

Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2015–2016

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**Annual Meeting of VUU**

**June 12, 2016, 12:00PM**

**Agenda**

1. Call to Order: Establish a Quorum (LDC)
2. Invocation – (2 min.)
3. Housekeeping – (3 min.)
  - Approval of Meeting minutes from June 2015
  - Approval of Meeting Agenda and Timetable
4. Elections: Board, Special Funds and LDC (20 min.)
  - a. Candidate Introductions (1-3 min. ea)
  - b. Any nominations from the floor (2 min.)
  - c. Collecting Ballots (2 min.)
5. Minister's Report (10 min.)
6. President's Report (10 min.)
7. Special Funds Report (5 min.)
8. Budget Approval (20 min.)
  - Presentation (10 min.)
  - Questions, Discussion & Vote (10 min.)
9. Election Results (5 min.)

Adjournment (1:15 PM)



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**VUU Annual Meeting Minutes  
07 June 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 12:02pm.

An established quorum was confirmed by the Leadership Development Committee (LDC).

Rev. Andy gave an invocation.

Jayne B. moved and Barbara F. seconded to approve the minutes of the 2014 annual meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Jim N. (LDC chair) asked all the candidates to stand. A call for nominations was offered; there were none. There was a ballot call: for anyone who has not voted, please do so in the next 3 minutes. The LDC retreated to count the ballots.

The Minister's report was presented by Rev. Andy Burnette. Rev. Andy briefly discussed current accomplishments. Worship attendance is up about 25% since 2012, some of the blessings and issues around this were discussed. And then he discussed the future, offering ideas and some food for thought for the visioning process to come. We have the most exciting problem a congregation can have!

The President's report was delivered by Janice Miller. She referred everyone to the written report for specific Board accomplishments. She then reviewed numerous indicators that show our congregation is healthy: Our attendance is continuing to rise. Our current operating budget is balanced and next year's budget is larger, so we can do more. We have made major property improvements this year. Innovations this year were highlighted. Social justice and interfaith work are expanding. We have a large group of active volunteers. In demonstration of that, Janice asked anyone who volunteered for VUU over the last year to stand, and most of the room did. She thanked board members and other volunteers for their service. Janice pointed to the visioning process to come in the next year.

The process for developing VUU's Vision was delivered by Barbara F. A timeline for the next year was outlined. The PERCEPT process was introduced and explained. This process is an interdenominational program that is a long term process that will require time during the service as well as small group work. This process was contrasted with the Searching for the Future weekend. We will get a report from PERCEPT on where VUU stands demographically in its community. This process will need to be implemented by next year's Board. This process will be planned during the summer for a launch in the fall.

The Special Funds Report was presented by DeeAnne M.:

1. This year Recognition Sunday raised \$4K for the endowment.
2. \$1000 was granted to the Leadership fund.
3. \$16K was granted from the endowment earnings to cover flood damage.



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4. The endowment is up 7.1% this year and has grown 15% over the last 5 years. \$332K or so is currently in the endowment, including principle and earnings.
5. This year, in recognition of our 7<sup>th</sup> principle, the SF Committee voted to divest from fossil fuels, specifically the CT 200 companies. Divestiture of indirect investments in this group of companies will take up to 5 years.

The Budget Report was presented by Anne S.

1. \$526K in revenue is projected for year-end (June) using the April actuals.
2. \$523K in expenses are projected for year end.
3. Provided pledges keep coming in, we are estimating a \$3K+ surplus in operating income.
4. VUU received this year \$18K in special grants from the Endowment and the District (PSWD) to cover flood damage.
5. \$50K+ was given by anonymous donors this year to perform deferred maintenance. This enabled us to re-roof and paint the sanctuary, re-pave the parking lot, extend the entry patio, replace lighting and gutters, and install a new canopy.
6. Anne explained the budget process, which involves input from all the ministries and programs, numerous committees and reviews, and collaboration on priorities between the senior minister and the board.
7. \$387K in pledges have been received and we are confident that we will have \$400K in gross pledges next year.
8. 46 households have increased their pledges by 15% or more!
9. \$546K in total revenue is being planned for next year, a 5% increase.
10. Sources of income for 2015-6 were displayed in a pie chart.
11. We are budgeting about \$26K more in the budget for next year. This will enable numerous improvements, including the addition of a bookkeeping service.
12. Expenses for VUU in 2015-6 were displayed in another pie chart.
13. Asset levels were reported. As of the end of April, VUU had \$33K in operating and savings accounts, \$332K in Special Funds, and \$1.85Million in real estate equity.

Jayne B moved and Mary Lou C seconded a motion to approve the Budget at 12:55pm.

Discussion ensued. Questions were asked and answered about the budget:

1. What happened to the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time administrative assistant that we wanted to add? We will not be able to hire an extra person this year because the operating budget can't accommodate the expense. However, the new bookkeeping service will free up about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of our administrator's time for other duties.
2. Thanks were offered to everyone who worked on governance.
3. A point of information was offered that we are still below 2007 staffing levels and the only reason we are doing as well as we are is that most of our staff works uncompensated overtime. Even with the addition of the bookkeeping service we are still a  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a person below where we actually need to be for a congregation our size.



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In the absence of further discussion we moved to a vote. The budget motion was approved unanimously.

Election results were reported by Jim Nielsen:

David Sheh, JoAnne S and Barbara S were elected to the LDC.

Carl A. and Jay M. were elected to the Special Funds Committee.

The following candidates were elected to the 2015-6 VUU Board of Trustees:  
Barbara F., Janice M., DeeAnne M., Ann S., Cliff A.

