredeau, Brooke Pearson, Darcy Buret (leave of absence,) Bill Paine, Vice Chair, Ron Cameron Chair, Rev Mara Dowdall and Catherine B Orr attend. Beth Damon assists with the flowers.

What our committee or program has been doing to further the UCM mission:

Worship services have been at the heart of our spiritual community. The words and the music of the worship experience nurture our spiritual journeys both individually and collectively. Our services help foster a sense of caring, an awareness of human need and concern for our home, our earth. That experience may transform us “toward our better selves,” call us to service and develop our sense of connectedness. We strive to make the services welcoming.

The main charge of this committee has been to help plan, monitor and comment on worship services and see that the pulpit is filled or a service in place for each of the 8 Sundays our minister is free of preaching responsibilities. We also deal with the candles, flowers, hearing assist devices, Braille hymnal and the Christmas Eve Service.

We have had an exceptional busy church year hosting 18 services- thirteen for Mara’s maternity leave (Feb-April,) in addition to five others, one of which was a pulpit exchange. With Mara’s help we put together a list of good speakers and lay-led services. Catherine led a singing meditation service on 1/1/12 and directed a choir performance of a UU Mass on “Music Sunday” March 18. Sally Armstrong, our DRE, led a Multigenerational Service celebration of Spring on March 25. Three ordained ministers in our congregation led services and offered support. Mara invested a substantial amount of time and effort putting together documents and templates for guest speakers and their hosts. Sally and Catherine have been available to guests and hosts for service planning. Committee members shared hosting duties. We doubled our meetings in the fall until the guest roster was complete and have invested substantial time contacting and meeting the guests, and preparing and hosting the services.

Last summer our committee read the book “Worship that Works- Theory and Practice for Unitarian Universalists” by Wayne Arnason & Kathleen Rolenz. We discussed the book at our retreat in August. Throughout this year it has served as a starting point for discussions of various service elements such as announcements, candle lighting, extinguishing the chalice, etc. The gathering song was initiated as a way to begin the service on time and help transition into our sacred time together. This fall we developed a committee covenant. November & December meetings required a lot of time planning the logistics of Christmas Eve service- greenery, recruiting ushers, service planning etc. January was spent training for our host duties and we have been absorbed in our hosting responsibilities and making sure the services run smoothly.

--submitted by Ron Cameron

Director of Religious Education

This has been an amazing year in Religious Education! I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to be a small part of it.

While establishing clear goals and creating a path for future lifespan education we have provided a rich feast for the children and youth of our church today.

Most of what we have accomplished this year is only secondary to our primary achievement: the recognition, emphasis, and celebration of the fact that we are indeed a multigenerational spiritual community.

This year we have demonstrated and affirmed the truth that we are all nurtured, sustained, and enriched by the presence of one another. No community can long survive without the gifts that each age brings...the wisdom of our elders, the wonder and clear eyes of our children, the strength of our young families, and the steady comforting presence of all those in between. We are all so truly blessed by our abundant diversity.

In the past, some saw a wall...a division...a separation...between what happened in the sanctuary and what took place in Sunday school. That wall...if it ever really existed...like the fabled wall of Jericho...has come down. The energy, life, and joy that fill our church on Sunday morning are palpable! Our Multigenerational services are life-sharing and life-affirming events. The children are learning how to be in community and the adults are remembering what it was like to approach life and worship with openness, wonder, and unbridled enthusiasm. This symbiotic relationship is a wonder to behold!

0. At my last count the list of people who have helped out in Sunday school, Coming of Age, the nursery, or in some other supportive role was eighty-one! Eighty-one! Wow!
1. Our teachers and volunteers have ranged in age from sixteen to over ninety!
2. We have had nineteen amazing teachers in preschool through seventh grade.
3. The Coming of Age program has served eleven youth and has been supported by over fourteen adults in addition to parental support
4. Four people took the OWL training and plan to teach next year 7-12 grades and at present eight people have signed up to take the OWL training for 1-6 grades that will take place at our church in August.
5. There were sixty pairs of children and adults who enjoyed March Mystery Madness.
6. We have hired staff for the nursery, but have been supported by volunteers whenever needed.
7. Two youth have applied for Gold Mine Leadership Training in August and three youth represented us at the district youth assembly last fall.

