

First Unitarian Church of Oakland

*2009 Congregational Meeting
March 15, 2009*



First Unitarian Church of Oakland

Annual Meeting

Sunday, March 15, 2009
1:00 - 2:35 PM

AGENDA

- 1:00 PM Welcome — Mark Savage, President, Board of Trustees
Opening — Rev. Kathy Huff
Reading of the Mission Statement and Covenant — Mark Savage
Quorum Count — Kevin McGown, Secretary of Annual Meeting
Installation of Moderator for Annual Meeting — Mark Savage
Review of Agenda and Rules of Order — Moderator
- 1:15 PM **Congregational Business:**
Election of Three Trustees to full terms (2009-2012) — Moderator
Candidates: Rinda Bartley
Roger Hallsten
Bev Smrha
- 1:40 PM **Financial Report** — Charla Weiss, Church Manager
- 2:00 PM **Senior Minister's Report** — Rev. Kathy Huff
- 2:10 PM **Green Sanctuary Program** — Darlene Pagano, Bret Andrews and Jack Macy
- 2:20 PM **Report on Status of Hamilton Hall Renovation** — Gail Schulz, Co-Chair of Hamilton Hall Renovation Committee
- 2:25 PM **Recognition of Co-Chairs of Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team** —
Mark Savage
Outgoing Co-Chairs: Charles Williams and Dan Wright
Incoming Co-Chairs: Sharon Dolan and Jill Miller
- 2:30 PM **Recognition of Outgoing Trustees** — Claire Eustace, Vice President, Board of Trustees
Retiring Trustees (effective March 24, 2009): Richard Bruehl, Chris Palm and Mark Savage
- 2:35 PM Adjournment — Moderator
Benediction — Rev. Kathy Huff

OUR MISSION

We, the members of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, unite to build a beloved community within and beyond our walls. Guided by individual conscience and wisdom from many sources, we gather in worship and service to nourish the spirit, work for justice, and celebrate the divine in all.

COVENANT OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OAKLAND

We, the people of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, covenant to build a religious community sustained by relationships of understanding, mutual trust and respect. Guided by our mission and collective inspiration, we will encourage all our members to participate fully in congregational life and to grow and learn together in faith and love. Knowing that what one of us does affects the community, we covenant to act with loving kindness in all our endeavors by speaking directly and positively with one another. We recognize that this calls for honesty in communications, valuing of diversity and inclusive process. We covenant to engage in ethical communications, to take our concerns to those responsible and to refrain from gossip. Recognizing that conflicts have the power to strengthen or diminish our relationships, when they arise we will handle our disagreements with courtesy, fairness and forgiveness. We promise to listen to one another, assume good intentions and identify common goals. In support of our shared ministry we covenant to honor our commitments, keep our decision making processes transparent and give generously of our spiritual gifts and material resources. This we covenant together.

ENDS POLICIES OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OAKLAND

The First Unitarian Church of Oakland is an intentionally multigenerational, multi-racial, multicultural, anti-oppressive Unitarian Universalist religious community. We actively promote spiritual growth, fellowship, service, justice, stewardship and evangelism.

- Spiritual Growth** We practice spiritual growth that is challenging and enriching, and which inspires us to live Unitarian Universalist values.
- Fellowship** We continue to expand our circle to include the whole human family in our multicultural congregation. Our religious community fosters development of meaningful relationships among people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Service** We joyfully answer the call to minister to one another and to the world. We use our unique gifts to nurture and create beloved community within and beyond our walls.
- Justice** Our congregation actively works to eliminate oppressions, such as racism and heterosexism, to create a sustainable, just and compassionate world.
- Stewardship** We care for our congregation and our community by giving generously of our time, money and talents.
- Evangelism** We proclaim the good news of our faith and promote Unitarian Universalism in the wider community.

RULES OF ORDER

1. In accordance with the bylaws, only members of the congregation may vote. A simple majority of members present (based on the initial quorum count) will be sufficient to act on behalf of the entire membership.
2. Voting shall be by raising hands. Votes are “up or down,” with allowance for minor, friendly amendments at the discretion of the Moderator. If there is a need for discussion which, in the discretion of the Moderator, cannot be completed within the time allocated on the agenda, the matter will be referred back to the Board of Trustees with the charge of arranging for an opportunity for congregational discussion and vote, if needed, within the next 60 days.
3. Discussion must be limited in order to complete the agenda in the time allotted:
 - a. Any person may speak only once to an issue.
 - b. Comments should be brief and to the point.
 - c. The Moderator may limit comment.
4. Robert’s Rules of Order apply, except that the above rules will prevail in the event of conflict.
5. The church’s bylaws specify that members with recorded contribution at the rate of \$100 per year are eligible to vote. Accordingly, the Church Manager will provide the Secretary of the congregational meeting with a list of the names of those members who are eligible to vote at the congregational meeting.
6. Because the number of candidates for Trustee may exceed the number of open positions, voting for Trustee will occur by paper ballot. The Secretary of the congregational meeting will cause paper ballots to be distributed to those eligible to vote.
7. All speakers at the annual meeting must use one of the microphones to speak. Before speaking, speakers must be recognized by the Moderator.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees
Revised February 24, 2009

CANDIDATES FOR TRUSTEE

Rinda Bartley

As a trustee I will work to identify and explore the important learnings of the past year for the ongoing health of our community. As we change and grow as a church, our challenge is to monitor and adjust our governance structures, communication processes, staffing, policies and fiscal management to best meet our mission. We have grown into a multi-celled church, with members and friends joining us through many pathways and for a variety of purposes. We nurture each other in community not only by attending Sunday worship, but by engaging in small group ministries such as covenant groups, church committees and working groups, music-making, justice-making and through adult Religious Education (RE). This is good. And in the midst of such healthy diversity in small-group ministries, how do we constantly redefine and care for the WE? Who are we as a congregation and where are we going? What agreements do we have about how we are living out our mission as a congregation? And how can we be sure we are doing so in a manner consistent with our covenant? These are questions I am very interested in exploring with fellow Trustees.

I bring variety and depth of church leadership experience. Since becoming a member in 1983, I have served as an RE teacher, Committee on Ministry member and chair, Worship Associate, Sabbatical Committee co-chair, Board of Trustees member and vice president, Church Council chair, Canvass co-chair, Leadership Development chair, Executive Team member, and Worship Council interim convenor.

I grew up attending the First Unitarian Society in Minneapolis. I am a high school and adult school principal. I met my spouse, Laila Ibrahim, here and we were married in the sanctuary in 1991. Our daughters Kalin and Maya have grown up in the church and our family owes much to this congregation for supporting us in more ways than we could ever count.

