

Jefferson Unitarian Church

2015 Annual Report

The Mission of Jefferson Unitarian Church

Guided by Unitarian Universalist principles and powered by the energy and resources of its members, Jefferson Unitarian Church acts to nurture our spiritual community, grow Unitarian Universalism, and transform the world outside our church walls.

In other words, the ministry of JUC is geared toward assisting each member, friend, and visitor to:

*Deepen to their truest selves,
Connect authentically with others, and
Engage with needs beyond their own.*

Each year goes by with blinding speed at Jefferson Unitarian Church. In the moment, it seems it is only possible to take note of all the things needing attention. Compiling our Annual Report insists that we slow down and appreciate all that has been done. This year staff and volunteers have partnered well to begin new aspects of our ministry, from the introduction of theme-based small groups, to a renewed understanding of JUC as a teaching congregation with the arrival of an intern and the formation of an internship team. Collaboration has been critical to the success of continuing ministry teams in areas like worship, membership, and administration. Last, but not least, staff and lay leaders are working thoroughly and thoughtfully together to improve and clarify the strong foundations of existing ministries, particularly in the areas of Pastoral Care, LEAP (now known as Being UU), and Social Responsibility.

Our report this year likely has a different feel. Rather than a list of accomplishments and tasks, it is our hope that in these pages you get a sense of the vitality our various ministries bring to the church and the impact we are hoping to create. As we continue in our mission-based work through our teams, the format will likely continue to evolve.

Regardless of format, our staff and lay leadership are dedicated people who live into their love of JUC. All of us are proud to be part of the good work that is done here and look forward to the year ahead.

Worship

Wendy Williams, Senior Minister; Eric Banner, Assistant Minister; Keith Arnold, Minister of Music

Worship life at Jefferson Unitarian Church's two campuses is robust and lively, varied and deep. The 2014 – 2015 year saw a number of changes in worship which expanded worship styles, integrated worship themes into more areas of congregational life, increased worship services outside of Sunday mornings, and gave up a long-standing worship practice commonly seen in smaller churches in favor of a large church practice.

Augmented Congregational Singing

In Golden, the Worship Band, which began accompanying congregational singing during the 2013 – 2014 church year, entered this year with more support as Adam Revell's role was changed from Pianist/Accompanist to Lead Worship Musician. Starting in September, the Worship Band was present on first Sundays, primarily backing the congregational songs with new harmonies and realizations, but also offering other musical elements from time to time. The Worship Band engaged volunteer JUCers to play bass, guitar, drums, and melody instruments, and helped bring expanded styles of musical expression to JUC worship on a regular basis.

Congregational singing was also fostered as JUC moved into its first full year of projecting lyrics on a permanently installed screen, a practice that resulted in stronger singing by service attendees and participants. The screen enabled the gathered people to interact more with one another and with the song leader. In Evergreen, upon the move of the campus to congregation Beth Evergreen, lyrics were projected as well.

Worship Themes

Although JUC has been working with worship themes for a number of years, in 2014 – 2015 we began participating in the Soul Matters Sharing Circle, a group of nearly 30 congregations who worked together to choose a series of monthly themes and provide collective resources on those themes to one another. With the advent of Small Groups this year, there was an increased integration among the Sunday morning themes and the Small Group discussion topics, providing opportunities for deep discussion and wrestling with such themes as Grace, Wonder, and Integrity.

Worship Services Outside Sunday Mornings

Mid-week worship was offered twice a month in 2014 – 2015 with the introduction of ToGather Tuesday services offered by our ministers that met before Small Group meetings, and with the continuation of Evensong services. Both offer a more intimate worship service in the chapel, with more interactive ritual elements, and are partly designed to meet

the need for spiritual depth that members ask for.

This year also continued the practice of minister-led Golden Circle Worship, a chapel service that precedes the quarterly Golden Circle lunches offered for those age 70 or older and their partners.

Certain Sunday services are typically high-attendance; these include Easter Sunday and any Music Sundays. In order to accommodate all who wish to attend those services, and to minimize the need for overflow seating in the chapel, 4:30 p.m. Saturday afternoon services were offered in Golden on those high-attendance Sundays.

