

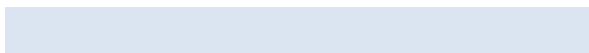


*first* **UNITARIAN**  
CONGREGATION | *Est.*  
OF TORONTO | **1845**

*Committed to love and justice, we*  
**Seek** to understand the meaning of our lives,  
**Connect** with others in common purpose, and  
**Serve** life to build a better world.

# ***ANNUAL REPORT***

## ***2017 – 2018***



## **Ministers' Messages**

### **Rev. Shawn Newton, Senior Minister**

I recently overheard two members of the congregation discussing how the congregation is aging. I resisted the urge to chime in, as I did not want to interrupt their conversation. But, if I had, I would have explained the congregation is actually both aging and growing younger.

First Unitarian is aging, of course, in the sense that with the passing of each year the congregation has been in existence a year longer. (We'll be celebrating our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020!) And the congregation is aging in the sense that each of us grows older with each day. But, overall, our congregation is actually growing younger—which bucks the trend for most congregations in Canada and within Unitarian Universalism. In recent years, we have had an increasing number of young adults become active in the congregation, with some bringing their families with them. Many have stepped into leadership roles, serving as Convenors and members of the Board. Last year, for the first time, the majority of the Board's members were younger than me, which I consider a shared accomplishment of which we should all be proud.

To overcome the prevailing trend towards aging congregations with declining memberships requires that we actively and consistently ask ourselves what changes we must undertake to be relevant and responsive to the needs of younger generations. Our staff team has worked hard to create a welcoming space for young adults, helping to foster Journey Groups and social occasions that draw them together in this community, and creating opportunities to encourage them to deepen in their involvement and take up leadership. We are also looking to introduce in the near future a number of enhancements to revitalize worship, helping us to better connect with younger people (and, really, with everyone) by being more attentive to elements of worship that engage our senses on multiple levels. This is a step toward greater inclusion, as we make more room for a wider variety of people.

As we approach our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary, my hope for the congregation is that we will continue to hold in wonderful balance our rich history and traditions while seeking opportunities for innovation and growth. Our times ask no less of us.

As always, it is a great honour to serve in shared ministry with you. I am grateful for the many gifted and generous people—on staff and in our leadership—who share of themselves in such beautifully committed ways to help us build a better world.

**Rev. Shawn Newton, Senior Minister**

### **Rev. Lynn Harrison, Minister of Community Engagement**

It has been an honour to serve on First Unitarian's ministry team this year, as your Minister of Community Engagement.

In 2017-18, the “At First” series of introductory workshops provided an opportunity for newcomers to get to know First Unitarian and Unitarian Universalism and deepen their engagement with our congregation. Each of these sessions was very well attended this year, as were monthly Newcomer Information sessions, and by June 2018 we will have welcomed 17 new members.

This year marked significant strides in our capacity to provide pastoral care to the congregation. We welcomed two new Lay Pastors to the Listening Ministry team, and through the Pastoral Care Team facilitated the creation of caring circles in the congregation and hosted workshops to support caregivers. As well, this year I was honoured to facilitate the thriving Journey Group at Christie Gardens and to support the creation of its new Sunday morning gathering, where residents enjoy our worship services online.

As well this year, with very able volunteer assistance, we introduced many appealing new visual elements to our physical space and welcoming materials, making use of our signature “sunburst” and “blue swoop” graphics. It’s been exciting to support the ongoing work of First’s Real Estate Team, help develop the recent congregational census, and support the important work being done now in the areas of diversity, inclusion and reconciliation.

It has been a joy to speak (and sing) to you from the pulpit, alongside our extraordinary worship team and musicians. As well, it was a great pleasure to join with others in offering “Peace and Quiet” contemplative services, which provided such calm and renewal. In January, along with Rev. Shawn, I attended the Institute for Excellence in Ministry, where we both were inspired by Marcia McFee’s multi-sensory approach to worship. I look forward to helping bring it to fruition at First in the coming months.

Finally, significant denominational outreach took place this year as we deepened our connections with Neighbourhood UU Congregation. In addition to “pulpit swaps” involving the three ministers, I hosted the four-part “Creativity and Spirituality” workshop series, attended by members of First Unitarian, NUUC, and The Bridge, my ongoing monthly UU community ministry project.

I have found this year to be a deeply rewarding time, as we grow together and deepen in shared ministry. I’d like to express my gratitude to everyone on staff, and to our extraordinary volunteers, with whom I’ve had the privilege to serve this year.

**Rev. Lynn Harrison, Minister of Community Engagement**

## **President’s Message**

On July 9 1845 First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto was born. We are now 173 years old as a congregation in this community - a long impressive history.

Your Board of Trustees is responsible for managing the affairs of the Congregation. It manages the administrative operation of the Congregation and the expenditure of Congregational funds. We take our fiduciary responsibilities very seriously and are dedicated to doing the best we can for the wellbeing of our congregation.