Roger Hallsten

I have been a member of this church since 1998 and a UU since 1991. In this denomination I find community, opportunity for service and spiritual guidance. At our church I have been active in reviving the annual auction and chairing its first four years, and in convening the current Phase 2 of the capital campaign. I have also served as a Pastoral Associate, a children's RE teacher, annual fund canvasser and in various justice projects. At my previous church (Cambridge UU) I was chair of religious education, on the endowment committee, on a committee that rewrote the by-laws and a board member.

Now that my children are a little older, I have more time to offer our community, which I believe is composed of individuals all seeking to do the right thing. I would like to help cultivate a sense of abundance, with balanced budgets, empowered volunteers, transparency, accountability and responsiveness to the membership.

Bev Sadowick Smrha

I have been a member of this congregation since 1983, when we were all (not much more than a couple of dozen of us) struggling with designing and growing a "new" differently-focused church from the remnants of what had once been a flourishing and leading congregation in the heart of Oakland. We were determined to grow a congregation that was filled with community activists and religious learners who trusted themselves and each other to be in intimate religious community. We few had the audacity to decide to rebuild our building in-place so that we could remain in the very heart of the city, because we saw ourselves as congregational/leader/owners with an ethic of high engagement with each other and with the neighborhood and the city around us.

I'm very proud to have served on our church's first Worship Committee (early 1980s) that developed our worship liturgy and our Worship Associates Program, which has been the model for many such programs around the country. I served as the Development/Communications Director at Starr King School for Ministry for eight years, and then as District Executive for the Pacific Central District of the UUA for ten years.

Over these last 25 years we have grown in so many wonderful ways. We have strengths we only dreamed about before. We have also grown in complacency. However, we are now at a point of deep reflection; that's an upside of church conflict. We now have the motivation to ask lots of questions: how do we really engage with each other, how do all the pieces of our governance system really function as a whole, how does our organizational skeleton support our programming and our religious quest, how do we support each other with both nurture and challenge.

It's a very demanding and exciting time.....both crisis as well as opportunity. Through it all, let's show ourselves and each other lots of loving kindness, for loving kindness does indeed grow beloved community.

SENIOR MINISTER'S REPORT

Rev. Kathy Huff

El que quiera azul celeste, que le cueste.
For whoever wants the blue sky, the price is high.

I will be offering more detailed reflections on the year and the “state of the church” from my perspective live-and-in-person at the annual meeting itself. For the purpose of this report, and the historical record of which it becomes a part of for future generations, this is probably what you need to know.

This was a most unusual year for your settled senior minister. After preparing for a sabbatical for nearly a year, it finally happened! After helping to kick off the Capital Campaign in early February, I took a five-month sabbatical, with the bulk of my time spent living in Central Mexico studying Spanish and Mexican culture, religion and history. I also visited churches with a commitment to creating multicultural, multiracial religious community. My sabbatical report (with slide show) to the congregation was given in worship as part of a worship service in September.

While on sabbatical I applied for and was selected to be a part of a two-year national UUA clergy consultation called “Dreaming Big.” This consultation visits six large congregations and studies large church best practices. In 2008 I went to First Parish in Concord, Massachusetts.

When I returned from sabbatical the church was embroiled in a high level of anxiety and conflict over the loss of its long-term music director. Trying to help the congregation through the second half of the grieving process and understand the decisions and institutional and interpersonal dynamics that contribute to this situation has taken up the vast majority of my time since returning from sabbatical. This situation also resulted in a process of engaging outside consultants who have served the congregation as a whole and whose final report and findings will hopefully help restore the congregation’s long-term health. My ministry and relationship with the congregation has been affected in several ways both positive and negative. Thankfully, I have been able to turn to and receive a tremendous amount of support and coaching from experienced colleagues and from the UUA Department of Ministry and Professional Leadership. While this conflict has seriously tested our beloved community and our commitments as a transformational religious community, I remain hopeful about our long-term future.

My sabbatical choices and my priorities for the future reflect my deep commitment to the work of Vision 2012, the building of radically inclusive community that counters oppressions and works to bring about the multiracial, multicultural multigenerational religious community. I look forward to the many ways we will continue to grow and learn and work together to make this vision real.

EXECUTIVE TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

The Executive Team (ET) is delegated responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the church by the Board of Trustees. Church policy calls for membership to include the settled minister, Rev. Kathy Huff, Church Manager Charla Weiss, and a lay member appointed to a two-year term by the Board. In 2008, the Board and the ET agreed on a revised ET membership during Rev. Kathy's sabbatical leave. The Rev. Michelle Favreault joined the ET from January through August 2008 and Judith Hunt agreed to extend her term to overlap with Charles Masten's term. We work in awareness of and in service to the ends of the church, with emphasis on stewardship and service.

In addition to tending to the myriad of details that come with day-to-day operations the ET provided oversight of the Hamilton Hall Renovation Committee and support to the Capital Campaign. The ET, in consultation with the Director of Music Ministry, established an ad hoc Music Advisory Group to provide feedback about our changing music ministry. This group provided a report to the congregation in July.

Staff turnover was notable in 2008. This past year the ET worked with an Interim Music Director Selection Committee, with Consulting Minister Rev. Michelle Favreault and Facilities Manager Stefan Schneider on hirings, resignations and terminations of staff.

In June 2008 we created a category of "Starr King Fellows" and hired seminarians Joel Gilbertson-White, Fellow for youth services and Karen Green, Fellow for communications. Other new staff were Linda Hodges, administrative assistant; Mary Margaret Scribner, bookkeeper; Denise Lyons, bookkeeping assistant; Frank Tabor, custodian and Matt Wolka, interim music director. Eight individuals departed: Kim Rankin, Director of Music Ministry; Nanci Armstrong, Hannah Eller-Isaacs, and Kathleen Michael, children's religious education teachers; Leah Hart-Landsberg, education assistant and membership coordinator; Kenneth Felts, sexton; Justin Weiss, facilities; and Charles Stelle, bookkeeper. Chris Long's two-year ministerial internship ended in May 2008. Trent Morante was contracted to serve as temporary music director for six months.

During spring 2008, the ET worked with the former Director of Music Ministry on performance issues that ultimately led to the decision in June to terminate her employment relationship with the church by not renewing her contract. This caused a strong reaction on the part of some members of the community and the ET spent a significant amount of time throughout the rest of the year dealing with this conflict.

One of the ET's main tasks is the development and management of the annual budget. The ET is committed to increasing transparency of the church's financial situation. To this end we plan to post budgets and quarterly cash flow analyses to the church website after they have been reviewed by the Board of Trustees. Quarterly cash flow analyses will give us time to adjust our expenditures if the revenue and expenditure projections do not mesh. We have also prepared an alternate 2009 budget that has lower pledge income and is more dependent on fundraising. We are in the process of putting together a fund development committee to manage the fundraising for 2009 and beyond which should help us meet our goals.