Janet N. moved and Mary E. seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously at 1:15 pm.

**Board of Trustees**  
**President's Report**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2015-16**

Members and Friends,

This has been an exciting year at VUU—the launch of our next 50 years! It's been a time to look forward and imagine our possibilities as a congregation, and to collectively discern our vision.

The VUU Vision process was the most significant undertaking of the board this fiscal year. We “listened” to 183 respondents to the Percept survey, and then listened to 106 participants in 14 group sessions. Common themes about our desired future emerged from these sessions, which were then distilled by the board into the following vision and ends statements:

**Our Vision & Ends**

***We are a vibrant, inclusive community, inspired by many spiritualities and theologies, caring for one another through life's challenges, and bending the moral arc of the universe toward justice.***

1. We challenge each person to discover, experience, and be transformed by the deep and mysterious.
2. We cultivate our inclusive community through radical hospitality and nurturing.



3. We prioritize intergenerational experience through increased investment in the faith formation of the next generation.
4. We engage in partnerships to counter systems of oppression and create a just, sustainable and healthy world.
5. We are an innovative congregation, growing Unitarian Universalism in covenant with our UUA partners.

These statements will provide high-level guidance to the ministers, staff and volunteers who will develop work plans and measures of success. These ends will also frame our resource priorities as we initiate a multi-year planning process for operating and capital budgets.

In regard to our overall success, we should reflect annually on the question,

**“How are we doing as a congregation?”** Each member may assess this from an individual vantage point, so here are some VUU health indicators to consider:

- ✓ We welcomed **43 new members** who joined the congregation.
- ✓ Our **sanctuary is 80% full (at capacity limit)** during the cooler half of the year.
- ✓ Our operating **expenses are below budget**, and are projected to end the fiscal year within 1% of collected revenue.
- ✓ We have a significant and **growing endowment** fund.
- ✓ Our operating **budget for next year is the largest** in our history, enabling us to give our ministers and staff raises and invest more in social justice work.
- ✓ We retained our **outstanding ministers and Director of Religious Education** and invested in their development.
- ✓ We **hired an amazing administrator**, transitioning smoothly from our interim administrator who improved many processes.
- ✓ We continue to **innovate**: new website; e-bulletin screens in the sanctuary; a better phone system; new church management software “Breeze”; new member directory; visually appealing communication vehicles (Happenings & Sunday Bulletin); new ways to mark Joys & Concerns.
- ✓ We’re making improvements to the property, including a long awaited **kitchen renovation**.
- ✓ We have increased **social justice and interfaith partnerships** (e.g. hosted Interfaith Dialogue on Fear; new memberships in VIP & Arizona Faith Network; Black Lives Matter and new relationships with NAACP, AME Church, and local law enforcement).
- ✓ Our ministers and program staff are active and well-respected at the national level among our **UUA** partners.
- ✓ We have many **new volunteers** devoting their time and talents.
- ✓ We have an updated **Vision & Ends** to guide the planning of the staff, committees and ministries.



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Overall, we have many health indicators moving in a positive direction. There is always room for improvement, but this has been an excellent year at VUU, thanks to great teamwork among ministers, staff, and volunteers.

On a personal note, I want to extend thanks to “retiring” board members Melanie Cloonan, Ann Sebren, and (ex officio) David Sheh. We are lucky to have continuing board members Barbara Face, Paul Schneider, Cliff Alred and DeeAnne McClenahan. Their commitment to the congregation is extraordinary. It’s a joy to work with them and Reverend Andy.

We should all pause to count our many blessings—especially to have one another. Many thanks to all of you for your support to VUU! Your passion and involvement are essential to achieving our common vision.

Yours in service,

*Janice Miller*

President

VUU Board of Trustees

**Senior Minister’s Annual Report  
Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
June, 2016**

In our mission statement, we call ourselves to the work of love, service, and justice. This year, we have shown ourselves to be the kind of community that takes these charges seriously. I count it a great honor to be wrapping up my fourth year of ministering alongside you.

Our lay pastoral care associates have not only maintained a listening presence after worship services, but have reached out to our most vulnerable members to keep them engaged in community. These folks are wonderful ministry partners. In our small groups (Chalice Circles, Spirit of Life Reading Circle, children's and youth Religious Education, and several others) learning and pastoral care are mingled as we hear one another’s stories. More than 170 of us were involved in a small group this past year, providing the opportunity to get to know one another better. We are a community that cares for one another.

We also reached beyond our walls to demonstrate that Black Lives Matter. It was an honor to be invited to attend a Chandler Police Department meeting with the East Valley NAACP. VUU member Beverly McCormick and I led a workshop on racial justice in congregations at the Pacific Southwest District Assembly. We are working on forging a relationship with a traditionally African-American congregation. Thanks to Beverly, to Barb Quijada, to Social Action Chair Willa Cree and all who have been involved for being part of this work!