Large Church Best Practice Changes

As Jefferson Unitarian Church continues to exist at a membership plateau of around 750, we look to the example of collegial churches who have broken through this size ceiling and have continued to grow. Large churches in our denomination and beyond have long advised that spoken announcements have the probability of speaking only to a few interested parties in attendance on a Sunday morning, and that spoken announcements in larger churches are not as effective and do not play the strong community-building role that they do in smaller churches. As part of a larger strategy of leaving small church behaviors aside and embracing practices that will help the congregation grow, the worship services now project announcements on the screen before, between, and after services, and print them in the order of service. In Evergreen, which has a smaller attendance and different worship tone, spoken announcements are still included.

Congratulations and Thank You

As Jefferson Unitarian Church continues to wrestle with full parking lots, sanctuary, and classrooms, and as our congregation explores multi-site campuses, and as we consider this year what it means to be *One Love, One Church, One Journey*, there is gratitude to the congregation for being interested in experiencing a fullness of worship through word and music, and for being willing to participate in new worship practices that explore the living tradition of Unitarian Universalism.

Religious Education Ministry for Children and Youth

We are entering a new and exciting chapter with religious education at JUC this year. Annie Scott will join our staff as Director of Religious Education in July. We are excited to benefit from her 24 years of experience and wisdom gained having served four churches before ours. Helping us during our present transition time, Sara Covington has served as Acting Director of Religious Education doing what has amounted to interim work. Sara has implemented administrative systems with our part-time staff and provided training to improve the safety of our program.

Our current program includes almost 250 registered children and youth with an average attendance of 150. The latter figure includes visitors and unregistered kids. Consistent attendance has been a challenge. We have created strong volunteer support within the Religious Education Team so far concentrating on communication with the congregation, volunteer recruitment and working on better integrating our families into congregational life.

On Sundays, we provide childcare for our babies and begin curriculum based lessons in preschool. At the Golden Campus, our elementary programs have included:

- Two classes for 1st – 3rd graders, appropriately based on stories that build faith identity
- Two classes for 4th – 5th graders based on Unitarian Universalist views of rights, privilege, race, and ethics

Beginning with 6th grade, middle schoolers meet at one scheduled time. This creates community with their age peers and establishes a foundation for the trust needed for this age group to develop stronger personal connections during their teens (7th - 12th grade). Three classes for middle schoolers include Neighboring Faiths (6th), Our Whole Lives (7th) and Coming of Age (8th)

- For 9 - 12th grade, we offer YRUU - Young Religious Unitarian Universalists, our high school youth group.

Additionally, our ministry includes First Sunday Children's Worship, a Children's Choir, and district events for youth.

Annie has let us know that she values nurturing her teachers and providing them with opportunities for community and spiritual development. We look forward to her guidance, training and mentoring.

At the Evergreen Campus, we are feeling grounded in our nursery program, but need to implement curriculum for our toddlers (now that we have some!). We are very reliant on just a few volunteers who keep our elementary program warm, fun, interesting and safe. As our program grows, we will strive to welcome more adults to teach religious education and provide programming for our older elementary and middle school children.

Ministry

The ministry of a church is where all the doing gets done. Our Senior Minister casts the vision, and the Board of Trustees, through its policies, sets out our values, mission and priorities. Within this vision and these policies, the staff and congregation creatively put our mission into action. The way that we get our church work accomplished is through

our programming. JUC's program structure is in the midst of significant change, with more to come.

We currently have two councils which oversee our programming: Program Council and Social Responsibility Council (SRC). Program Council has gradually restructured its ten groups (Belonging & Connection, Community of Unitarians Raising Kids, Evergreen Campus, LEAP, Membership, Music, Pastoral Care, Worship and Young Adult Ministry) to be twelve (or so) ministry teams this year, moved to being staff led and volunteer powered, and encompass more of the ministry of the church than the previous model allowed. SRC is just beginning to look at how policy governance might work for us in the social justice areas of our programming.

Director of Congregational Engagement, Sue Parilla

I have facilitated Program Council since 2008. In recent years, our program groups have become less "silo-ed" and more team-oriented. As volunteers and staff integrate their work, staff is able to foster greater communication, just by the awareness they have of the church as a whole, since it is the focus of their career. Staff are more able to help volunteers get tasks completed when they are at the table and aware of the need. Within our new programming configuration, each program ministry has a staff member on their team. Communication and collaboration is expected among the staff. Wendy keeps our work focused on the mission and vision.