HAMILTON HALL RENOVATION COMMITTEE

The committee has been very busy getting the church ready to go ahead with our Hamilton Hall retrofit project. We completed selection of the contractor, and during the summer and fall worked with the contractor and our architects and engineers to finalize plans for the work. We have reduced the scope of the project to just what is needed for our seismic safety, our roof replacement and better access to Hamilton Hall and the chancel. There will be opportunities for volunteer effort on painting and some finishing as the work is completed.

At this point, we are trying to finalize our construction loan, the building permit and the construction contract in order to meet a target start date of April 1. The congregation voted overwhelmingly on February 22, 2009 to go ahead with the project and the financing at this time. We will hold services in Wendte Hall while construction is underway.

Our congregation has continued to meet its Capital Campaign pledge commitments during the last year, and we expect that this will continue to the best of our ability.

Gail Schulz and Glen Dahlbacka, Co-Chairs,
Hamilton Hall Renovation Committee

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Dec 31, 08

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

1002 - New Wells Ops. Acct. #1840	-803.19
1011 - Wells Desig and Rest Acct.#5023	51,560.77
1012 - Wells E-Script Acct.#0451	97.04
1080 - Wells Musicopia Checking #0469	19,374.38
1090 - Hamilton Hall Checking #5049	210,302.57
1091 - Hamilton Hall Savings #3139	21,956.10
1092 - Hamilton Hall CD's	332,861.21
1094 - Fidelity Acct.	24,395.21
1096 - Scottrade Financial Svcs.	25.00

Total Checking/Savings 659,769.09

Other Current Assets

1205 - Accounts Receivable - Pledge DB	1,420.00
1207 - Accounts Receivable - HHR	357,012.36
1220 - Accts. Receivable - Other	
1221 - Deposits in Transit	7,063.04
1220 - Accts. Receivable - Other	<u>2,375.90</u>
Total 1220 - Accts. Receivable - Other	9,438.94

1290 - Due From

1290.1 - Due From Musicopia	<u>512.54</u>
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Total 1290 - Due From 512.54

1401 - Prepaid Insurance Expense	5,342.00
1402 - Prepaid Other Expenses	2,545.07
1410 - Prepaid Retreat Expenses	
1410.1 - Men's Retreat	1,091.25
1410.2 - Annual Retreat	12,240.00
1410.3 - Women's Retreat	<u>6,780.00</u>

Total 1410 - Prepaid Retreat Expenses 20,111.25

Total Other Current Assets 396,382.16

Total Current Assets 1,056,151.25

Fixed Assets

1701 - Land	20,000.00
1702 - Building	175,746.00
1703 - Building Improvements	
1703.1 - Bldg. Improvements Prior to R&R	4,635,988.32
1703.2 - Bldg. Improvements - R&R	146,776.00
1703.3 - Hamilton Hall Restoration - WIP	<u>163,107.57</u>

Total 1703 - Building Improvements 4,945,871.89

1704 - Furnishings & Equipment

1704.1 - Furn. & Equip. Prior to R&R	208,242.09
1704 - Furnishings & Equipment - Other	<u>118,613.15</u>

Total 1704 · Furnishings & Equipment	326,855.24
1750 · Accumulated Depreciation	-
	<u>1,674,345.71</u>
Total Fixed Assets	3,794,127.42
Other Assets	
1800 · Notes Receivable	
1800.1 · Note Receivable - Rev. Huff	30,000.00
	<u>30,000.00</u>
Total 1800 · Notes Receivable	30,000.00
1850 · HHR-L/T Pledges Receivable	841,313.88
1900 · Trusts & Endowments	
1901 · Boston - George E. Grant #195	12,004.72
1902 · Boston - Grant Memorial #196	24,010.46
1903 · Boston - 1st Unitarian Mem.#420	89,443.83
	<u>89,443.83</u>
Total 1900 · Trusts & Endowments	125,459.01
Total Other Assets	996,772.89
	<u>996,772.89</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	5,847,051.56
	<u>5,847,051.56</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2000 · Accounts Payable	16,126.03
	<u>16,126.03</u>
Total Accounts Payable	16,126.03
Other Current Liabilities	
2001 · Accrued Expenses	4,473.64
2010 · Due to	
2010.1 · Due to Musicopia	1,134.21
	<u>1,134.21</u>
Total 2010 · Due to	1,134.21
2101 · Retirement Withheld	1,821.96
2150 · Prepaid Pledges	6,060.00
2152 · Prepaid Rental Deposits	750.00
2162 · Deferred Pledges - HHR 2009	357,012.36
	<u>357,012.36</u>
Total Other Current Liabilities	371,252.17
	<u>371,252.17</u>
Total Current Liabilities	387,378.20
Long Term Liabilities	
2200 · Note Payable - UUA	168,445.45
2201 · Note Payable - Mittman	1,250.00
2202 · Note Payable - Hunt	2,500.00
2203 · Note Payable - Brandt	1,250.00
2263 · L/T Deferred Pledges - HHR	841,313.88
	<u>841,313.88</u>
Total Long Term Liabilities	1,014,759.33
	<u>1,014,759.33</u>
Total Liabilities	1,402,137.53

Equity	
3900 · Unrestricted Net Assets	0.00
3901 · Temporarily Restricted	
3901.1 · Musicopia	18,246.05
3901.2 · Emily Ransom Funds	325.45
3901.3 · Manse Fund	46,315.41
3901.50 · Hamilton Hall Renovations	257,869.39
3901.6 · Transylvania/Partner Church	-674.42
3901.7 · Sabbatical Leave	293.30
3901.8 · Cong. Consultants	<u>-1,667.43</u>
Total 3901 · Temporarily Restricted	320,707.75
Net Income	<u>307,286.24</u>
Total Equity	<u>627,993.99</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>2,030,131.52</u></u>

Church Budget Expenses and Income

Expenses	2008 Budget	2008 Actuals	2009 Budget
Ministers and Staff salaries, benefits	469,973	488,311	430,654
Payroll taxes, Worker's comp., Insurance	49,229	48,542	22,510
Bldg Maint / Repair / Utilities / Supplies	41,600	43,152	42,500
Office / Technology / Postage / Copiers	35,800	25,448	41,340
UUA / PCD Dues	10,400	10,015	7,930
Unitarian Universalist Assoc Loan	23,000	23,800	0
Programming support	9,975	4,458	2,750
Reserves	3,973	0	5,786
Credit Card fees	2400	2,012	2,100
Ordination	1,000	1,000	2,500
Previous Year Deficit rollover	0	3,900	10,810
Miscellaneous	2,538	597	500
Total	649,888	651,235	569,380
Income			
Pledges	480,000	468,998	422,000
Rentals	60,000	66,104	40,000
Default pledges and credit card fees	(-7,200)	(-2,725)	(-21,100)
UUA Intern grant	3,888	0	2,250
Fundraisers	52,200	31,168	45,800
Investments	32,000	42,134	38,000
Sunday collection & one-time gifts	15,000	21,612	17,000
Special programming collections ¹	1,000	1,122	10,430
Religious education fees	11,000	7,739	2,000
Hamilton Hall 2009 rental offset	0	0	12,000
Misc. Income ²	2,000	290	1,000
Total	649,888	636,442	569,380

Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009

¹ UUA/PCD dues and/or Ordination support, ² Bookstore and coffee hour lunches/refreshments

A snapshot of the ministries and services supported by your generosity

Lifespan education for children, youth, and adults
Unitarian Universalist guideline salaries for staff
Multiple informational publications (<i>Sower</i> , online newsletters, stewardship brochures, etc.)
Spiritual growth, community building and entertaining activities and events
Fundraising
Building maintenance, repair, upkeep, security, utilities

REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Much of the Board's work and time over the past year revolved around the Director of Music Ministry and the various reactions to non-renewal of her contract. While it is the Board's responsibility to provide such leadership, care and oversight in times like this, this was an unexpected addition to our workload over and above the many other responsibilities we have.