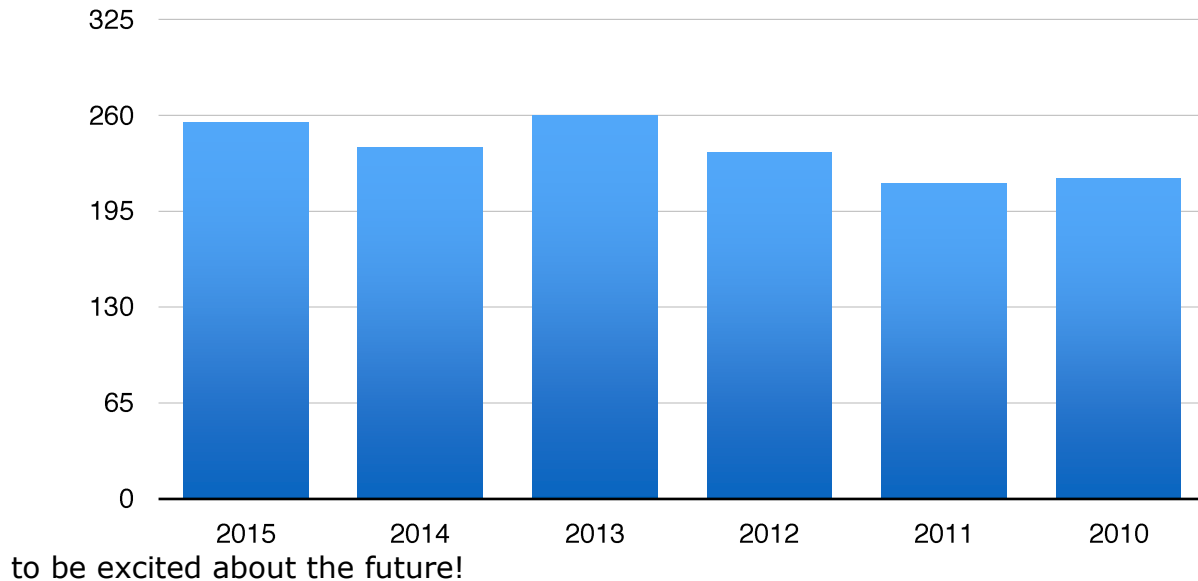


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Our message of love and justice is resonating with our community. Attendance in calendar year 2015 was the second-highest in our history, and the highest on record with only one service, as we had a Saturday service in 2013:

Our membership is also on the rise, up from 341 last year to 366 as of May 15th. The winter new member class was the largest ever at VUU. We have reason

■ Total Attendance



With an eye to the future, we're also widening our reach using technology. Thanks to the tech team, we are now posting all sermons online via our YouTube channel. We even ran a successful experiment by live-streaming a memorial service at the family's request. Family members in New York successfully viewed the service. More work is required, but we may soon be able to live-stream all of our worship services.

Of course, all of this love, service, and justice requires administrative support. It has been a joy to welcome Sue Ringler as VUU's Congregation Administrator. As she has gotten her VUU sea legs, she has also worked with volunteers to help us streamline our communications and to fully utilize the congregation's new database, the Breeze Church Management System. The new system combines several previously-separate functions, including sending giving notices, recording pledged and other giving, mass communication, and more. We'll even be sending out a directory from the Breeze program soon! Thanks to Sue and dedicated volunteers, Breeze is making our work easier and our communication with you better.

A large part of next program year's work will consist of responding to the new ends statements written by the board of trustees as part of the all-congregation visioning process. I am grateful to the board and other volunteers for





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their careful gathering of congregants' dreams for our faith home. They used that input to craft goals (ends statements) to move us toward our shared vision. My work, and the work of staff and many volunteers, is to respond to these goal statements with concrete plans of how we will achieve them over the next few years. Those plans will then be monitored for progress by the board of trustees. By using this process, we become more accountable to the congregation, to love itself, and to future generations of UUs for achieving our mission. I look forward to taking this big step in the governance of the congregation. I believe we stand poised to make great strides toward our shared vision of the Beloved Community!

In conclusion, I am grateful to the excellent staff at VUU for their work. Marci, Kellie, Sue, Joe, and Aleks are second to none. I am humbled by and grateful for their passion and skill. Of course, each member at VUU also brings something unique to our faith community. Some of you have spent long hours volunteering this past year. Thank you for all you do. Together, let us expand our vision of what VUU could be. People of all social classes, ethnicities, faith backgrounds, gender expressions, and more are looking for a faith home to which they can bring their full selves, and from which they can work to change the world. A congregation never belongs only to its members. In important ways it belongs to those we serve in the community, and is always being passed on to the next people through the door. Where is the Spirit of Love calling us next?

With love,  
Rev. Andy

### **MUSIC MINISTRY & MEMBERSHIP 2015-16 Annual Report**

**MUSIC MINISTRY:** As usual, a main focus has been on maintaining high quality music during Sunday morning services, and making sure the music helps facilitate the needs and flow of the service, while helping to create depth and meaning in our worship. Another focus is to use music to build community in various church activities, and to use music to benefit the greater community, when appropriate.

**CHOIRS:** The Adult, Children's, and Bell Choirs have all taken in new members this year and the Bell Choir has particularly grown under the leadership of volunteer director Joan Bundy. The Adult Choir (and particularly Ken St. John as "Project Manager/Producer") was the organizing force behind our annual fall Cabaret, with the fun theme this time of "Music of the 1980's." The Adult Choir also participated in the Arizona Choir Festival, which VUU hosted in late January and featured the music of UU composer Elizabeth Alexander. This then became the focus of our All-Music services with the UU Congregation of Phoenix in late February and early March. Members of the choir also participated in the annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, and several other Interfaith events, including a fundraiser for AZ Interfaith Power and Light.

**OUTREACH:** The Voices Lifted Singers continued its partnership with Hospice of the Valley, singing regularly at a couple of their inpatient units each month, as well as at Desert Haven Care Center in Phoenix, and for some congregants in their homes.