*We welcome all as we build a loving...growing, vibrant...community.
To nurture each person's spiritual journey...wherever they are along the path.*

--submitted by Sally Armstrong, DRE

Religious Education Committee

Members: Jen Miller-Arsenault, Chair; Sally Armstrong; Nancy Chickering; Lorna Corbett; David Mears; Melinda Moz-Knight; Marianne Mullen; Trish Turner-Gill; Pam vanDeursen; Deb Van Ness; Carl Witke

With the Mission Statement in mind, the Religious Education Committee identified the following goals for 2011-2012 and identified questions and action steps for each:

- Integrate Religious Education into the life of this congregation
- Create a vision for lifespan education
- Map out curriculum and experiences Nursery-Grade 12
- Improve Nursery Program 0-3
- Support our junior and senior youth
- Pre-K through Grade 7 focus on program
- Support families

The Committee meets monthly after church from 11:30-1:00.

--submitted by Jen Miller-Arsenault

Safe Congregation Task Force

Members: Tina Ruth, Chair; Jenny Beaudin; Ginnie Humphreys; Janet Poeton

We were charged with developing a safe congregation policy for the church. This would serve the mission's purpose of building a loving community, particularly a protected place for our children to develop their own spirituality, but also a safe place for other vulnerable members of our church community to feel safe physically and emotionally. To that end, we reviewed UUA materials, safe congregation policies of several other UU churches, the Northern New England District Policy and materials, and the UUA Our Whole Lives curriculum. We developed a Safe Congregation Policy Handbook and a Training/Procedures Manual to supplement it. They addressed many issues, including having an application and Code of Ethics for people who want to work with children and youth in church activities, phasing in criminal background checks and references for applicants, education about and implementation of the new policy (if adopted by the EC), supervision procedures, conduct of RE volunteers, educating children for prevention. It also included responding to and reporting incidents of sexual abuse of children. It also addressed the issue of how to handle a person who acknowledged having behaved improperly but who wanted help changing; such persons who have close supervision and a signed agreement as to the activities in which they could and could not participate. The manual contained backup materials for carrying out the policy and training RE volunteers. While the EC has been developing and this year trying out the new governance model, the project has been put on hold pending their deciding how they will develop and adopt policies for the church.

--submitted by Tina Ruth

Report about Auditing done in FY2012

During the FY2012 church year – at the suggestion of the church’s Internal Auditor Ted Allen, the Executive Committee (EC) approved a \$3,000 expenditure for Leslie Krogh-Wisner of Mudgett, Gennette, and Krogh-Wisner to conduct an external review of the church’s financial books and record-keeping practices. The recommendations resulting from the review are being incorporated into the new Financial Management Policies of the church (to see these, click onto the relevant attachment in the article about Governance Board and Executive Team Approval of Policies on the church’s website as follows:

<http://www.unitarianchurchofmontpelier.org> , going to Resources>Executive Committee>Governing Board). For a copy of the full auditing report, speak with Paul Wallace-Brodeur, Chair of the Finance Committee.

Finance Committee

Members: Paul Wallace-Brodeur, Chair; Brenda Bean; John Poeton; Nancy Read; Deb Robinson; and Dee Montie, who stepped down from the Committee in March. The Committee is grateful for and acknowledges her years of faithful work with the Committee.

The Committee has met five times since the beginning of the Church year. The normal monthly schedule has been curtailed somewhat to accommodate the demands of the new trial governance structure. In our early meetings, we examined the funds needed to cover our summer expenses, when pledge and other income are lower than the rest of the year. It was estimated that \$42,000 was required to cover these expenses. Cash reserves are used to cover these costs along with prepaid pledges and income we receive in July and August. Despite a shortfall in pledge income of \$5,500, fund raising was ahead of projections by about \$3,700 and the budget for the FY2011 church year ended up in the black.

In September the Committee met with Rich Pearce, Managing Director of the Trust Company of Vermont and manager of our Long Term Invested Funds (LTIF). He reviewed our portfolio with the Committee and the performance of our investments in this volatile market. Although the Congregation has given authority to withdraw 5% of the value of our portfolio annually for Church expenses, the Committee limits this to 4% due to sluggish economic growth and continues to consider dropping this to 3% in order maintain the basic value of the LTIF. The annual withdrawal is dedicated to the Capital Fund.

In other Committee work, Deb Robinson filed for the new federal health insurance tax credit to offset the cost of health insurance we provide. We received a modest refund as a result of her effort. The Committee agreed to allocate additional funds (up to \$1,250) to the Worship and Arts Committee to spend on guest speakers this year if needed. In February the Committee adopted a Finance Committee Covenant and reviewed the first draft of a proposed budget for the 2012-13 church year. The independent audit of the Church financial practices recommended that couples not count the Sunday pouch together. The Committee agreed to recruit additional counters and is pleased that Norma Raymond, Rob Chickering, and Dick Jenney have agreed to come on board as counters. The Committee still needs to recruit a couple of additional counters to fully address this recommendation. With the completion of the roof project, the Capital Fund has been significantly depleted and only had a balance in February of \$8,239. Finally in late April the Committee completed work on the proposed budget for the 2012-13 church year. The Committee’s recommendation was forwarded to the Executive Team for further review, adoption by the Executive Committee, and final action by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting in May.