My role as Director of Congregational Engagement is to make it possible for each church member to find their place within our community. Over time and in conjunction with other staff, our hope is to provide opportunities for every JUCer to do the spiritual work to deepen their awareness of their truest selves – living into individual authenticity. Parallel to this, we hope to encourage ways for each person to connect through relationships. Through our mission-based programming, we strive to provide multiple and varied opportunities for people to find these connections with others. As connections flourish and members are able to participate within church life, we each find our way to engage and develop our own ministry at JUC.

A challenge within our programming is developing priorities so that all of this can happen. We know we have the people resources, but focusing the efforts of our members to come together as a community instead of going it alone or with just a few is a challenge.

Each Program Ministry team has a different configuration. The Belonging & Connection Team is comprised of many slices of church life. At the Getting Connected table on first Sundays, LeeAnne Dale is a friendly resource to anyone trying to find their way in to JUC. When you've been a member for a while, it is tough to see how overwhelming a place we are to the newcomer. Our annual Getting Connected Sunday provides the opportunity for all JUC activities to staff a table on one Sunday, giving our members a chance to learn new ways to connect and engage within the church.

While spiritual growth is important, social connections can help us get there. Church is where we can be ourselves with people we have come to know. Member-initiated social activities which build community are essential. We value those members who take the time and put forth the effort to create and build community with others. At JUC, members can apply to lead affinity groups, which bring together people of a similar interest. In pursuit of that interest, people find their connection at JUC. We currently have 18 active affinity groups and 6 regular social activities at JUC.

Our congregation is made stronger by the presence of so many families in the congregation. Bringing together people across all ages enriches our lives. This year, our family programming has endured many changes, as the Community of Unitarians Raising Kids (CURK) has moved into the Belonging & Connection Team. While maintaining its identity and focus on family activities, CURK benefits from staff support and more visibility with the addition of a JUC Families Facebook group and revitalized JUC Family Yahoo group. CURK strives to provide ways for parents to connect with each other. Their most well-attended event is the annual Halloween Party, with over 200 people attending in 2014. This year's CURK sing-along drew over 100 people, the ice cream social 25, and the most popular of the game afternoons attracted 20. SOUPS, Support of Unitarian Universalist Parents, draws about 25 adults and 25 children two Monday mornings a month, with a mix of church members and young mothers from the surrounding community. SOUPS hosts 18 meetings each year, providing community for families raising young ones.

Additional volunteer-directed family activities include two annual campouts and Nature's Keepers (31 participants), and 2-Con Dinners (averaging 80 potluck attendees).

Mixing social connection with worship, ToGather Tuesday was initiated, offering a simple soup meal followed by a minister-led worship. Specially focused on our elders, Golden Circle Luncheons bring together members and friends who are 70 years old and better for a quarterly lunch preceded by a minister-led worship. Along with ToGather Tuesday and Golden Circle worship services, Evensong provides an alternative meditative mid-week worship experience.

We held our Annual Celebration Weekend picnic on a Saturday in September with a worshipful beginning on the patio which transitioned into a potluck picnic. A simpler approach to food and children's activities was intentional to provide less organization and more space for relaxation and conversation. The weekend's Sunday's worship welcomed us back to a more regular pattern of church attendance. Religious Education classes kicked off on this day.

Every few years, a volunteer effort brings all church members together at a Fall Retreat. The next will be in October

2015 at Snow Mountain Ranch in Granby, CO.

Who says fund raising can't be fun? The annual Rummage Sale brings together about 100 volunteers to raise money for the church, while getting to know each other working shoulder to shoulder. The conversations had over folding donated clothes or pricing housewares are every bit as valuable as the money raised. Our November Auction is an incredible social event not to be missed, but its benefit is felt year round as members attend social events purchased there. These small gatherings bring together random church members in ways no one could plan, to have fun and establish new friendships.