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**DENOMINATIONAL:** I continue in my role as a Good Officer through the UU Musicians Network, and was selected to the Worship Team planning the four Worship Services at the UUMN summer conference. I have also been working on my portfolio to become a Credentialed Music Leader through the UUA. For this I needed to do a Community Service Project, so after attending the 5-day BorderLinks Educational Experience through the UU College of Social Justice last November, I decided to focus on Border Issues for this project. On May 14 the Soulstice Brothers Band performed at VUU for a "Sock Hop," a fundraiser dance that collected socks for No More Deaths in Tucson and collected money for the Center for Neighborhood Leadership in Phoenix. This fun event was attended by 50-60 members and friends, and it was especially great to have many of VUU's junior high group there as well as some of our new Young Adults, and most people danced the night away!

**THANK YOU TO ALEKS!** Our wonderful staff pianist, Aleks Izotov, is moving to the Washington, DC area this summer after giving us five and a half years of beautiful music. He has added immeasurably to our worship services, especially with his creative & sensitive piano improvisations and the energy and musical support he provides for congregational singing. He will be greatly missed but we wish him well in this new chapter of his life. Thank you, Aleks, for all the special musical moments you have given us over the years and for the musical memories that will linger on in our hearts and minds!

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The Journey to Membership sessions were re-designed to be 4 hours instead of the previous 6, in the hopes that more families and working people could attend. We had a record number join in the fall (21), then 11 in January, and 10 in May. Rebecca Riggs and Sherrill Smith are working on ways to help new members connect to others and become active in congregational life, and hosted the first of a Dessert/Discussion event in May for all new members who joined in this past year. Changes have also been made in how we welcome guests on Sunday mornings and physical changes have been made in the back of the sanctuary so that there is more room for people to "meet and greet" and also to bring the coffee and snacks out from the kitchen. We will continue to look at ways to welcome newcomers into the congregation and practice "Radical Hospitality." Staff support has also been given to re-vitalizing the Young Adult group this year, and new leaders have emerged to make this a good way for young adults to make connections within the congregation.

-Submitted by Rev. Kellie Walker Hart, Minister of Music



## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2015-16 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **CLASSROOMS**

Our theme this year is Unitarian Universalism – the curricula covered the 7 UU principles, Unitarians, Universalists and Unitarian Universalists from our history, and social justice issues.

As of the middle of May, we have had 2138 children and youth signed into a Sunday morning class. 64 families completed registration forms for their children/youth – 119. An additional **92** children and youth attended as guests. We averaged 49 children and youth per Sunday in our classes.

It has been very difficult to find volunteer teachers this year. The ideal team consists of 6 teachers in 5 of our classes; preschool, kinder/1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>, and high school, and 5 in the middle school class (Dave Merrill has committed to full time teaching for the past 2 years, 4 other teachers rotate in to assist Dave.) Total teachers needed to fill the teams: 35, we came up short with only 29. The only full teaching team was in the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom.

### **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

I attended the LREDA Fall Conference in Morristown, NJ where I became trained to take on the responsibility of being a Good Officer for LREDA professionals. Good Officers offer support during times of professional conflict.

This March, I assisted in, and became trained to lead, the Renaissance Module on Multi-Cultural Religious Education.

### **YRUU**

YRUU continues to be a strong youth group. The youth continue to enjoy the monthly youth mUUVie night. Youth attended CONs in Ventura & San Diego, CA We hosted a CON in February, over 40 youth attended. A 4<sup>th</sup> CON is scheduled and will be hosted in Pasadena, CA.

The youth planned and presented the worship service on May 15<sup>th</sup>. 12 youth participated in roles including readings, writing their reflections on the theme of “Walking in someone else’s shoes”, presenting the Time For All Ages story, taking the collection, and the senior Bridging ceremony.

2 of our youth have been accepted into summer programs leadership programs. Justin Grigory will be attending Goldmine Leadership School in Edmonds, WA, and Reba Hagen will be attending Thrive Youth West in Denver, Co.

### **MUUGS**

The Middle school Unitarian Universalist Group (MUUGs) meets once a month on a Sunday afternoon for pizza and games, they also continue to attend monthly Irish



line dancing gatherings in Phoenix. This April, several MUUGs families went camping and white water rafting on the Salt River.

UU congregations around Arizona have expressed an interest in participating in “AzMUUGs” events again this year. The youth will get together 2 or 3 times this year to fellowship, worship, and perform community service.

## **OUR WHOLE LIVES**

This year we offered three Our Whole Lives (OWL) Human Sexuality classes. In the fall we had 8 youth participate in the Sr high (10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades) program, In the spring 6 children and their parents participated in the Kinder/1<sup>st</sup> Grade program and 13 youth participated in the Jr high (8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> grade) program.

In May, Sherrill Smith attended Jr High/Sr High OWL facilitator training in Phoenix, we currently have 10 active OWL facilitators.

## **ARE - ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

New adult programming this year included A Bible study group using John Buehrens *Understanding the Bible* and a very successful *Continuing the Conversation: Racism Revealed in Film* and

Rev. Andy led 2 programs; *The Gospel of Luke* – Bible study in the fall and *What Moves Us* study group of Unitarian and Universalists in the spring.

We continue to offer a wide variety of adult RE programs, including several that have continued from last year; Spirit of Life Reading Circle, Dalai Lama and Friends workshops, Great Books, Not So Great Books, and a strong Couples Ministry.

## **SERVICE TRIP TO AQUA PRIETA, MEXICO**

41 participants, youth and adults, traveled to Aqua Prieta for our 3<sup>rd</sup> service trip working with Rancho Feliz. In addition to plastering walls and pouring floors, we had lunch with and played with children in a state run orphanage, and visited the border wall. The next service trip will be in March of 2018.