--submitted by Paul Wallace-Brodeur

Stewardship Committee

Members: Scott Hess and John Thomas Poeton, Co-Chairs; Murray Evans; Marianne Mullen; Ted Richards; Ted Schultheis; Paul Smith; Susan Weber

The Stewardship Committee normally meets in the small classroom upstairs on the fourth Tuesday of each month from 5:30 to 7:00.

The major topics over the last seven months have been:

- The Committee organized planned and scheduled the annual budget drive for the 2012-2013 church year. This organizing and planning proved to be very successful as the annual budget drive this year netted more than \$207,500 contributed by 265 commitment units. This number included 28 new units. All of these numbers are new highs. A special thank you goes to the 32 visiting stewards who worked so hard to make this drive a success during the months of March and April.
- The Committee read and discussed sections of *Beyond Fundraising: A Complete Guide to Congregational Stewardship* by Wayne Clark.
- The Committee agreed to be involved with FORTH, a stewardship assistance program developed by UUA. This summer members of our church knowledgeable about our fundraising will be invited to conduct a survey of our financial procedures. Following an analysis of our submitted information the UUA would assist us with a plan for fundraising and procedures.
- The Committee organized and planned activities and publicity in support of a successful budget drive. This planning resulted in a leadership gathering, two training sessions for our visiting stewards conducted by Sue Stuke, a “sermon on the amount”, two testimonials, and a celebration at the end of our drive with music and food.
- The Committee agreed to change the terminology of the drive from annual canvass, canvassers, and pledge to annual pledge drive, visiting stewards, and financial commitment in order to use terms that are in line with the national stewardship movement of the UUA.
- The Committee selected and revised a covenant between the congregation and the visiting stewards.
- The Committee agreed that there is a need for a couple of major fund-raisers to supplement the current strategies to raise funds for our yearly budget. Two major attempts were planned to raise funds but neither event was supported by enough people to have it occur. The Committee continues to plan other events for the Fall and Spring of the next church year. If you have any ideas for a successful fundraiser please speak to anyone on the Stewardship Committee.

--submitted by John Thomas Poeton & Scott Hess

Report of the Church Administrator

In Order to support the ministries of the church, the Church Administrator, in close collaboration with the Administration Committee, the Minister, Treasurer, Executive Team, Property and Finance Chairs and other committees, coordinates a range of necessary administrative services. Such services include the filing of tax documents, payment and collection of obligations, maintenance and upgrading of equipment, administering payroll and employee benefit programs, recording contributions, coordinating the schedule of building use, developing the infrastructure for technical services, publication of informational materials, and maintenance of data, as necessary for internal and UUA mailings and statistical purposes.

The Administration Committee continues to support the Church Administrator in carrying out assigned duties. To that end, the Committee successfully advocated for funds to provide some staffing hours for office assistance during this year. This additional staffing has enabled us to do a better job of coordinating use of space in our building as well as maintaining more accurate and up-to-date calendars.

Volunteers, coordinated by the Church Administrator, deliver many of the services that support other staff, address the needs of church members, and help us fulfill our corporate responsibilities. Office volunteers handle mail, assist with data entry, filing, etc. A core crew deals with the news and announcements - formatting, mailing and emailing the monthly newsletter and weekly announcements. A volunteer prepares quarterly and annual tax filings, etc., etc.

It cannot be emphasized enough how much we rely on volunteers, and they could not be appreciated more by the Church Administrator. Identifying, recruiting and retaining volunteer administrative assistance is not all that easy, as the work isn't everybody's cup of tea, but still, the number of people we have found, the diversity of skills, and the willingness to help are really quite remarkable. And, as we are fond of saying, "Church administration can actually be fun. Well, at times, anyhow. Who knew?"

While much work is accomplished with volunteer help, the Church Administrator must maintain control of, and have a complete knowledge and understanding of, the tasks and responsibilities that are delegated to helpers. Technology, accounting, tax and employment law are only a few areas in which the Administrator must be conversant. In order to maintain a high degree of technical knowledge, he continues to take extra courses of study. This year, he took a course in Small Business Networking through the Cisco Networking Academy. The Administrator also continues self-study in church tax law and business administration. Additionally, the Administrator continues to participate in the Association of UU Administrators, a group that provides resources for congregations across the U.S. - hosting an active email discussion group and a northern New England cluster group that meets quarterly.

--submitted by Sam Rossier, Church Administrator

Administration Committee

Members: John Poeton, Chair; Corey Chase; Polly Ellerbe; Judith Hinds; Norma Raymond; Amy Tatko.