This year we have had an abundance of interesting matters to navigate: social media policy development, staff documentation improvements, strategic planning development, human resources policy updates and improvements to our online policy documentation.

And of course the Real Estate Task Force has presented frequently to your Board. We have navigated these challenging waters with care and attention to our long-term future.

We extend our enormous gratitude to the members of the Board of Trustees who have been part of this amazing team. Our departing Trustee this year is Joe Clarke who has dedicated a number of years to leadership at First. We thank Joe for his many contributions to the Board.



With gratitude

**Susan Phillips, President, Board of Trustees**

## Chief Convenor's Message

As Chief Convenor I am surrounded by the generosity and commitment of dozens of volunteers who work faithfully and efficiently together and with staff to make all the things happen that constitute the life of First. When there is a bump in the road, they look for help then regroup, restart, or rethink. There is a busy buzzing hive making it all happen. Thank you to all of you!

Our Convenor structure continues to evolve as we adapt the roles to the reality of busy lives and congregational priorities. Each member of this dedicated team takes the initiative to identify and resolve issues, design improvements, and deliver services to the entire congregation. The relatively newly-formed IT Crowd is making wonderful contributions by assessing and implementing our technology needs. On the HR front, we are updating our files, policies and processes to ensure we meet our commitments to our staff. We've also benefited from creative volunteers taking charge of social events and several successful fun- and fund-raisers.

As being Chief Convenor also makes me a member of the Executive Committee, I am blessed with hours of regular discussion with our Ministers and our Board President and Vice President. Our meeting topics range from the practical challenges of building management to the spiritual and decision-making challenges of leading through change, resolving conflict, and directing focus and compassion to the things that matter most to our congregation. This year we have been actively working on matching members and friends with engagement opportunities well-suited to their skills and interests, and we have returned many times to our "Seek Connect Serve" mission statement, with a view to filling out more of our vision and strategy in line with our congregation's collective spirit.


At year's end, we created a Congregational Census to update our awareness of how, why, and when people attend First, their demographic context, religious perspectives, and life experiences. As we aim for greater relevance to our members and our world, and prepare for the transition related to our plans to relocate, we want to have an up-to-date and reasonably thorough awareness of who constitutes this beloved community of ours.

**Karen Dunk-Green, Chief Convenor**

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**We are a proud to be a certified  
Welcoming Congregation  
and a  
Green Sanctuary  
Congregation.**

## Our Leadership Team

### 2017 - 2018 Board of Trustees

- Susan Phillips, President
- Terri Marks, Vice President
- Mary Anne Roche, Secretary
- Sasha Akhavi, Real Estate Task Force Rep
- Margaret Bryant, HR Lead
- Joe Clarke, FMC Rep
- Bill Dunk-Green
- Heather Mackintosh, Safe Steps Rep
- Terri Palmer

### 2017 - 2018 Convenor Team

- Karen Dunk-Green, Chief Convenor
- Cheryl Gordon, Administration Convenor (to March 2018)
- Margaret Kohr, Denominational Convenor
- Beth Ann McFadden, Worship Convenor (from January 2018)
- Dominic Stones, Property Convenor
- Ted Wood, Finance Convenor

### Staff

- Shawn Newton, Minister
- Lynn Harrison, Minister of Community Engagement
- Angela Klassen, Director of Lifespan Religious Education
- Dallas Bergen, Director of Congregational Music
- Afsoon Sabaa, Administrator
- Daniel Grzymisch, Senior Bookkeeper
- Carmen Schultz, Junior Bookkeeper
- Veronica McFarlane, Custodian
- Andrew Foley, Cleaner

**Lay Pastors:** Sabina Hikel, Mike Stroh, Jeanne Van Bronkhorst

**Lay Chaplains:** Jan Crowley, Karen Dunk-Green, Sue Meggs

## Staff Reports

### Congregational Music

It is a pleasure to be approaching 10 years as your Director of Congregational Music at First Unitarian. I'm grateful for the many ways the congregation has supported my work, and the musicians who contribute to our worship services and our community.

For Ingathering/Water Communion service in September 2017 we featured an arrangement by resident musician Lucas Marchand who collaborated with Ontario singer-songwriter Coco Love Alcorn. 'The River' was a great contribution to the service and one that we will use again in the future. The following Saturday, the choir spent an enjoyable day at Northwest Unitarian Fellowship on our annual choir retreat, kicking off the year with great workshops by Kimberly Carroll who got us started with guided meditation, gratitude exercises, creativity stimulation and relationship building. The afternoon session featured Toronto voice practitioner and musician, Ryan Luchuk, who taught us the physiology of the human voice and helped us become more aware of our vocal technique.

In December we continued our tradition of a Winter Solstice service, this year moving to *two* services due to the incredible success of this special service marking the darkening of the year and the return of the light.