JUC has two campuses: Golden and Evergreen. Our Evergreen Campus has been settled in to its newest location, Congregation Beth Evergreen at 2981 Bergen Peak Drive, since October. This church year, 15 people who attend at our Evergreen Campus joined the church. Our Small Group Ministry has provided rich ground to cultivate deep, meaningful relationships within the two geographically based small groups meeting regularly in Evergreen and Conifer. While a family size community within a corporate size church, the Evergreen Campus is becoming an essential spiritual home to those who gather twice a month. Minister-led services have given the congregation an expectation of quality from the pulpit that was missing in the past, and continuity that has added to our pastoral potential. Integrating our worship associates into our Worship Team continues to be a challenge, as the Evergreen crew does not benefit from the communication and support more easily available for folks based in Golden.

Focusing efforts on building community instead of a better meeting space will be a welcome change. JUC has joined both the Evergreen and Conifer Chambers of Commerce with hopes of nurturing relationships within both organizations to get the word out that the religious home for the liberal spirit is in the foothills, ready to receive all who would find ours their spiritual home. We continue to strengthen our ties with our special plate recipients (Mountain Resource Center, Peaceworks, 285 Backpack Project and Mt. Evans Hospice) and learn how to become more established within the community. About the time we moved, in October, we had to find new Nursery Attendants. The strain this added to our routine demonstrated a resiliency we weren't sure we had. Our families have hopes that our new Director of Religious Education will bring age-appropriate curriculum to our preschoolers and implement outreach through middle school programming in the near future.

Membership Coordinator, Annie Hedberg

As Membership Coordinator, I have observed significant shifts in our congregation, witnessing it becoming younger and busier, as members search for ways to contribute their time and find personal meaning. The Membership Team has followed a small group ministry format this past year and found that by providing a time to deepen together by sharing a reading and then listening deeply to each other's responses to a question, their work has become more meaningful, members feel motivated to attend, and their work gets done in the same amount of time. There are opportunities for reflection and deepening together. Busy people need their souls fed while volunteering and I am doing my best to make this happen.

In the coming year, Membership will emphasize new member attendance at Small Groups and 2-Cons, both successful and established activities, in place of New Member Potlucks, which have fallen out of favor and had poor attendance. Our people are hungry for more closeness and depth than group potlucks at church can provide. We will be evaluating whether to drop Visitors' Circle, as we have seen fewer visitors participate this last year. Our sense is that visitors are finding plenty of friendly members to speak with after services and don't feel the need to seek out a particular Visitors' Circle volunteer.

Business Administrator, Carol Wilsey

Leveraging our resources is the description I used during a staff retreat to describe what I do. What that means to me is making sure that JUC's income and assets are utilized effectively in service of the mission of the church. I know that your dollars are hard-earned, and giving them away – entrusting their use to others – is a faithful act. It might give more immediate gratification to see the purchase of a tangible item or to know money is spent directly for a known purpose. That, however, is not how a church works. Our budget is made up largely of pledges from members and friends who see the bigger picture. We are, together, creating a religious community that is not a consumer purchase, but much, much more. I encourage you to imagine what it is you are "buying" with your pledge in a meaningful way.

Some accomplishments in the "administry" area this year include:

- Debt Restructuring: Recent refinancing of the mortgage will save approximately \$23,000 in the next fiscal year alone. The debt is amortized over 15 years at a fixed rate of 4.02%. We will not be required to refinance again, which is a savings in both cost and labor as it is not an insignificant amount of work. Many thanks to DeDe Cross who led the effort. The Endowment and Memorial Gift Trust (EMGT) Directors also assisted the effort by increasing our debt to the trust by \$25,000 – also at a favorable rate of 3.25% so that our balance with the bank could be reduced.
- New Website: A team made up of staff and volunteers is working on a requirements document for a new JUC

website to be launched in 2015-16. It will be mobile-friendly and have a fresh look and new functionality. Generous donations toward this project from the Auction Special Appeal will fund professional assistance for development.