Your Trustees considered and responded to two appeals of decisions by the Executive Team (ET), brought by members of the congregation in April and October. We initiated a series of congregation-wide discussions on expressed concerns, including decision-making under policy governance; the quality of our shared ministry; our rapid growth from a pastoral-size church to a program-size church to perhaps a corporate-size church; and Vision 2012, our plan to grow our beloved community as an intentionally multiracial, multicultural, multigenerational congregation. We established a consultant search committee, engaged an outside consultant team to help the Board, ET and congregation work through the conflict, and worked collaboratively to hold the many focus groups and meetings in December and the retreat with the consultants in January.

At its meeting on February 24, 2009, the Board of Trustees formally accepted the consultants' final report, and committed to lead the process of considering and implementing the consultants' recommendations as appropriate. Several Trustees and Rev. Kathy are already working between Board meetings to consider and recommend which recommendations fall within the Board's purview and which fall, for example, in the ET's responsibility; in what order we should look at the recommendations or which recommendations can be combined and worked on together; and ways in which the congregation should be involved in considering and implementing recommendations. The Board will continue its efforts to serve the congregation faithfully and to lift up the congregation's guiding values and covenants.

The Board advanced stewardship as a priority. As one of the Church's six ends, stewardship means "We care for our congregation and our community by giving generously of our time, money, and talents." The Board revised its policies on stewardship to give Trustees more active roles in stewardship during the annual stewardship drive in the fall and in ongoing stewardship with new members throughout the year. Trustees worked in small teams to host fundraising events for the congregation, namely the First Annual Prom in June and the fabulous Cabaret Night in September—both of which brought together great gifts of time, money, and talent.

Again in 2008, as in 2007, the Board and ET agonized first with trying to ensure that our pledges and fundraising covered our planned expenses for 2008, and then with cutting our expenses even further for the 2009 budget. The collective pledges to date for 2009 were \$55,000 lower than the pledges in the 2008 budget. Staff received no salary increases despite a 3 percent cost of living increase in the Bay Area, and the Senior Minister and Church Manager received 4.5 percent decreases. Programs and program support were cut, and staff for our core learning and education ministries will be substantially reduced for fall 2009 unless pledges and stewardship can at least return to previous levels. The latter situation is especially serious, and contrary to our core values, needs and priorities. In 2009, the Board will work on how it and the entire congregation might develop enough will and resources to continue transforming our learning communities—consistent with the recommendations developed over the past two years first by the Transforming our Learning Community working group and then by the Dreaming Team—rather than return to a more conventional and even diminished approach.

It is not for want of generosity, of deep generosity, on the part of those who pledged much for the benefit of all, as the separate report of the Board's Stewardship Committee makes clear. But the average cost per adult member is \$1,700 under an austere budget, and more, perhaps \$2,000, for a budget more consistent with the range of programs and staffing we say we want to nourish us. The 2009 budget is balanced, with budgeted expenses limited to budgeted revenues, but only after drastic, heart-breaking cuts.

Stewardship continues to be a priority for your Trustees in 2009. We must build a strong congregation-wide stewardship program which covers the true cost (approximately \$2,000 per adult member) of our ministry and enables us to generously support our dedicated staff, our operations, our ministry, our building, and pay our fair share contributions to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and Pacific Central District (PCD). Each of us must take an active role, not only financially but also with time volunteering to help run the programs of the church. May we all be stewards of this beloved community.

The Trustees also worked towards Vision 2012, to build a radically inclusive community within and beyond these walls by expanding our welcome table, by practicing active hospitality, by deepening our commitments and actions to be an intentionally multiracial, multicultural, multigenerational and inclusive congregation. At most board meetings we set aside time to deepen our personal and intellectual understanding of what it takes to successfully build multicultural, multiracial congregations. The Board revised the Ends Statements, our overarching goals, to incorporate the congregation's values of multiculturalism and inclusion. We hosted two well-attended conversations on Vision 2012 in June and September, and will schedule more opportunities to share and listen. Trustees were among 30 members of the congregation who attended the Now Is The Time conference in February 2008 and several joined members for Jubilee II (anti-racism training) in October.

Lastly, Reverend Kathy took a long-deserved sabbatical in 2008 to rest, reflect, study and envision—to nourish the roots of her ministry. The congregation assumed more of the vision and practice of ministry in Kathy's absence, with a sabbatical plan created by the various committees and councils, approved by the Board and coordinated by the Sabbatical Leave Steering Committee.

A closing word about the Board's role and responsibilities within the life of the church: the congregation elects Trustees to the Board of Trustees to govern the church. The Board delegates the operation of the church to the ET (under the Trustees' ultimate discretion and responsibility), and works principally to ensure that the church and congregation achieve the goals of our Mission Statement with appropriate use of our resources. The Board's work generally emphasizes vision and strategic leadership more than administrative or programmatic detail, while including oversight and evaluation of the Executive Team. We welcome any thoughts or visions you care to share.

Yours in service and faith,

Your Board of Trustees

Richard Bruehl, Claire Eustace, Dan Goss, Jon Greer, Noemi de Guzman,
Chris Palm, Mark Savage, Gail Schulz and Charles Williams

BOARD REPORT ON PROGRESS ON 2008-2009 ANNUAL PRIORITIES

Each year at the church annual meeting, the Board of Trustees reports to the congregation on the church's progress on the annual priorities. The Board of Trustees chooses the annual priorities based on discussions with lay leadership, the executive team, and discussions with members of the congregation. The annual priorities for the 2008-2009 church year were Vision 2012, stewardship, and Hamilton Hall.

Vision 2012

Vision 2012 was reflected in the reports of both Transforming our Learning Community and the Music Advisory Group. Music during services has become purposely more inclusive of a variety of cultures in order to implement Vision 2012. The Faith Explorer ad hoc group visited area churches and reported its findings to Rev. Kathy upon her return from her sabbatical in September 2008. The Board began hosting conversations with church members about Vision 2012 during the summer of 2008. It also reflects on Vision 2012 topics at its monthly meetings.