I was grateful to be able to use some of my allocated sabbatical time in the new year. My time away was a mix of reconnection to my musical leadership, new challenges, as well as needed rest and renewal. The sabbatical featured the planning and guiding of a choir tour that allowed me to find renewed inspiration in my choral work. During my absence, the choir and congregation benefitted from new musical leadership, jointly shared by our resident musicians. I'd like to express my sincere thanks to Tom Lillington, Tahirih Vejdani, Danny Fong, Lucas Marchand, and Joanne Chapin for their leadership during this time. Our team also contributed to the preparation of the choir and the performance of our *Let Love Be Heard* concert in April, featuring musical responses to events of the 20th century. The concert coincided with the Toronto van attack which had taken multiple lives five days earlier. There was a feeling of a need for healing, which came through in the music and the congregational singing that happened during the concert.

Looking forward to next year I am most excited about the new ideas being brought to our planning and presentation of worship where we will endeavor to create a more unified aesthetic experience using input and skills from the many talented and dedicated members of the congregation. Our effort to consider all of the aspects of worship and the multisensory experience, combined with intention around how to weave threads of continuity through a series, should help us create more meaningful and transformational worship.

**Dallas Bergen, Director of Congregational Music**

## Lifespan Religious Education

Again this year, our programs for children, youth and adults have thrived thanks to the skill and commitment offered by over 100 teachers, facilitators, organizers and guests who have guided us in deepening our UU identity. Although space doesn't permit naming everyone individually, we owe a debt of gratitude to all who have contributed to making learning engaging and fun!

Highlights of the year include:

- Welcoming 5 new trained OWL facilitators at the Grades 5-6 and 7-9 levels: Kelly Ferguson, Julie Matheson, Meridith Morrissey, Ben Robbins and Jeremy Powell. It's a rich blessing indeed for our congregation to be able to draw upon over a dozen trained facilitators to lead, or provide relief teaching, for Our Whole Lives programming at every level of the lifespan.
- Co-hosting, along with our Youth Advisor, Portia Dodds, a one-day regional retreat for 10 Youth Advisors in neighbouring congregations which was led by the CUCs Youth and Young Adult Ministry Development Lead, Asha Philar. Our Youth Group welcomed Lisa Trentin as co-advisor with Portia this winter/spring, and five members of First are attending and/or supporting CanUUdle, the national youth conference – 3 youth attending, along with Portia Dodds and Nicole McKay taking up leadership roles as “Advisor to the Advisors” and “Youth Chaplain” respectively.
- Family Ministry sessions included “Anger in the Family”, “Parents Who ‘Get It’” for parenting kids and youth who march to the tune of a different drummer, and individual consultations and age-specific parenting circles, all led by Alyson Shafer at our Winter Family Retreat.
- Our “Youngish UU” Group continues to thrive, with approximately 25 members and friends in their 20s and 30s (ish) arriving as they're able to our monthly Dinner and now, two distinct Journey Groups. We welcomed guests from First and beyond to our “Healing in Action” spiritual practice sessions for young adults, thanks to the thoughtful preparation and leadership of Mairin Smit and Jason Burton.
- Approximately 150 people attending 18 Journey Groups, including an on-line group and a group which Rev. Lynn Harrison facilitates at Christie Gardens. 75 children and youth registered in RE and Youth Group, 68 parents and youth attending the Winter Family Retreat which is now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year, and continued strong attendance at Unicamp among campers, families and leaders in training.

It has been a great joy to collaborate with Rev. Lynn on the “At First Series” which welcomes those who wish to explore a deeper relationship with First, and with Rev. Shawn as the Journey Group Facilitator for the Spiritual Leadership Development Program for emerging leaders. Meeting with our ‘Wise Elders’ each month is a privilege and always a source of humour.

I'm grateful to our congregation and the Board for the opportunity to attend training through the Centre for Courage and Renewal Alumni Institute in facilitating a program called “The Soul of Aging”; I look forward to launching a pilot offering in the 2018-19 congregational year.

Finally, thank you to my colleagues, Rev. Shawn Newton, Rev. Lynn Harrison, Afsoon Saaba, Dallas Bergen, Andrew Foley and Veronica MacFarlane with whom it is a joy to serve at First.

**Angela Klassen, Director of Lifespan Religious Education**



## Committees and Projects of the Congregation

### Nominating Committee Report

**Nominating Committee Members:** Beth Ann McFadden, Art Brewer, Gilbert Salgado, Emily Larimer, Brigit Swenson

**The Nominating Committee presents the following nominees:**

For the Board: Bill Dunk-Green, Nathan Cox, Darryl Neate, Susan Phillips

For the Funds Management Committee: Rich Bailey

For the Nominating Committee: Paul Bognar

**Terms of Office:**

Regular board trustee terms are for three years. Nominating Committee terms are for two years. The Funds Management Committee term is for three years.