- Policy Governance: I have been integrally involved in working with the Board of Trustees on learning about and working towards adoption of a Policy Governance model. Some of the structural changes have been organic over many years and some have arisen proactively through this year. The most recent are Bylaws changes being voted on at the spring Congregational Meeting, reflecting the dissolution of Business Council. Most of the duties of Business Council have gradually been delegated to staff. Some elements will be re-imagined as Board, volunteer or staff-directed committees.
- Database: We implemented a new database last year and are taking advantage of its capabilities more. We are learning to work around some of its limitations and broadening the scope of its use. A goal for 2015-16 is to send more pledge statements by email, including the year-end tax information.
- Office Operations: The JUC office has its doors open under largely volunteer help. Except for evenings and Sunday mornings when hired staff member hold down the fort, a friendly volunteer answers the phone, locks and unlocks the building, assists with mailings, makes copies or helps with almost anything else that comes up. Between 9 volunteers, this group racked up over 1700 volunteer hours. A big thank you to Victoria Girdziunas, Linda Horn, Frank Kaplan, Betty Minor, Linda Ropes, Trinity Saffer, Mary Anne Schiff and Lauren Wilder for playing such an important role here every week.
- Accessibility: An automatic door opener was added to the front entrance with the proceeds of the scrip program. Those funds have been designated for accessibility projects, and a report is underway evaluating our facility and looking for ways to improve the accessibility further.
- Composting: We had a setback in composting this year when our service cancelled suddenly. While inconvenient and disappointing, it did give us a chance to take a breath and think about how this could work better. I encourage everyone to take time to learn what goes in compost, recycling, and save only the rest for landfill. The better we sort, the greener we are!
- Applewood Golf Course: We are staying apprised of plans for redevelopment of the golf course. As the process unfolds, we will keep the lines of communication open with the developers and/or the public entity(ies) that may be involved to represent the church's interests.

Challenges include:

- Year Round Pledge (YRP): Pledging is lower than hoped for and is projected to be lower yet in 2015-16. I am working with the YRP team to find better ways to connect with people around their pledges.
- Facility Use: There are increasing demands on space, equipment and furnishings. Keeping everything repaired, clean and ready for use depends on myriad factors that are challenging to manage. Caretaker, Eric Pieratt has his plate full keeping up.
- Slow to No Growth: Church membership has stagnated around 750 for the last 10 years. It seems perhaps that is the natural capacity of this campus. We have added the Evergreen campus meeting two times per month, and that is beginning to take hold. This might achieve a small amount of growth, but we may need to consider if growth is really a goal, what else might need to be done.

Communications Manager, Rona Bradley

2014/15 has been an exciting year! Through my work with the Communications Team, a decision was made to implement a pre-service announcement slideshow to replace spoken announcements. This transition has been difficult in some aspects, but overall it has been met with resounding *hallelujahs* from those who feel that our worship services have benefited from the change.

Also in our weekly communications, you may have noticed that the announcements in the order of service are more concise and we're using less paper each week. Our *This Sunday at JUC* email, sent each Friday, has been expanded to include all of the announcements that are also printed in the order of service, and sometimes more. This is just one of the ways you'll find JUC reaching out to communicate more clearly with more people, making sure you get the news you need!

Speaking of emails, you'll see that all emails from JUC have a new look - we're striving for all of our communications to look and feel like they came from the same organization: another step towards the re-branding that will become more and more clear as our new website comes into being. At the November auction, JUCers were generous in giving to the special appeal, which was a fund for re-vamping - or more accurately re-creating - our website. I have been working with the Communications Team to take the first steps in the process, and we should be rolling out our new website by the end of this summer!

Intern Minister, Beckett Coppola

While I am the first intern to serve this church in some time, a piece of your stepping into the role of teaching church is that I will not be the last. This transition will not always be comfortable, especially as I and the next intern go through the

process of leave-taking. Yet, each time you see an intern enter the congregation, wade through their formation, and then walk out into the wider world a minister, you will know that you have fulfilled your shared mission to nurture souls, grow Unitarian Universalism, and transform the world beyond our walls.

It has been a year of incredible learning as my ministerial formation has continued, truly helped more than hampered by my medical journey; I am grateful that I have been able to continue my work as your 2014 – 2015 Intern Minister while undergoing treatment. Ultimately my service to JUC has shone a light on what is within me, and helped to continue my emergence and formation.

My integrity as a minister is far more developed now than it was at the beginning of this internship. Despite the medical setback, I have had plentiful opportunities for ministry here at JUC in all the expected, and some unexpected, places. One anticipated shift that has happened has been to feel and see myself transformed from an intern into a minister.