## **DISTRICT/DENOMINATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

I have been elected to serve one more term as President of Pacific Southwest chapter of LREDA (Liberal Religious Education Directors Association). My duties consist mainly of planning and running board and membership meetings and assisting with chapter sponsored training events. This past year I created online registration forms for our training events and for our membership renewal, edited to our chapter bylaws,

-Submitted by

Marci Beaudoin     Director of Lifespan Religious Education



## **Congregation Administrator 2015-016 Annual Report**

I joined the staff of VUU in mid-August 2015. I was lucky to come to VUU on the heels of your Interim Administrator, Linda Bellantoni. Linda was a wonderful bridge between the former, long-time Administrator and a new Administrator. Linda had initiated many great efforts to improve the workings of the Administrator and the service the Administrator brings to the VUU Community. I will be forever grateful for her thorough work and her passion for service.

My job here at VUU is to manage the day-to-day operations of the office, streamline processes where possible (incorporating technology and best practices), improve communications and help coordinate volunteer activities. I'm also the staff liaison to both the Facilities Team and the Finance Team.

**Day-to-Day Office Operations:** Byon Garrabrant, VUU Volunteer/IT coordinator along with website creator David Ryan launched the new VUU website, Byon also researched our internet and phone system, making recommendations that have improved our service and also saved us money. This year VUU accounting and payroll have been out-sourced to JDP Accountants. Brenda Patton is our liaison and takes care of our accounts. We couldn't have a better partner! I was able to do a cost comparison regarding VUU's Worker's Comp, Commercial Umbrella and Commercial Liability Policies that led to VUU obtaining better coverage that actually saved 33% over the old plan. We continue to have a great relationship with those who rent our space – Adobe Montessori, NefeshSoul and Counselor Jane Baker.

**Communications:** Along with the new website mentioned above, we created a one-page Order of Worship that is available on the front page of the website: just click on OOW and there it is. The link is published every week in the Thursday email blast called VUU Happenings, our weekly email reminder (thanks Sharon Kopina!). Along with the monthly newsletter, VUUPoint (thank you long-time editor Gilda Czerwonka) we now publish a Sunday Bulletin that includes a calendar of the coming week and other important info for both seasoned VUU attendees and newbies! Our new software system, Breeze has allowed us to keep better track of your giving record, your contact info and what skills, interests and experiences you want to share with this community. Breeze even made possible an electronic Directory that is easy to update and email as an attachment to VUU Members and Friends. (Thanks Jim Nielsen!) Thanks to another volunteer Amy Monahan we boast a new *Welcome Brochure* for visitors, a wonderful new document for our new member classes and the business cards that you can pick up today. Put a few in your purse or pocket and have them available to give to family and friends when you are out boasting about your awesome community – Valley UU!

**Facilities:** Joe Martin continues as our Maintenance Tech and he treats this facility as if it were his home. He cares and works very hard. We have improved drainage (now we just need the rain!) at the school so that future flooding issues can be avoided. We have good working relationships with the companies that maintain our landscape, take care of our AC needs, keep our bugs in check. All of these companies care about our facility and work hard to make it our home away from home.

**Thank you for your warm welcome.** Submitted by Sue Ringler, Administrator



**Leadership Development Annual Report for 2015-16  
submitted by Linda Horton**

The LDC policy lists the following purposes and responsibilities:

- provide leadership education to VUU members
- gather information and recommend potential candidates for leadership positions
- recommend qualified candidates to fill vacant positions in elected office
- prepare an annual slate of candidates for elected positions
- conduct the election at the annual congregational meeting
- facilitate mentoring of leaders

To fulfill these responsibilities, we conducted a four-hour Leadership Development Workshop on February 6, consisting of:

- a continental breakfast
- a Keynote Speech on Policy-Based Governance by Rev. Andy
- Two rounds of breakout sessions, 50 minutes each:
  - Causing Others to Want Your Leadership
  - The wider denomination: GA and the UUA
  - General Assembly and the Unitarian Universalist Association
  - VUU Finances for Non - dUUmies
  - VUU Tech: Website, tech booth and communications at VUU

We have gathered information from attendance at our workshops about people who are interested in leadership, but we need to work with staff and committee chairs to get these people involved.

We have recommended and recruited candidates for the three elected leadership groups: our own committee, Special Funds, and the Board. We have prepared a list of eligible voting members for the election at the Annual Meeting and are prepared to count the votes at that meeting.

Throughout this process we have identified a need for a smooth "orchestration" of the leadership development process. We plan to work closely with the Minister, staff, and committee chairs in the coming year to achieve this.

Committee: Linda Horton, chair, Tom Briggs, Jennifer Glick, David Sheh, Debbe Simpkins, JoAnne Smith, Barbara Sorauf



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**Social Action Ministry Annual Report 2015-16 submitted by Willa Cree**

In a year of political concern and unrest, our VUU congregation has continued to show its strong support for our UU principals through the many ways we promote important social justice concerns. This support is shown not only through the organized efforts of VUU groups such as VUUJAZ and Green Sanctuary, but is infused into the very fabric of what we do, from educating our children about concerns over the use of child labor in chocolate production to providing needed socks to immigrants through the inspired and successful efforts of our recent “Sock Hop”.