### Real Estate Task Force

The Real Estate Task Force (RETF) was authorized to begin its work in September 2016 at a Congregational Meeting wherein we outlined why renovating our current premises is not an effective strategy for both financial and practical reasons. The congregation voted in favour of pursuing an alternate strategy, i.e. entering the real estate market formally to find a new premises solution. In 2017/2018, the RETF took the following steps:

- Assessed multiple properties for fit with First's needs; while 3 were of significant interest, each had significant drawbacks with regard to zoning, construction challenges, or neighbourhood fit
- Worked with multiple bidders interested in purchasing our current property. Each of the bidders eventually withdrew their offers due to their own concerns about getting city approval for their desired project or about being able to assemble a large site on the block.
- Established relationships with professional consultants and advisors who will be needed to assist us in due diligence on properties of interest.

The current status of our strategy is to stay the course. We will continue to negotiate with interested buyers and search for a suitable new home.

**Karen Dunk-Green, Chair, Real Estate Task Force**

### Save a Family from Syria (SAFFS)

We have completed our sponsorships of the five Syrian newcomer families. Two new babies were recently born to two of the families. Many volunteers remain in contact with their newcomer friends.

In October 2016 an application was submitted to sponsor a Syrian family in Yemen. In October 2017 the application was forwarded to the overseas visa office in Abu Dhabi. Because of the war, Canadian visa officials are not able to safely travel to Yemen to carry out the necessary interviews, medical checks, and security checks. They are considering alternate ways to process these applications remotely, but there is no indication that any applications are being processed at this time. Current processing time is over two years. SAFFS continues to have contact with the family, and is hoping the situation will change.

In December 2017 an application to sponsor two men from the Middle East was submitted as a co-sponsorship with Rainbow Refugee Society. This co-sponsorship made it possible to submit an application outside of the very limited number of sponsorships available with the Canadian Unitarian Council as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder. The application was forwarded to the overseas visa office in March 2018, with an expected processing time of six to eighteen months. A volunteer settlement team is being developed, with the first organizational meeting planned for May 2018.



**Beth van der Weerd, Chair, Save a Family from Syria**

## Human Resources

In the past year, we have enhanced our HR practices as follows:

- Compiled a complete set of HR records (including contracts, job descriptions and start dates for all staff)
- Updated Social Media Policy and Employee Manual (many thanks to Heino Nielson for his assistance in this work)
- Updated the Senior Minister's job description with input from Shawn
- Established Statements of Employment and long-term contracts
- Launch an annual performance review process for staff

Work in progress:

- Staff onboarding and exiting checklists
- Establishing a locked, physical location for all employee files in the same place
- Standardizing contractor contracts

**Margaret Bryant, Head of Human Resources**

## Convenor and Committee Reports

### Administration

Office Volunteers: Bill Belfontaine, Judith Magney, Mo McMahon, Wendy Dines, Stan Yack and John Lewis help in office.

The office volunteers are a big help in managing office and congregational needs. Updating the directory, managing website, producing OOS, sending New Horizon and fillings are the routine works of the office that volunteers have a huge role in handling all these tasks. For part of this year, we were also pleased to have input from Cheryl Gordon as our Administrative Convenor.

This year we increased our still-very-reasonable rental rate by 7% on all contracts. We also signed a flat rate contract with Canadian Children's Opera Chorus (CCOC) which was a big accomplishment from both an administration and finance point of view. We were also able to rent the 3rd floor office to a new therapist in the same month the previous tenant left.

**Karen Dunk-Green, Chief Convenor**

### Property

Great thanks to all who have helped the Property committee over the past year: MJ Blackman, Wendy Dines, Jean Galt, John Lewis, Veronica McFarlane, Anne Murdock and Hope Paul.

The past year has been one of careful consideration regarding building repair and upkeep. With the understanding that we will only be occupying our building for a few more years, we are being cautious and attempting to avoid "throw away" spending if it is not necessary for reasons other than safety, accessibility, or essential cosmetic repairs. Naturally, there is still work that must be done! Some examples:

- Instead of hiring a carpet cleaner, we renting cleaning units and do the work ourselves.
- The fluorescent lights in the library failed and were replaced. We considered moving to LED units but the cost over same unit replacement was prohibitive, particularly given the life-span of the fixtures.
- The lift elevator broke down twice in 2017 and the end of year assessment identified a code violation that needed to be updated. These were costly issues and we found ourselves without elevator service on a few weekends. As the unit is aging and will probably need more frequent repair, we have chosen to sign up for a comprehensive 24-hour service contract. This will ensure a service technician will be available whenever needed, including during our critical weekend hours.
- A new ramp was installed along with a wooden pathway through the Secret Garden to ensure the area is fully accessible for all and that it can serve as an alternate entrance to our sanctuary if there is no elevator in service. Great thanks to Craig Mahood for his time and excellent work on this project.