It appears that the congregation has been more active in the past year in talking about and desiring to talk about Vision 2012 and how it weaves through our spiritual and organizational community. Nineteen church members attended Jubilee II, a 2-1/2 day antiracism workshop in October 2008. Youth have become active in the services and an elders group has formed.

Earth Justice Associates have organized the wider congregation to become active on behalf of truck drivers and West Oakland residents in their struggle with the Port of Oakland. On February 8, 2009 approximately 30 members and friends systematically knocked on doors in West Oakland to notify residents of a free asthma screening.

The Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team (JTWTT) has been routinely tabling during coffee hour. JTWTT started an Allies for Racial Equality group in the church. JTWTT also hosts a people of color caucus and white identity caucus and plans to begin a multiracial families caucus this year. The "Building the World We Dream About" curriculum was field tested at our church during the 2007-2008 church year and was completed in June 2008. The Coming of Age content in 2008-2009 includes significant focus on identity formation, with a mid-year unit on gender/race identity issues in adolescence. Over 20 people attended a special white identity caucus in early fall '08 with Rev. Kathy to process manifestations of white privilege and racism in congregational life. In the fall of '08 the Board brainstormed with JTWTT to learn how best to understand, monitor and shape congregational meeting dynamics. JTWTT also met with the board regarding accountability to communities of color in September 2008.

The Board and Executive Team have agreed to participate in the UUA's Diversity in Ministry program. In our selection of an intern minister for 2009-2011 we will intentionally seek a seminarian of color.

There will be a series of conversations about Vision 2012 on the Wednesday evenings of March 18, April 15, and May 6 from 7-9 PM. This will culminate in a Vision 2012 Summit on May 16 from 9 AM to 3 PM.

The Board will retain Vision 2012 as an annual priority for the 2009-2010 church year in part to build in even more congregational involvement and input.

Stewardship

The Board continues to work on developing and implementing a multi-year strategy to create a strong stewardship program. The stewardship drive in the fall of 2008 included four additional pledgers. However because of the church conflict some pledges for 2008 were cancelled or reduced. Members have also been affected by the economic recession and due to unemployment or income reductions they have had to reduce their 2009 pledges. The reduction in income resulted in severe programmatic cuts as well as salary reductions for the Senior Minister and Church Manager.

We are not collectively covering the actual cost of ministry, which is approximately \$2,000 per adult member of the congregation. This amount would cover the cost of a thriving Sunday youth education program, strong programming, the salaries for all staff, building maintenance, insurance, utilities, etc. The Board will retain stewardship as an annual priority for the 2009-2010 church year.

Hamilton Hall

The capital campaign to raise the money to make Hamilton Hall earthquake-safe was a success. The contractor has been selected and the scope of work has been downscaled from the original plan in order to reflect the current economic reality. All structural changes to make the sanctuary earthquake-safe and compliant with the Oakland Building Code will be completed. However, there will be significant aesthetic changes which will give church members the opportunity to put up drywall and paint in order to beautify the church. Please see the report to the congregation on Hamilton Hall for more information.

The Board of Trustees thanks the congregation, the lay leadership, the Executive Team, and all Trustees for all your work in making these priorities a reality.

ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2009-2010

Each year the Board of Trustees consults broadly and establishes annual priorities for the coming church year to inform the efforts of the board, ministers, Executive Team, lay leadership, and the congregation. These are the extraordinary priorities for a particular year, in addition to the regular imperatives every year, such as Sunday worship services and religious education classes.

For the church year beginning September 2009, the Board establishes the following priorities. As a result of our combined efforts, by September 2010 the church will look, feel, and be different in the following ways:

- **VISION 2012.** Our church will be more welcoming and inclusive to all newcomers. Our congregation will have a greater understanding of what it means for us to be anti-racist, multicultural, and multigenerational, both in our church life and in our own individual lives.
- **CONGREGATIONAL OWNERSHIP.** The lay members of the church will have a greater sense of ownership of all aspects of our church life. This will be reflected in robust planning, leadership, and participation by lay members in our worship, education, community, membership and justice activities. It will also be reflected in full engagement by the congregation in all aspects of strengthening the financial resources of the church.
- **BELOVED COMMUNITY.** Our congregation will have a strengthened faith in our ability to build beloved community. We will deepen our covenantal relationships, and renew our commitment to making our love for one another more real within and beyond our walls.
- **LEARNING COMMUNITY.** Our learning community ministries will be strengthened to meet the lifestyles of our members and friends. We will have worship and programming for all ages that reflect wide participation and commitment. We will also address the realities of our budgeting in this area and find ways to move into the future with renewed investment.

Approved by the Board of Trustees, March 11, 2009.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

The Committee on Ministry (COM) is appointed by the Board of Trustees to nurture the mission and ministry of this congregation. It embodies shared ministry, in concert with our settled ministers, and represents the congregation in matters of ministry and congregational polity. It is a primary structure within the church for demonstrating the power of mutual trust and for modeling redemption, reconciliation and healing. In short, we say that the Committee on Ministry is responsible for tending to the health and well-being of our congregation as a whole.

The (COM) Charter charges us, among other things, to “make recommendations whenever and wherever it deems necessary for the benefit of the ministry and the mission of the church...; serve as a forum to discuss the quality, directions and long-term vision of our ministry...; provide a conduit through which ministers and congregants may privately make known any ideas or concerns about the ministry of the church and work with the ministers and other committees to facilitate solutions to identified problems...; solicit ideas and listen for concerns as its members participate in the life of the congregation; (and) works to assure continuity of ministry during periods of sabbatical leaves, illness and transition of ministers.”

In the past year the COM has been comprised of Tom Bretthauer, Rick Hecht, Peggy Macy, Chris Sutherland (chair) and Randall Wright. Since our last report to the congregation, we have been principally absorbed with:

Facilitating Rev. Kathy Huff’s Re-Entry from Sabbatical

Her return coincided with and was made more difficult by the congregational conflict, discussed below. The COM worked (along with the Board President) to prepare Kathy in the days immediately upon her return for the upset congregation that awaited her, and attempted to help her plan for ministering to the congregational in the early first weeks and months back at First Unitarian.

The Dreaming Team

In early 2007, the COM was charged by the Board with visioning the future of our religious education programs. It formed a separate working group, Transforming Our Learning Community (TLC), to develop a process for that dialogue, which took place between January and September 2007, and resulted in a conceptual report to the Board in November 2007. As a second step, a Dreaming Team was then formed that worked through August 2008 to determine how the congregation’s many visions and aspirations could be implemented. The Dreaming Team was led by Rick Hecht, and included Giselle Ampuero, Charlotte Dickson, Bev Smrha and Rev. Michelle Favreault. They concluded their work by making a final report and recommendations to the Board in August (available through request to the COM or the Board of Trustees). Those implementation steps are now seriously constrained by resources, but we thank them nonetheless for their considerable work.