Sam Rossier, Church Administrator, attends our meetings and gives a monthly report for our consideration.

The Administration Committee normally meets in the Fireplace Room on the third Thursday of each month from 11:30 until 1:00pm.

The major work that has been conducted this year includes:

- A careful analysis of the workload of the Church Administrator including the amount of time spent on church rentals, financial matters, communication, reception responsibilities and interruptions throughout the workday. Committee members assist the Church Administrator in areas such as mailings, rental contracts, mail sorting and financial procedures
- The development of a newly structured interactive website and its implementations. Recent work has included the development of a policy for web site use, discussion and decisions about what should or should not be included on the web site, and the establishment of a procedure for editing and authoring including the training of those who will be involved with the website itself.

Other website activities have included the establishment of a “sanitized” Communicator (a newsletter with no telephone and e-mail numbers, and other non-public information), a web auction procedure and group communication procedures.

- The establishment of the position of Office Assistant/Host Coordination, the job description and procedures for the processing of work. Following a series of interviews, the Committee offered the opportunity for this work to Paul Gambill. Paul is assisting with the rental procedure, seeking and coordinating hosts for church activities as needed, and assisting with other office procedures on an as-needed basis.

The Administration Committee is always looking for new members. If you have any interest in the operations and management of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier please consider joining our committee.

--submitted by John Poeton

Personnel Committee

Members: Priscilla Fox; Chris Granda; Leslie Parr; Sarah Patterson

- We worked on the details around a job offer to the Acting Director of Religious Education (DRE) to become the settled DRE.
- On a continuing basis, we answer questions posed by Mara and other staff members,.
- Using Alban guidelines, the committee worked on a performance appraisal process to enable our staff, appropriate committees, and others to provide performance feedback based on job functions and goal setting.
- All of the above is to further a warm, positive environment for staff and between staff and the congregation.

--submitted by Priscilla Fox

Property Committee

Members: Paul Ohlson, Chair; Charlie Ballantyne; Rob Chickering; Rhoda Chickering; Murray Evans; Ben Fowler; Danner Friend; Scott Hess; Art Stukey; Ted Schultheis

The Property Committee adopted the following mission statement at its November meeting: Protect and maintain the church in keeping with its historical integrity and its current needs.

The Property Committee currently is busy addressing the sinking floor in the Vestry, the rotting/unpainted exterior siding, inefficient heating and insulation, mold and rot inside, as well as concentrations of pigeon guano in the belfry. In addition, the Property Committee oversees the ongoing and routine maintenance of the interior of the church.

--submitted by Paul Ohlson

Report from Church Historian Peter Thoms

These notes offer brief highlights of “major events in the church,” as described in the bylaws.

The Mission Statement, adopted in April 2011, has become an essential touchstone for many church activities and is recited at the conclusion of each worship service. It is becoming a vital beacon and foundation for the congregation.

Governance changes – initiated in the spring of 2011 after an extensive period of preparation led by the Governance Task Force and the Executive Committee – have been undertaken at a significant level during this church year. The developments – not yet formally adopted through bylaw changes – include duties taken on by a new Governing Board (focused on policy), a new Executive Team (focused on management), and a new Council of Chairs (focused on coordinating committee work). A decision has been made to continue the trial period into the next church year, and to consider formal bylaw changes at the appropriate time.

Our minister, Mara Dowdall – and husband, Ben, and their young son, Dean Patrick – took the first maternity leave in the church’s 148-year history, during the months of February through April. It was a significant chapter in Mara’s ministry, and responsibilities were taken on by church members in a number of ways. The Worship & Arts Committee – Meredith Tredeau, Leslie Parr, Brooke Pearson, Bill Paine, and Ron Cameron, Chair, and Choir Director Catherine Orr and Religious Education Director Sally Armstrong – skillfully and creatively arranged for and conducted 13 worship services during the leave.

The Church Historian has continued working – with the able, committed leadership of archivist Leslie Rowell – on the Church Records project, which was begun with a 2010 grant from the Vermont Quebec Unitarian Universalist Convention. The church received a second grant in May 2011, and much was accomplished. Records at the church, from 1996 through 2011, were completely re-organized; the re-organization was fully documented in a revised Finding Aid, reflecting all of the records held at either the Vermont Historical Society and at the church. This spring, the church applied for a third VQUUC grant. If funded, it will allow Leslie to complete parts of the project that need additional attention and to put into place an accessible, searchable database of past Executive Committee minutes, church newsletters, and annual and special meeting reports. An exciting prospect – as we look ahead to honoring the 150th anniversary of the founding of the church in 2014 – 2016.