**Dominic Stones, Property Convenor**

## Denominational Affairs

The major area of responsibility for Denominational Affairs is to maintain relationships between First Toronto and the other denominational organisations with which we are affiliated or connected. First Congregation of Toronto has a long history of active involvement in denominational organisations and in regional, national, and international UU matters.



### **Canadian Unitarian Council**

The Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) is made up of Unitarian and Universalist member congregations from across Canada who have chosen to participate together in a national faith organization. The CUC provides the connecting thread to link member congregations in a community and to provide a forum for discussion and dialogue on significant issues in the context of UUism in Canada. It is our extended Canadian family.

Once a year delegates from member congregations including First Toronto attend the CUC Annual General Meeting to review and approve the Strategic Priorities for the coming year, the budget and the Auditors. There may also be resolutions to vote on, brought forward by monitoring groups or individual member congregations.

This year the Annual meeting was in Hamilton on May 18 and was followed by the National Conference, which now takes place every two years, on May 19 and 20. The delegates from First Toronto were Wendy Peebles, Gerta Moray, Bill Dunk-Green, Helen Iacovino, and Margaret Kohr. Delegates, Karen Dunk-Green and Richard Kirsh were unable to attend at the last minute. Detailed information about the AGM can be found on the CUC website. <https://cuc.ca/> As a small faith group, UUs across Canada continue to deepen and grow our faith as was evidenced most significantly when we welcomed the Nelson BC Unitarian Spiritual Centre as a new member of the CUC.

Vyda Ng, Executive Director, reported that the mighty 4 person resource staff have been renamed the Congregational Life Team to more clearly reflect their role. In that role staff have:

- provided congregational workshops
- facilitated on line round table discussion and webinars on various topics, including a series Let's Talk Racial Justice
- trained over 100 facilitators to deliver Truth, Healing and Reconciliation workshops to congregations.

The detailed staff reports, including the report on social justice, will be posted soon on the CUC website. In response to a CUC priority identified in 2017 to improve communication and outreach the CUC:

- successfully launched its new and improved CUC website, For anything you want to know about the CUC this is the place to start. <https://cuc.ca/>
- revised its monthly electronic newsletter, which includes current congregational happenings and information about upcoming webinars facilitated by the staff.

On the financial side:

- the CUC reported a surplus of \$11,076 and projects a surplus of \$7,178 for 2019.
- Delegates voted to increase the Annual Program Contribution for 2018 from \$100 to \$101.60 in accordance with the 2017 Consumer Price Index from Stats Canada.
- The CUC Treasurer, Tanya Cothran announced that the APC Task Force Part 2 will be sending out recommendations for a hybrid model of calculation to be discussed and voted on at the meeting in 2019.

Looking ahead to November, the CUC will be participating significantly in the world's most diverse interfaith event, happening in Toronto in November 2018. The Parliament of World Religions will be attended by over 10,000 people from over 80 countries and 200 unique spiritual traditions. All three program proposals the CUC submitted to the Parliament for consideration were accepted: Welcoming Congregations; Truth and Reconciliation; and the OWL Program. *Pretty impressive!*

The National Conference, with the theme of Love and Justice took place on Saturday and Sunday. The diverse workshops provided a rich and rewarding opportunity for all who attended. Some highlights of the Conference included links to Toronto First:

- Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz, who was an inspiring summer minister at First a few years ago delivered the Confluence Lecture;
- on Sunday, after the worship service, Rev. Shawn officiated at the moving child dedication of Peter and Wendy Brydon's grandsons;
- on Sunday afternoon Rev. Lynn offered a sampling of The Bridge.
- the Theological Fund awards went to Christopher Wulff and Ben Robbins
- Helen Iacovino was a winner of the CUC Vison Arts Contest.

Next year the Annual Business Meeting will be held in Toronto but in 2020 there will once again be another Conference, hosted with splendid maritime hospitality by the Halifax Universalist Unitarian Congregation.

**Denominational Youth Activity:** First Toronto was the host congregation for a youth advisor retreat put on by Asha Philar of the CUC, in the fall. Both Portia Dodds and Angela Klassen attended. While the adults were conferencing, our youth were also holding their annual national conference CanUudle, whose theme this year was Super Heroes. Portia Dodds was the youth advisors' "advisor" – supporting youth advisors travelling across the country with their youth. Portia was also the sponsoring advisor for a number of youth who attended from First. Nicole McKay acted as Chaplain for all members of CanUudle. A great time was had by all!



**Unicamp:** The programs offered by Unicamp between May and October are enjoyed by many, including children, youth and adults.