Ministerial Education and Training

It is also the COM’s duty to review credentials and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for the congregational sponsorship of students for ministerial education and advancement to ministry, and to similarly review credentials and make recommendations to the Board for ordination to ministry. In the past year the COM reviewed and recommended to the Board of Trustees sponsorship of Mary Foran, a member of the congregation and a final-year ministerial student at Starr King School for the Ministry.

It is additionally the COM's role to fulfill the congregational responsibilities required by the Unitarian Universalist Association of a teaching church and to foster the development of ministerial interns. In this capacity, led by COM member Peggy Macy also serving as Chair of the Intern Committee, the COM has been ultimately responsible for the support provided to Chris Long in his time with First Unitarian as Intern Minister.

Congregational Conflict

All of the above activity and responsibilities were dwarfed by the enormity of the congregational conflict that subsumed our congregation during the second half of 2008 and into 2009 after the ET's decision not to renew the contract with Kim Rankin, our former Director of Music Ministry. While congregational conflict resolution is not *per se* the purview of the COM, we took it as our responsibility, along with the Board of Trustees, to attempt to help the congregation navigate through this tumultuous time. In the last nine months, members of the COM have invested countless hours in reaching out and listening to distressed members of the congregation in one-on-one and group settings. We worked closely with the Board to recommend and on some occasions helped to facilitate congregational forums so that members could feel heard, and where ideally some steps toward healing might occur. And the chair of the COM was appointed by the Board of Trustees, along with Charles Masten, Jill Miller, Gail Schulz and Karin Werner, to lead the effort to conduct what became a national search to identify and recommend to the Board of Trustees a team of consultants to help the congregation work through -- and past -- its recent months of conflict. Throughout that process (beginning in September 2008), resulting in the Board's selection of the team of Rev. John Janka and Rev. Jacqui Lewis and their report to the congregation in late January, we continually kept the congregation updated through bi-monthly Chalice Chatter announcements and *Sower* articles. We also invited congregational input throughout. I extend my personal thanks to Karin, Jill, Gail and Charles for the massive number of hours they devoted to this effort in a short and concentrated period of time.

Speaking for the COM, we were deeply challenged by this year. We have often felt at a loss for how to move, and ineffective in the face of the sometimes seemingly overwhelming dissention and distrust that divided so many of us.

In faith,

Chris Sutherland, Chair

Pastoral Associates and Chaplains - Rev. Laurel Liefert, Chaplain Coordinator

The 2008 Pastoral Associates (PA) team was led by Kelly Jonick, with Ronny Gaal, Roxie Kellam, Bonnie Richman, Jay Roller and Maud Steyaert. Jay's term ended in August, Maud moved away, and Kelly announced her intent to relinquish her long time (seven years!) of dedicated service and leadership, creating a need to recruit and train new PAs. New PAs are Dick Bailey, Carolyn Devol, Gil Dacumos, Judith Hunt and Claudia Morgan.

- We introduced "Take Five," forming a circle of friends instead of counting on just one or two close friends or relatives.
- We met monthly all through the summer and talked to individual members of the congregation one-on-one about their own personal sense of sorrow, anger and loss in the community.
- We took cakes and made calls and sent cards to the Board and ET to also support them during a rough time.
- We were a consistent place of comfort all year long, any day, any time and just a phone or email away.
- We provided meals as needed to new parents, new cancer patients, the depressed and over-stressed.
- We checked on individuals who, once they knew someone cared, decided that they had the resources they needed to make it.
- We hosted the labyrinth during the Holiday Vespers and during the meeting with the consultants.
- We hugged and held people who lost loved ones during the year during the Tolling of the Bells.
- We helped over 40 members of the church in an ongoing way by providing meals, rides, phone calls, visits, comfort and support.

The chaplain team was coordinated by Rev. Sheri Prud'homme through September, with Rev. JD Benson, Rev. Susan Conrad and Ministerial Intern Chris Long serving as chaplains. In September Rev. Laurel Liefert assumed the role of Chaplain Coordinator, providing ongoing chaplain care, with Starr King School for the Ministry seminarian and church member Jamie McReynolds. The Chaplain Coordinator attends monthly meetings of Pastoral Associates. In addition to responding to individual requests for meetings, the chaplains were available for drop-in meetings.

The transition in chaplaincy leadership occurred just as the non-renewal of the Director of Music Ministry's contract was disclosed. From that moment, the pastoral needs of the congregation, including the Pastoral Associates themselves, erupted into a crisis. The Board asked the Chaplains to help facilitate congregational meetings and to provide a pastoral presence. The PAs sponsored a Holidays Vespers service in the Sanctuary in December and set up a labyrinth in Wendte Hall, hoping to provide an experience of comfort and caring during a difficult time.

The caring team has remained committed to the community during a stressful year. We look forward to adding new Pastoral Associates and continuing to strengthen and heal the pastoral dimension of our congregational life in 2009.

JOURNEY TOWARDS WHOLENESS TRANSFORMATION TEAM

July - December 2008

The following is a list of activities of the JTWTT which promote our vision and involvement in the life of our church community. JTWTT met four times.

- JTW provided tabling during coffee hour two times a month.
- JTW is continuing to encourage internal leadership development through a multicultural, multigenerational context.
- JTW is doing internal development work by using a process monitor in our JTW meetings.
- JTW has provided to the Board the interest in considering using a process monitor in other church meetings. 11/08
- JTW is in the process of recruiting new members, currently recruiting via word of mouth and Chalice Chatter. The interest has been more on people of color involved in JTWTT leadership. 07/08
- JTW, Interweave, and other members of the church co-hosted a potluck. Following the luncheon, there was a Question and Answer session for Rev. Peter Morales, a candidate for the president of the UUA.
- White allies meetings were re-started, now organized by Natasha Mader and Ingrid Mittermaier. They conduct the meetings around the principles of the Allies for Racial Equity.12/08
- JTW has elected new co-facilitators (co-chairs) for the team, Sharon Dolan and Jill Miller.
- JTW held another Jubilee II training.
- JTW is involved in the 2012 Summit.
- JTW organized a worship service.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The annual stewardship drive ran from October 2008 through early January 2009 with the theme “Roots Hold Me Close, Wings Set Me Free.”

Core pitch: The roots of First Unitarian Church of Oakland remain strong, even as we are buffeted by the winds of change. Today, as it has been for more than a century, your church stands on the corner of 14th and Castro streets in Oakland as a beacon of religious tolerance and liberal thought. To keep that light shining bright, we need your help. We need you to step up and play your role as a “steward” of our beloved church, affirming your ongoing support for the mission and the ministry of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland by making a generous pledge to fund next year's operating budget. Your generosity is especially important this year. Our costs have been rising at a fast clip, causing us to make some painful cuts, such as the elimination of dental and vision coverage for the staff and the elimination of summer music and RE staff. The good news is that we all have an opportunity to make a generous contribution to the church's operating budget, and each and every contribution helps us get closer to being able to fund our church in accordance with our values.