Over the course of my ten months serving JUC, I could feel myself becoming a minister through prayers, speaking, conversations with congregants, pastoral care, small group ministry, and even in a deepening of leadership skills. Being able to bring a ministry for individuals working with chronic illness to JUC has been an unexpected gift from my personal journey this past year. Meanwhile, creating and facilitating a class on our theology, using the book *A House for Hope: The Promise of Progressive Religion for the Twenty-first Century* has given me an opportunity to speak to and teach about our theology.

The tagline I wrote for the class is, *Exploring our theology, and discovering yourself in it*. In much the same way, I have been exploring my ministry. This internship year has been a precious gift for which I will be thankful through my entire career. I am learning an incredible amount thanks to the Rev. Wendy Williams, my supervisor, and JUC, as the community I am serving.

Recently I have asked several of my mentors the same question: will I fall in love with every congregation I serve? They have all had slightly different answers, and if my experience serving JUC is any indicator, the answer for me will be a resounding yes.

I am both honored and incredibly proud to say that I see JUC living into the vision of one love, one church, and one journey, and it has been a great privilege to companion you through thick and thin during the 2014-2015 church year.

Lifespan Education and Adult Programming (LEAP)

Building on the work of previous years, adult programs have undergone a few significant shifts this year. At the top of the list was the decision by the members of the Lifespan Education and Adult Programming (LEAP) team, led by Patti Coe-Withington and Pam Bond, to narrow their focus to adult faith development. A revised mission statement is being developed to guide their work.

Across all ages, we hope that members, children and friends of our church will continue to grow as Unitarian Universalists. Accordingly, the team formerly known as LEAP has renamed itself Being UU: Adult Faith Development. While the meaning of the word faith in our context is, as with everything, subject to individual interpretation, what Being UU hopes is that all who are part of our church will grow in their understanding of Unitarian Universalist history and theology, participate in and deepen through spiritual practices, and prepare ourselves and our church for the multicultural world we are a part of by gaining a greater level of cross-cultural understanding and engagement.

The congregation has responded in greater numbers than we ever expected to offerings from ministers and lay members alike to engage growing edges, and we've been delighted for it. In the coming year we hope to entice more people to join the team by offering training and curriculum that will allow all of us to grow at our church and in our lives.

Social Responsibility Council

It's been a year of steady work for justice and engagement beyond our walls. Our four task forces, Food & Nourishment, Green, Housing & Poverty, and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), as well as Just Neighboring, our all church project, have been building on the energy of previous work and expanding their collaboration. A few highlights from the year include the joint efforts of three of our task forces to work with thousands of other Unitarian Universalists and hundreds of congregations to support Commit2Respond, a nationwide effort to address the ongoing climate crisis. Dozens of people signed up to participate, and a month of events invited members of our church to get engaged.

We also hosted the Citizen's Climate Lobby conference, which brought in people from all over the state to look at what can and should be done to address climate change on a policy level, in addition to the personal actions we can all take.

Through giving away the plate each month, JUC has sent more than \$32,000 to partner organizations working to heal brokenness in our community and the wider world. Through the efforts of the UUSC we've helped provide more than \$15,000 in scholarships so that children in Guatemala can go to school and receive the education they need and deserve. And our partnership with Habitat for Humanity has helped raise \$30,000 to continue our partnership supporting affordable housing right here in metro Denver.

Just Neighboring has continued to engage more people within and beyond our walls. At the end of April, many members had the chance to attend a celebration at Lumberg Elementary where nearly two dozen first, second and third graders were paired with reading buddies. Numbers of children ended the year reading at grade level, in spite of beginning below grade level. Just neighboring has also successfully partnered with a weekly homeless breakfast, a food bank for senior citizens, and helped elders stay in their homes by getting dozens and dozens of members of our church out for senior cleanup day.

As we look to the year ahead, our entire social justice team is enthusiastically beginning a conversation about growing in effectiveness and responsiveness in the years ahead. Whether that's growing greater partnerships beyond our walls, or offering training and support within them, we know great things are coming.

Pastoral Care

One of the most important things that churches do is take care of members when they're facing challenging times. We call that work pastoral care. At Jefferson Unitarian Church, pastoral care is a shared ministry with dozens of volunteers, led by the incredible Deda Nelson and Sara Kresse, who help organize everything from meals and rides to long-term companions.