As a member congregation of Unicamp since its founding in 1969, Toronto First sent 2 delegates to its AGM on September 2, 2017. Thanks to Iris Murray and Ben Robbins, who represent First on the Board. There are about 20 member congregations, most in southern Ontario, and these member congregations own Unicamp in common, as the only permanent UU owned camp and conference centre in Canada (the US has about 20). Located north of Toronto near Shelburne, Unicamp has programming for all ages, offering UU community and nature connection. <http://www.unicampofontario.ca/Home-Page.php>

**Unitarian Congregations of Greater Toronto (UCGT):** the activities of the UCGT, which supported GTA congregations to act in unison under the formal organizational umbrella of UCGT is currently suspended due to a diminished interest in joint participation in social justice initiatives, Pride, etc.. However, one-to-one interactions between congregations remain strong, especially at the leadership levels.



## Technology

The IT Crowd at First has had a busy year identifying and implementing opportunities to improve our use of technology. Many thanks for completing this challenging and skilled work are owed to current Chair Andrew McAllister, former Chair Sue Berlove, and volunteers including Bill Dunk-Green, Giles Edkins, Michael Klinowski, Jamie McKay, Mo MacMahon, Jim Mason, and Stan Yack. Our Audio Visual crew is essential to our Sunday morning services, both live and online; countless thanks for providing their skills and time go to Joseph Muller (coordinator), MJ Blackman, Henry Campbell, Derek Manning, and Kim Saltarski.

Upgrades were installed on office computers, both in hardware and software, providing faster processing and stronger backup and recovery capabilities. We invested in more internal cabling and upgrades to wifi capabilities, still trying to bring more reliable wifi to more locations in the building. Our Live stream Sunday services received a lot of attention to improve equipment and are now broadcast over Youtube, with the sermon portion archived to Youtube on Mondays. We implemented Sync (internally called Shadow) as a centralized file sharing and storage solution, giving our staff and leadership team a way to store documents for archive reasons and to enable greater continuity in our operations.

## Lay Pastors

The Pastoral Care Team has had many endeavours this year. We have supported countless congregants who have physical and/or medical conditions. These people are living in their own homes, in seniors' residences, in assisted-living care facilities, or in hospitals. In addition, we take people to medical appointments, shop with them, or connect them with community services. First Meals is a service we provide to those who are house-bound and unable to cook easily. We have over 15 volunteer cooks.

The Pastoral Care Committee meets on a monthly basis to assess the needs of congregants for whom we have serious concern and provide support on an on-going basis. We create Circles of Care (a team of volunteers) for congregants in need of intensive, end-of-life support.

This year we have offered two well-attended, successful workshops: *Caregiving at a Distance* (20 participants) and *Medical Aid in Dying* (40 participants).

**Allen Brand, Lay Pastor**

## Lay Chaplaincy

LC Committee members remain as per last year: John Cummings, Peter Brydon, Jennifer Drinkwater, Bill Parsons and Margaret Kohr (LC liaison).

During 2017, Jan Crowley and Sue Meggs continued their 6-year terms, which began in the fall of 2015. Karen Dunk-Green continued her 6-year term, which began in the fall of 2016. We were very sad to record the death of Margo Holland, a former lay chaplain.



During the year, the evaluations of Jan Crowley and Sue Meggs were successfully completed. Joint-meetings of the Lay Chaplaincy Committee and Lay Chaplains Support Group (LCSG) were held at First on 15<sup>th</sup> January and 25<sup>th</sup> June. We have agreed to hold these meetings twice a year. The latest one was on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2018. Meetings of the LCC were held at First on 9<sup>th</sup> April and 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Meetings of the LCSG were held at First on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 13<sup>th</sup> April, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 20<sup>th</sup> September and 25<sup>th</sup> October.

The new Lay Chaplains' web site went live at: <https://firstunitariantorontoofficials.org/> There is a link from the First Unitarian Toronto web site home page via "Weddings & Ceremonies". The site was developed by the Lay Chaplains with the technical assistance of Bill Dunk-Green. In 2017 the Lay Chaplains performed 14 weddings, 5 memorial services, and no child dedications, setting a new low total of 19 ceremonies following an uptick to 31 in 2016, and continuing a downward trend from the range of 50-60 ceremonies in 2006-11. There are some signs the number will increase in 2018.

**John Cummings, Chair, Lay Chaplaincy Committee**

## Newcomer Services

This year, our regular Newcomer Information sessions continued on the first Sunday of each month, with Rev. Lynn Harrison joining Diane Wagner in a friendly, informative and welcoming hour for newcomers to First.

In addition, two rounds of the three-part *At First* workshop series took place this year (facilitated by Lynn Harrison and Angela Klassen), offering a deeper opportunity for reflection on what it means to be part of the First Unitarian community. With approximately 12 people participating in each workshop, they were lively and enriching opportunities for new connection.

The members of the Greeting and Engage & Connect teams all were instrumental in the welcoming and engagement of more than 50 newcomers to First this year—many of whom have taken part in volunteer opportunities, social events and other gatherings, and several of whom have chosen to join us as new members or regular attendees. As well, through this year's Welcome Workshop and ongoing education and awareness, First Unitarian continues to deepen our ability to fully welcome, include and affirm diversity.