As a small congregation, we recognize that we are strongest when we can leverage our work by establishing partnerships with other organizations that share our concerns and social justice beliefs. These partners have allowed us to provide important support in a number of important areas. Our work with I-HELP and Paz de Cristo has provided over 2,500 meals and overnight accommodations for over 500 guests, with our congregation members volunteering over 600 times to make these programs successful. Our support for Black Lives Matter has provided education for both our congregation and community by developing a successful movie and discussion program, working closely with Chandler police, and providing a statewide workshop on Race, Poverty, and Justice that gathered UUs from around the state. We proclaim our support for racial justice with our Black Lives Matter banners, and continue to replace them even though others work to silence us by stealing these banners (we’ve lost 5 so far). Our congregation has shown strong support for legislative concerns through participation in marches, petition signings, talking with our legislators, and providing education for our congregation about important issues that impact us and the ideals that we promote.

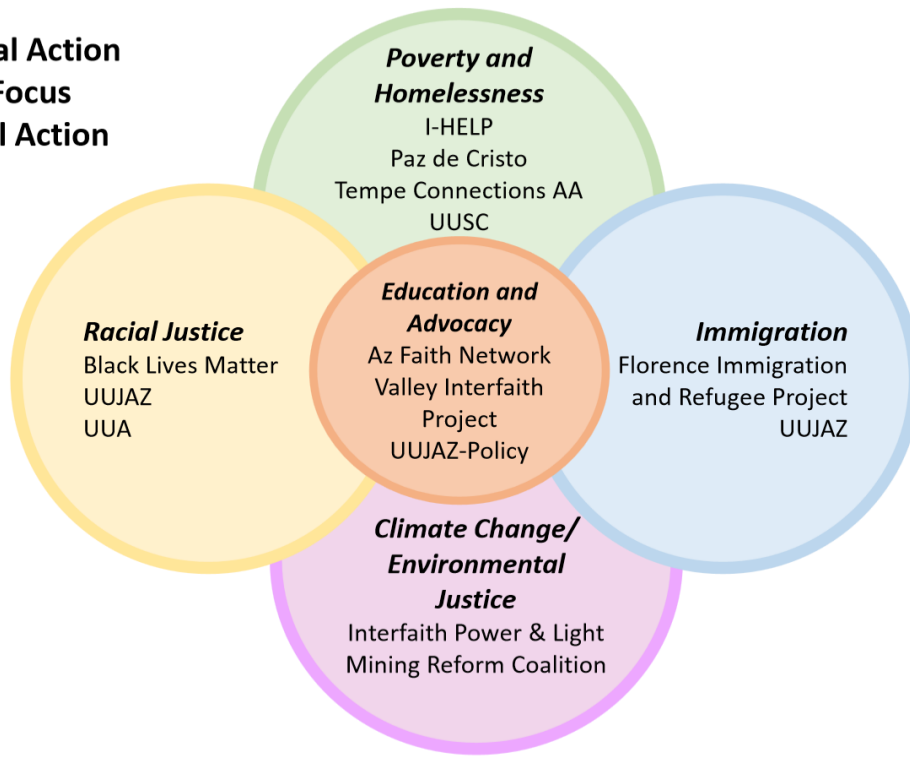
Our “VUU Social Action Ministry Focus and Social Action Partners” diagram (pg 16) shows the areas of primary focus for the coming year and also identifies our partners in each area. Each area is made up of a number of smaller projects, developed and supported by the many concerned congregation members that make up VUU. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to work with such a dynamic and committed group of people as we continue to work for a more just society.





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**VUU Social Action  
Ministry Focus  
and Social Action  
Partners**



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**VUU Green Sanctuary\* Annual Report 2015-16 submitted by Laurel Hardin**

This year, we again chose as a goal to pursue re-accreditation as a way to re-focus and re-vitalize Green Sanctuary. We changed our annual meeting, with elections and goal setting, to a calendar year so that our many winter residents could better participate. And we conducted a 20-20 Visioning Session in March to help VUU select goals for the future. The VUU Green Sanctuary (VUUGS) grew out of members' concerns for the Earth. The UUA's office of Earth Ministries set guidelines in the following areas for being certified.

**Environmental Justice Highlights:**

**VUU Garden on site, Divestiture from Fossil Fuels was adopted, VUU joined the Arizona Faith Network (AFN), AZ Interfaith Power and Light**  
- AZIPL presented VUU-Green Sanctuary with a S.A.G.E. (Spirited Activists Greening the Earth) Award for our activities. **Oak Flat Advocacy.**

**Worship and Celebration**- Support for environmental causes was evident as comments, readings, songs and sermon topics about environmental issues into many Sunday services.

**Sustainability Highlights:**

**Adopt a Highway Clean Up Program, Recycling-** kitchen waste composting, textile recycling, ink cartridge and battery collection, bottle caps and art supplies.  
**Metal Silverware, Carbon Footprint Survey, Sustainability Policy.**

**\*There is a longer report with more detail available on the VUU website\***



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**Facilities Team Annual Report 2015-16 submitted by Debbie Dinyes**

Following last year's huge projects, this year has been routine. In August we welcomed our new Administrator, Sue Ringler. Sue and our maintenance technician Joe Martin handle the day-to-day maintenance needs. The Facilities Team supports them with advice and planning. The team is also the clearinghouse for changes to the buildings and grounds.

Two long-standing projects were completed this spring. The sanctuary is now tied into the overall emergency fire alarm system. The classroom courtyard now has a functioning drain and a portable pump to handle heavy rain.