Campaign structure: Two co-chairs (Jon Greer, Board member and Laila Ibrahim, immediate past Board president); 21 volunteer visitors (Bret Andrews, Jeff Asher, Julie Baeder, Rinda Bartley, Richard Bruehl, Dan Goss, Noemi de Guzman, Claire Eustace, Molly Hermes, Laurel Liefert, Jack Macy, Ingrid Mittermaier Chris Palm, Mark Savage, Bob Schulz, Gail Schulz, Danny Schottenfeld, Bev Smrha, Emily Stoper, Suzanne Van Houten, Jane Voytek, Dan Wright and Charles Williams,).

Outreach: Members and friends were approached initially by letter, then with outreach calls, emails, and personal visits. Pledges were solicited via a leadership dinner, covenant/affinity group pledging, one-on-one visits with canvassers, as well as by phone, email and web. The campaign was kicked off during Sunday services and there were weekly testimonials. The campaign officially closed with a Celebration Sunday. Post-campaign, we set up a coffee hour table to bring in most of the remaining pledges.

Results: \$411,000 raised from 200 pledging units (282 adult members), which was four more pledgers than last year.

OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING MINISTRIES REPORT

Rev. Michelle Favreault

2008 - Another year of learning and growth at the First Unitarian Church of Oakland!

At the start of 2008 we had a cadre of paid teachers and volunteers leading our educational ministries with children, youth and adults. At the end of the church year we acknowledged transitions and gave thanks for Leah Hart-Landsberg (education and membership assistant), Hannah Eller-Isaacs (junior teacher with Club UU), Daniel Richman (student assistant with Club UU), and KT Michaels (teacher with grades 7-8). High school youth advisors Andy Karlson and Dara Kaufman LeDonne rotated off the team in May. We said good bye to LEAP convenor Darlene Pagano and to Adult Program chair Richard Stromer in 2008 and recognize how fortunate we have been to have the blessings of their leadership. At the end of 2008 we also said goodbye to Nanci Temple Armstrong (teacher - preschool).

For the 2008-09 church year we welcomed Stephanie Gilbertson-White, Katie Goslee, and Dan Thompson, who joined Joel Gilbertson-White who continued on with our youth group. Joel also took on new duties serving as a part-time "youth specialist" administering our programs for 7-12th graders.

Because of reduced staffing we offered intermittent Sunday programs for kids over the summer, rather than every Sunday. In the fall, Melissa James, our Spirit Play teacher, also took on about eight more hours of administrative duties, as Rev. Michelle shifted to a half-time ministry with the congregation.

During 2008 we offered the Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education program for K-1 (thanks to Intern Minister Chris Long and Darlene Pagano), for 4th-6th graders (thanks to Rev. Laurel Liefert, Marcus Liefert and Brian Jeffries) and for 7th -9th graders (thanks to Kate Lenhardt and David Fry).

Throughout the year we continued our preschool class (with special thanks to Karen Eng). During the church year we offered our Spirit Play program for K-4th graders taught by Melissa James with the help of many parent volunteer storytellers and doorkeepers.

Giselle Ampuero and Marcus Liefert took on leadership of Club UU (5th-6th graders). During the 2008-09 church year we offered the Coming of Age Program for 7th -8th graders, led by Kevin McGown, Agatha Buell and Rev. Sheri Prud'homme and assisted by a host of adult one-to-one mentors. We also had two 9th graders join the Pacific Central District Coming of Age Program.

Both Club UU and Coming of age met from 10:30-11:30 with an explicit expectation that students would also attend worship services with their families or peers. Worship has been integrally connected to the curriculum for both of these age groups.

During early 2008, the "Dreaming Team" worked hard to articulate a plan for learning programs at all "ages and stages" considering the realities of our congregation; the visions shared during the 2007 Transforming our Learning Community (TLC) process; and the restricting realities of our staffing model. Over the summer they shared a list of recommendations that called for more

volunteer leadership, a shift of worship times and the increase of attention on multigenerational worship. The team recommended using short-term learning modules to support cognitive learning/religious literacy and moving from relying on paid staff to lead age-segregated “traditional” classes to a flexible learning model in which volunteers share their passions in multigenerational groups. This continues to be an area of learning and change within the congregation as we seek leaders and experiment with models.

Adult learning, too, saw lots of experimentation and change in 2008. Leadership development focused on teams of UU Oaklanders attending two local conferences: the Unitarian Universalist Association’s (UUA) Now is the Time conference, a continental program on leading multiracial/multicultural congregations drew some 30 Oaklanders to San Jose for a long weekend of study and reflection. A dozen congregants attended a day-long training with the Rev. Larry Peers on transforming leadership and the power of story.

We continued as a site for field testing the Building the World We Dream About curriculum for the UUA (led by Chris Long and Heather MacLeod, with Mary Foran) for the first half of 2008. We also field tested Spirit of Life and Spiritual Practice curriculums. Both were offered at the same time on the 3rd Sunday and were led by Richard Stromer and Jamie McReynolds. Offerings included Mythic Movies, Exploring Membership, a workshop on Seeing the Other in Ourselves, Developing Healthy Responses to Christian Fundamentalism. And as 2009 begins, our ministry continues to grow and change! More on that...next year!

With gratitude,

Rev. Michelle Favreault

COUNCIL OF CONVENORS

Justice Council - Emily Stoper, Convenor

The Justice Council worked this year in support of projects of the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE). Six church members attended a fundraising breakfast for the Interfaith Alliance for Worker Justice. Kristi Laughlin of EBASE made a presentation at a Justice Council meeting. Over 20 church members canvassed West Oakland in support of the Coalition for a Clean and Safe Port.

We sponsored several well-attended phone banks at the church in opposition to Proposition 8 on the November ballot, which took away the right of same-sex couples to marry.

The council led three Sunday services: Environmental Justice in August, Labor Day in September and Justice Sunday in January. Members of the Council taught the Children's RE class on three Sundays during the summer. We also sponsored a dessert reception and discussion after Byron Williams' service in April.

We raised about \$800 for the UU Service Committee through the Guest at Your Table campaign and the sale of holiday cards.

Worship Council - Kristen Montan, Convenor

In 2008 the Worship Associates, led by the unbelievable B Avalon and Linda Propert Sanford, coordinated with guest ministers from far and wide to ensure First Unitarian had wonderful worship during Rev. Kathy Huff's sabbatical. This same wonderful team also made sure we had new Worship Associates for the 2008-2009 worship year. B and Linda also coordinated and wrangled up lay worship leaders for summer worship.