**Lynn Harrison, Minister of Community Engagement**

## **Social Events**

Our ever-ready Social Events team hosted three festive gatherings during the year – a Thanksgiving potluck, a winter potluck, and Waffles on Easter Sunday. They also stepped up to provide meals during congregational meetings, celebrations and fundraising events. Thanks to these helpful people, organized by Jane Larimer, we are a well-nourished community when we come together to share food and fun:

Lynn Atkin-Phillips, Margaret Bryant, Peggy Cameron, Carol Damioli, Brian Deming, Wendy Dines, Beth Guthrie, Hanna Heger, Doreen Lowe, Beth Ann McFadden, Catherine Millar, Norman Millar, Sharon Mourer, Hope Paul, Wendy Peebles, Loo Russell, Barbara Syer, Joan Toogood, Judy Velland.

**Jane Larmer, Coordinator**

## **Engage & Connect**

The Engage and Connect Table helps First members and friends become as connected as they want to be with our congregation. Since its creation in 2011, Engage and Connect has linked people with hundreds of opportunities to get involved and feel part of something bigger.

From April 2017 to April 2018, Engage and Connect made the following connections:

- 16 people to First Light or New Horizons
- 10 people to journey groups
- 7 people to coffee hour
- 6 people to one-time events and fundraisers
- 4 people to choir
- 3 people to the Board of Trustees
- many others to social justice groups and newcomer information

Thanks to our volunteers who staff the table every Sunday: Linda Brown, Kate Cottington, Susan Phillips, Mary Anne Roche, Francesca Shrivone, Kimberly Watson

**Sheila Riddell, Engage and Connect Coordinator**

## **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Group**

The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Group met monthly over 2017-18. We got to know one another's backgrounds and interests and learned about how and why the group was formed. The group's areas of focus – inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility – are distinct but interrelated and each offers potential to make First a better place. Setting priorities is important and we submitted a proposed mandate to the Board of Trustees for review. Our priorities for Fall 2018 include:



- Discussing with the Board and Convenors our mandate and the recommendations of the 2015 Diversity Scan report
- Sponsoring learning and discussion sessions for members, including a scrupling meeting
- Engaging the congregation about preparing for a move to a new location that may have quite a different diversity mix
- Finalizing IDEA-related practices for First, and discussing with committees and others how they can be implemented
- Starting an IDEA-focused journey group
- Thinking about how First can help all members, visitors and friends feel more included
- Increasing the number and diversity of IDEA Group members

Members are Niki Andre, Bill Belfontaine, Wendy Peebles, Yvonne Raaflaub, Beth van der Weerd and Barb Wentworth. Please join us!

**Bob Sherman, Chair**

## Fundraising

This year we held several successful events to build community, have fun, and raise funds in support of our many programs: Euchre and Games Night, Dinner Series, Spoken Word Event, Choir Concert, Time & Talent Auction, and a Storytelling Event. Many thanks go to our wonderful volunteers who stepped forward to organize these events and make them each a success. Combined, they earned over \$16,000!

**Karen Dunk-Green, Chief Convenor**

## Greeters and Ushers

We are always looking for new greeters. Our weekly teams are not fully staffed some Sundays, as we lost some volunteers this year. We will carry on trying to find new individuals and families that would be willing to welcome people on Sunday morning.

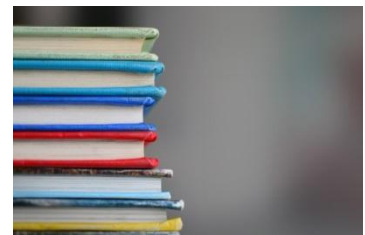
**Linda Brown, Greeters Coordinator**

Our team of dedicated, loyal ushers has had a successful year without major problems. As a result of a few retirements we have recruited new ushers and are seeking one or two more.

**Jim Mason, Ushers Coordinator**

## Bookstore

The bookstore is open Sunday mornings during coffee hour. The congregation supports the bookstore with donations of used books, CDs and DVDs. Members of the congregation can offer their own books, CDs and cards for sale at the *Local Authors* table. These items are either on consignment (40% of the proceeds going to First) or donations. The bookstore also stocks Unitarian



Universalist books, hymnals, and jewellery from the UUA Bookstore in Boston.

The Bookstore earned a profit of \$876, less than in recent years and less than the budgeted \$1200. In part this is because of the increase in the price of denominational materials such as hymnals that are imported from the U.S.

**Lynn Hughes, Bookstore Coordinator**

## Library and Issues & Ideas

The library committee purchases, or acquires through donation, a number of new books every year to keep our library up to date. We also prune our collection of out-of-date materials. We have a strong collection of Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist books as well as books relating to every aspect of religion. We also administer the circulation of four collections of books, which belong to Unitarians for Social Justice, the Green Sanctuary Group, the Reconciliation Working Group, and the OWL program. We have a new small collection of DVDs available for circulation.