Extensive repairs were made to the tile roof around the classroom/office AC units. One of the very old sanctuary AC units was replaced. Thanks to two Chalice Circle groups the sanctuary interior paint was touched up, the monument sign painted to match the building, the baby room and kitchen were deep cleaned and all the wood trim on our 350 chairs was cleaned.

We had our first monitoring of the VUU Sustainability Plan. Information on this is in the Green Sanctuary annual report (available on the VUU website).

The Memorial Garden has a new plan for names. People can still order an individual plaque to be placed on the blue wall at their own expense. Now the names of the deceased will be inscribed on a separate wall plaque as part of the basic fee, whether or not an individual plaque is purchased.

Thank you to all volunteers and staff for their help. Thanks also to the entire congregation for letting us know when there are problems and for submitting projects for approval prior to implementation.

**Stewardship Annual Report 2015-16 submitted by Carl Anderson**

The Stewardship Ministry is responsible for fundraising activities and promotion of our current vision of "Love is our Doctrine, Service is our Prayer, and Justice is our Calling. We will adjust our message once the results of our visioning process have been published. The Ministry consists of several sub-committees: Fundraising Calendar, Pledge Drive, Major Fundraisers and Shopping Rebates. We are also available to assist other committees in their fundraising efforts.

This has been a year of refocus, rebuilding, and imagining how the Stewardship Ministry can expand our culture of giving to the greater community. We started by organizing a Volunteer Day in November, where approximately 70 members spent a few hours helping at Feed My Starving Children, cleaning up the VUU campus, making birthday bags and cards for children at Save the Family, and tending our VUU Garden. We transitioned to an email based pledge and calendar year cycle.



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This was followed up by our newest “Let’s Have FUUnd Together” fundraiser. This event takes the place of our long running auction and was an extreme success thanks to the efforts of Debbe Simpkins and her team.

In the coming year we will add fundraisers, work to grow our Shopping Rebate program, and generally have a good time working to make Unitarian Universalism known outside of our walls, and as a great place to donate to. This will include the ability to pledge or donate through the VUU website.

Thanks go to all the FUUnd Together volunteers and volunteer day participants.

Other Members: Laura England, Debbe Simpkins, Bill Haskell, Lorraine Doman-Sheydayi, Anne Schneider

If you want to help please let me know. We are very excited about the future of Stewardship at VUU!

**Caring & Concerns Annual Report 2015-16 submitted by Lauree Perry**

**Caring & Concerns Committee**

The Caring & Concerns Committee operates under a Neighborhood Contact format. Contacts help identify VUU Members and Friends who need short-term support and assistance; and work with the Minister, Staff, and other Members of the Congregation to meet those needs. We also recognize the joys and milestones in Members lives.

This past year some of the services the Caring & Concerns Committee provided included: helping with meals, transportation, calls, visits etc. when needed; sending cards and notes for joys and sorrows; referring the Voices Lifted singing group to ill and homebound members, and recognizing 10+ year Members in the Newsletter. There is a Caring Corner column in the newsletter each month to keep members up to date on what has occurred in the lives of other members recently. Requests for help or to have an event mentioned during the Pastoral Prayer can be sent to the Caring & Concerns email at [caring@vuu.org](mailto:caring@vuu.org). There are 3 Caring Quilts able to be lent to members of the congregation when ill or recovering from surgery. We also work with the Minister and the Lay Pastoral Care Providers to identify additional ways to meet the needs of all Members.

We always welcome new Contacts in all areas to be able to provide full coverage to all our members.

**Special Funds Annual Report 2015-16 submitted by Chris Sar**

The Special Funds Committee solicits donations to the Congregations’ endowment and manages those investments for the long-term benefit of the Congregation. In addition, Special Funds handles all donations of stock or other securities to VUU. The endowment represents the principal vehicle for our Congregation to ensure its financial stability and guarantee the mission of the Congregation will continue for another 50+ years.



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The largest additions to the fund come through individuals making planned contributions to the endowment through wills or bequests, or other one time contributions in honor of special occasions in one's life.

In 2015-16, the Committee monitored and rebalanced the investment allocations, in accordance with our long-term strategy of fund asset growth. Our prudent balanced portfolio, is a diversified plan which includes socially responsible investments. Significant interest and dividend income was achieved to allow the endowment to support urgent Congregational needs. A grant of up to \$7000 was made to the congregation in December to support the sanctuary kitchen remodel.

The committee also remains committed to our policy proposal by VUU Green Sanctuary to divest our assets from all fossil fuels by 2020. This is a policy that has also been adopted by the UUA nationally.

Current Combined Balances: \$334k at end of May

Cash Available for Granting: \$29k

Funds Allocated this year: \$7,000 for kitchen remodel

2015-16 Special Funds Committee

Chris Sar, Chair, Mindy Ramsey, Treasurer, Joel Sannes, Secretary, Carl Anderson, Jay Miller

### **Chalice Circles Annual Report 2015–16 submitted by Dianne Haskell**

Chalice Circles, VUU's Small Group Ministry program, is an intentionally formatted series of twice monthly meetings which offer participants spiritual growth, deep connections and opportunities for service. These groups of 6 to 12 people, led by a trained facilitator, reflect on a variety of spiritual topics and life issues. Chalice Circles encourage listening more than speech making and sharing personal stories more than debate.