The music committee, after being rocked by the drama and ensuing conflict over the non-renewal of the Director of Music Ministry's contract, has re-emerged and re-invigorated itself. This talented committee provided excellent leadership in keeping our music program together with mostly volunteer musical support for several weeks at the start of the program year while we searched for a new director. The committee has since doubled in size and diversity and now includes members from several areas of our church. Members of this committee were also responsible for the search and ultimately the recommendation to the Executive Team for the hiring of Interim Director Matt Wolka. Under his leadership the Choir continues to grow and provide beautiful and exciting music for our services.

In keeping with the Dreaming Team's recommendation the worship council began last fall to form a Worship Arts Team. This team is charged with incorporating multimedia, puppetry, poetry, dance, liturgical drama and other art forms into worship.

Lifespan Education and Learning

Our Learning Programs for children, youth and adults have continued to move forward in implementing the recommendations of the Dreaming Team. The most visible effect is the increased participation of children, families and youth in the 11:30 worship services and the efforts to bring Vision 2012 more fully into our learning and worship programming. While the full realization of the Dreaming Team's recommendations in this regard has yet to occur, these incremental changes have made a big impact.

We have over 100 children registered in our Sunday school program. Our attendance fluctuates dramatically from week to week. As identified in past years and in the reports by the Dreaming Team and Transforming our Learning Community, volunteer support for our children and youth programming overall tends to be minimal. While we do have a small and highly dedicated team who are passionate about children and youth ministry, come the fall, we will have to expand the numbers of volunteers in this area if we are to both sustain and grow our program.

We have offered a wide variety of adult programs throughout the year and also opened an Adult Sunday School. This has been a very rich area of thematic programming. Attendance has grown exponentially with each of these offerings with more than 125 adults participating overall. Leadership development included recruiting a team of a dozen folks to attend the PCD Growth Conference with Larry Peers. The Oakland church also sent the largest team (30 people) to the Now is the Time Conference (building the antiracist, multicultural congregation). This is the second year of theme-based worship and learning. This is going very well and is likely to continue. Many other congregations have successfully moved to this model and can offer resources to us as we deepen our own ministry in this area.

We are in leadership transition, again. In the fall, Rev. Michelle moved to half-time employment with us and her position will be dramatically reshaped with even fewer hours by fall of 2009. We have been challenged already with how best to keep her hours reasonable and still meet the expectations of the congregation for our learning ministries. We also said thank you and goodbye to Richard Stromer as our Adult Program Committee chair and to Darlene Pagano as the LEAP Convenor for 2008. We have not yet found replacements.

Community Life

Our Community Life Council functioned without a convenor this entire year.

The activities of this program area (Secret Buddies, the Seder, the Community Retreat and much more) were accomplished on an ad hoc basis with members of the Council of Convenors serving as a "committee of the whole." Our Lead Convenor Molly Hermes provided considerable support and inspiration for this effort.

While programming was offered by ad hoc volunteer groups and enjoyed by the congregation, it is not a model of ministry that could be sustained. As of December 24, this council has four new leaders, Katrinca Ford, Laila Ibrahim, Kelly Jonick and Sheri Prud'homme who are working to assess what activities will garner the most enthusiasm (and volunteer support) as we move through the rest of 2009 and into the new program year.

Membership

People continue to choose this church as their spiritual home. We welcomed 42 new members into fellowship in 2008. Thanks to Nancy Ragle we have a steady group of volunteers who usher on Sunday mornings. Jodie Mathies and her team have been a steady presence at our hospitality and welcome table. Our Orientations and Exploring Membership series continue to help people find their way into membership. After a hiatus, our bookstore is under new management and is once again a valuable resource for members and friends alike. Be sure to thank Renee Harper for her ministry in the membership area. She ended her term with this council before the writing of this report but has stay connected and helped out in a number of ways to support this program area since officially stepping down from leadership.

As a growing church we struggle with how best to keep up with what it means to both meaningfully orient, welcome and integrate new members into fellowship and help new and veteran members find their shared ministry in the life of the church. This is a very time- and labor- intensive council. It requires a consistent Sunday morning presence, advanced organizational skills and the ability to marshal, train and support a number of additional volunteers. Many congregations our size hire part-time staff to help lead and manage this important area of ministry. It was noted that when we experimented with this in 2007-08 it made a significant difference in Membership Council functioning. Convenors overall continue to recommend that we hire a permanent volunteer/shared ministry coordinator.

Lafayette School Mentoring Project

The Lafayette School Mentoring Project is in its twelfth year providing free after school one-on-one tutoring currently to 97 children a week in our neighborhood K-5 school. In addition there are enrichment classes (at present cooking, soccer, and gardening) and field trips. The project has never been able to recruit enough tutors to serve all children who have applied. Privately funded, the endowment is running low and the Advisory Board is engaged in extensive fund-raising. Since beginning in 1997 over a thousand children have received tutoring. We are still in touch with some of the early ones who are now in college.

Center for Urban Family Life (CUFL) - Jeffrey W. Asher, President

Throughout 2008, CUFL consisted of two programs, The McClymonds (High School) Merit Awards Scholarship and GOTcom, each with its own board and volunteers.

The McClymonds Merit Awards Scholarship provides college scholarships to graduating seniors from McClymonds Educational Complex consisting of EXCEL and BEST high schools, the only high schools in West Oakland. The students are selected by a board comprised of a representative of our church community, McClymonds faculty, and community representatives. The awards are funded principally by anonymous donors who had previously given a set amount of money, but who have recently agreed to give enough so that funding is available for all selected students. Others donors contribute as well. The awards have been given for the past six years, during which time the graduation rate at McClymonds has improved substantially. In 2008, 34 students received scholarships.

GOTcom works to improve digital literacy of students at West Oakland Middle School (WOMS) and KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) College Preparatory School, both of which are in West Oakland. The program is expanding to Lafayette Elementary School. Today, GotCOM serves over 500 individuals and connects with neighborhood families through its after-school and summer computer literacy programs at KIPP and WOMS. GotCOM volunteers develop positive relationships with parents over years as their children successfully master technology skill in the schools' computer labs. These positive relationships open opportunities for GotCOM to provide training and Internet access assistance to parents with limited computer skills through three interrelated programs:

- GotCOM's Take Home Computer Program (THCP) provides a free computer to families with public school students in grades 5 to 12.
- Once families have a computer in the home, the Internet@Home program provides free one-on-one sessions with a GotCOM volunteer who helps parents obtain a subsidized telephone landline, if needed, and order low-cost dial-up or high-speed DSL Internet services.
- GotCOM's Small Group Mentoring Clinics for Parents hosts small, focused, two-hour evening and weekend training classes for parents of West Oakland public school students. These clinics provide parents an intimate, encouraging environment in which to learn marketable computer skills.

GOTcom is funded by grants and other fundraising. GOTcom is actively seeking volunteers to teach, mentor, manage and raise funds.