This year we've had our share of births and deaths. Our newly minted Family Connectors provide a hot meal and blanket donated by the church quilters to families who have welcomed a new baby. Meanwhile, at the other end of life, our Memorial Reception Team, through the caring leadership of Sara Lohaus, has ensured a system and consistency for receptions of memorials held at JUC. Sara has led this ministry for a number of years, and we're looking for the person who can keep it going in the future, so if you'd like to help, please be in touch.

We're delighted that our Pastoral Care Associates program has found its feet, with a new manual and a regular set of meetings to help those who are called to share their gifts through a ministry of companioning members who are struggling. If you have time to meet with a person once or twice a month, and want to help companion a member in a difficult time in their life, we'd love to hear from you.

Much of the year has been spent building and strengthening the often hidden systems that underlie our volunteer efforts. While you might not see it, our work this year has improved our effectiveness and capacity through systematized record keeping, streamlined processes to help those who write cards for our church, outlined expectations around memorial services, and assuring that if you ever need to reach a minister, it's easier and more straightforward than ever.

So whether you're experiencing a challenging time, or in the hospital, or something is going on in your family and you need support, remember, you can always reach one of your ministers at 720-CHURCH9 (720-248-7249) or at cares@jeffersonunitarian.org.

Board of Trustees, Judy Gangloff, President

Governance

This congregation—that's all of us—has found this a place where our gifts and values come to life and our spirit grows. Jefferson Unitarian Church is a member of the Unitarian-Universalist Association (UUA): an association of liberal congregations, but not a governing body. Our association is unique in that each church and fellowship governs itself. We need a formal structure to make things happen.

The Board of Trustees, made up of nine members, serves in trust for the congregation for staggered three-year terms. Staying in close touch with the congregation, the board articulates the church's vision. During the past year, the Board of Trustees has explored ways to govern your church in a less cumbersome way that allows members to commit themselves to furthering our mission. We are currently working towards revising our governing policies in order to help give direction to the work of Jefferson Unitarian Church.

When we complete our revisions, they will state the mission, values, and strategic outcomes we want. They will describe the board's relationship with the congregation, with the senior minister, and within itself. The policies will also list what must not be done, as limitations. Outside of what is expressly stated that the senior minister cannot do (such as mistreat staff or spend outside the budget), she or he may use their judgment to achieve the mission and strategic outcomes of Jefferson Unitarian Church. This allows and encourages the senior minister to have freedom and use her creativity.

Each trustee is involved in other activities at JUC, out of personal interest and as one way to connect with other members. Under policy governance, the three jobs of the trustees are to stay in touch with the congregation, to articulate the congregation's vision through governing policy, and to monitor the work of the senior minister. The senior minister and the staff is the group that will be responsible for day-to-day operations.

The senior minister will make decisions about how things happen here. While each member of the staff will focus on a particular area of responsibility, the senior minister will be responsible for broader issues, such as staffing priorities

and preparation of the budget. The senior minister will also be responsible for operation policies, such as personnel policies. The key word is responsible, meaning the senior minister can designate staff and volunteers to achieve these responsibilities, but the senior minister is ultimately the one responsible.

Guided by the mission and strategic outcomes and restricted by the limitations, the senior minister reports directly to the board. So long as she does not do anything the board says not to do (and these things are written in policy so there is little room for misinterpretation or forgetting), the senior minister has the freedom to do anything and everything else to help us grow our spirits and bring our gifts and values to life.

The Board will continue to involve the congregation in the changes we propose as we complete writing new policies, updating our proposed strategic outcomes and writing the limitations.

The congregation has jobs too: to elect the trustees; to be involved in whatever ways fit for us; to share our time and other resources; to speak up when we have something to say; and to support our board and staff.

Members help carry out the work of Jefferson Unitarian Church through outreach ministry teams such as Just Neighboring, music ministry, ministry with children and youth, and the pastoral care team. These teams will all report to someone on the staff. Sometimes the board may recruit time-limited teams (like a Ministerial Search Team) to do board-related work. Those teams report directly to the board. During the next year, the congregation has the responsibility to learn about the proposed changes by reading information in *The JUC Crier* and on the church website, asking questions, and attending Board informational meetings.