The VUU Chalice Circle program began in January, 2013, with an abbreviated series of six Circles which met through May, 2013. The first full cycle of Chalice Circles ran from August, 2013 until May, 2014. The most recent series of Chalice Circles completed a 2015-2016 cycle in May of 2016. There were three Circles serving over 30 total participants. Each Circle presented two Service Projects - one to the VUU congregation and one to the larger community. The Service Projects for 2015 - 2016 included a major clean-up effort for VUU's sanctuary, library & kitchen and a painting project in the sanctuary as well as our outside sign. Chalice Circles also provided meals for VUU's I-HELP homeless assistance program, as well as serving a meal for the Paz de Cristo charity.



The 2015-2016 Chalice Circles included one session topic based on the Touchstone Common Theme used throughout VUU each month. The subjects of 'Gratitude', 'Communion', 'Truth', 'Generosity', 'Renewal', and 'Mindfulness' were all used in this cycle.

The Chalice Circle Steering Committee and all the Circle Facilitators met monthly from September, 2015, through May, 2016 for their own Circle facilitated by Reverend Andy. The Steering Committee also held several meetings to plan for the Chalice Circle sign-ups and facilitator training. The committee is presently recruiting Chalice Circle Facilitators for the 2016 - 2017 cycle and reviewing surveys submitted by all Circle participants. The Chalice Circle Steering Committee for 2016 -2017 will be headed by Molly McNamara and has already begun planning for the next round of Chalice Circle sign-ups in the fall of 2016.

The goal of Chalice Circles for 2016-2017 is to offer several Circles, perhaps serving as many as 60 participants. As this ministry promotes the ideals of Deep Listening, Deep Caring and Deep Connections accompanied by Service Projects it allows members to directly work toward VUU's mission of Love, Service and Justice.

2015-2016 Chalice Circle Steering Committee - Patrick Whorton, Lenore Braun, Rev. Andy Burnette

### **Women's Group Annual Report 2015-16 submitted by Sally Buntschuh**

VUU Women's Group has met for years on second Thursday of each month. These monthly meetings are casual and for each one there is usually a theme or a speaker. In the past, we have affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation by contributing financially to support them in their efforts to advance justice for women and girls among many other good works. These contributions are not required for participation in any of our Women's Group meetings and all are welcome.

This year there were excellent speakers from within VUU on a variety of subjects. Thanks to all who participated. This circle group is for women of all ages, learning and sharing interests and experiences.

### **Finance Committee Annual Report 2015–16 submitted by Bill Haskell**

The primary role of the Finance committee is to meet monthly, to discuss pertinent financial matters and to perform a thorough review of the congregation's finances for the prior month and year-to-date. The committee analyzes results and reports to the Board monthly to keep them informed of any significant deviations. While most of its deliberations are done out of sight of the congregation, the committee's role is critical to the continuing success of VUU. The accuracy of the congregation's actual results to budget reflect the longevity of the members of the Finance team, the thorough application of sound budgeting principles and practices, and the consistency of our congregation's historical fundraising, spending, and giving habits.



The Finance Committee was again chaired in 2015-16 by Bill Haskell. Committee members included DeeAnne McClenahan, David Sheh, Rev. Andy (ex officio), Mindy Ramsey, Byon Garabrant, Linda Horton, Joan Bundy and Sue Ringler, Church Administrator (ex officio). David Sheh acted as the official Board of Trustee representative. **As always, we want to especially recognize DeeAnne McClenahan for all of her dedicated work in maintaining detailed spreadsheet records, allowing this committee to have a very clear and detailed analysis of monthly and year-to-date financial results.** This year, in addition, a special thanks goes out to our paid, professional bookkeeper Brenda Patton with JDP Accounting.

A budget subcommittee was formed again this year, under the auspices of Finance, and chaired by Bill Haskell and included DeeAnne McClenahan, Anne Schneider, Byon Garabrant, David Sheh, Carl Anderson, representing Stewardship and Reverend Andy. Anne Schneider was elected Budget Compiler. **Thank you Anne for your dedication and diligence to insure that we had a balanced budget.** Reverend Andy provided most of the proposed, detailed budget submissions. The committee met several times during February – May to review budget submissions and to develop several budget scenarios to present to the Board of Trustees for FY 2016-17.

**A special thanks goes out to Reverend Andy for his diligence, analysis and justification in preparation of the preliminary budget.** The final Board of Trustee's approved budget for next year will be presented for congregational discussion and approval during today's annual meeting.

In addition, an Audit subcommittee was created under the auspices of Finance consisting of DeeAnne McClenahan, Chairperson, David Sheh, Anne Schneider, Bill Haskell and Sue Ringler with participation by our bookkeeper, Brenda Patton. The subcommittee will have met once during this fiscal year before the Annual Meeting.

*Shown on the next page* is a summary of this year's Tracking Report covering the period July 1, 2015 through April 30, 2016, reflecting current month and year-to-date actuals with comparable budget amounts and with a current projection of year end result. This report has been recommended to the Board of Trustees for their approval.

For this fiscal year-to-date (through April), the congregation's revenue is \$434,000 (79% of the budgeted \$547,000). Expenses to date are \$443,500 (81% of the budgeted \$547,000). It is anticipated that many members will catchup on their outstanding pledge obligations during May and June.

**While a balanced budget was approved by the congregation for this fiscal year, it is the Finance Team's most current projection that VUU will end the year with a projected deficit of about \$5,700.**

**A special thanks, and a job well done, goes out to Mindy Ramsey, David Sheh and Bill Haskell, who will be leaving Finance at the end of this fiscal year - June 30, 2016.**

The committee has forwarded to the Board the following names to be incoming members of the committee for the fiscal year that commences July 1, 2016 - Richard Bitner, Gerry Klepser and David Sheh.



## 2015-2016

Restricted (plus sweep from opp)