This year we paid special attention to our collection of volumes on Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, which include books on religious practices, mysticism, and resources for storytelling. We are hoping to be able to begin processing our special collection of historical materials in order to make these books more available to researchers.

The committee is also responsible for the monthly book report and discussion event, *Issues and Ideas*. Thanks to Gerta Moray, who recruits for and plans these sessions, *Issues and Ideas* continues to be a success, eliciting much participation and a lively sharing of thoughts.

**Peter Hughes, Chair, Library Committee**

## Arts Committee

**Members:** Kate Cottington, Jean Galt, Judy Clarke, Judy Skelton, Wendy Dines, Barbara de Beaupre, Brigitte Nowak

Sunderland Hall monthly art exhibitions provide a welcoming atmosphere. The opening receptions and artists' talks attract new visitors to our congregation. Commission fees (20% of sales) collected in 2017 totalled \$716.40. The \$50 exhibition fees totalled \$400.00. 2017 exhibitions in Sunderland Hall were:

January – Michael Battenberg  
February - Black history month exhibit- Jordan Clarke  
March – Members and friends of First group exhibit  
April – York Artists Guild  
May – Nancy Bennett  
June – Irene Sakata  
July and August – Avenue Road Arts School  
September – Carmel Bouzanne  
October – Barbara de Beaupre

November – Nick Biagini

December – Indigenous artists Joseph Sagaj and Keitha Keeshig-Tobias

Artists wishing to exhibit their work in Sunderland Hall should email Kate Cottington at [Arts@FirstUnitarianToronto.org](mailto:Arts@FirstUnitarianToronto.org). In the library, members' exhibits rotate every 2 months. Interested artists should contact Judy Clarke at [yduj@sympatico.ca](mailto:yduj@sympatico.ca) to schedule a library show.

**Kate Cottington, Chair**



## Eco/Social Justice Reports

Our congregation supports selected social justice projects or groups by providing access to Sunday service programming and after-service activities, publicity through our regular publications and announcements, the use of our facilities, and a special collection. Projects are voted on for official support by the congregation at the Annual General Meeting.

Affiliated groups may also receive some forms of support but exist outside the congregation.

### Criteria

Applicants are asked to demonstrate their viability and accountability by meeting the following expectations:

- The group is led by a member in good standing (i.e. who is attending and has made an identifiable financial contribution in the last 12 months).

Each group will provide an annual report in which they identify their supporters, meetings held, actions taken, results achieved, money raised and how it was allocated or spent by the group during the year. This report will go into the Annual Report.

### Annual Process

Reports from social justice groups will be requested at least one month prior to the AGM. The Chief Convenor will recommend the list to the congregation.

At the Annual General Meeting, the Congregation will vote on the list of approved social justice groups/projects for the next year (September to June).

Approval at the AGM makes it possible to

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group has at least 10 identified supporters who are active in the work of the group and members in good standing.</li> <li>• The group meets at least twice yearly.</li> </ul> | <p>schedule special Sundays in the worship calendar for the coming year.</p> |
|---|--|

## Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

The Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ) Toronto First Chapter is not requesting recognition as a Social Justice project of the congregation. This report is included for information purposes only.

Members: Douglas Buck, Kate Chung, Eryl Court, Jack Dodds, Beth Guthrie, Tony & Helen Iacovino, Wendy Oonpuu, Margaret Rao, Gilbert Salgado, Ted Wood

The Toronto Chapter of CUSJ includes members involved in local, regional, national and international debate and action in matters of social, economic, environmental and political justice. CUSJ maintains a bulletin board listing local events and actions, as well as national and international news. We post articles and events to the Eco-Social Justice and Green Team

listserv and *First Light*. On occasion, we staff a Sunday table with information, letters and petitions.

The CUSJ banner was raised in the past year at Climate, Indigenous and International Women's Marches and pro-Democracy, pro-Palestinian and anti-racist rallies. Long-time *Raging Granny* Kate Chung and newly inducted granny, Margaret Rao, shared the podium at this year's science-friendly, *Evidence for Democracy* rally.

CUSJ Toronto Chapter works closely with *Climatefast*, a locally based activist group which meets regularly at Friends' House (Quaker Meeting House). We recently helped staff an Earth Day table at Nathan Philips Square, with postcards and letters and sign-up sheets to encourage public participation in deputations promoting the full funding of city staff's *Transform T.O.*'s recommendations for reducing carbon emissions 80% by 2050. Think globally and act locally!

Having lost our technical assistant to Ottawa First, we did not continue our Eco-Social Justice Sunday film series this year. We are planning to screen one film in June, *Sea of Life* by young, award-winning Canadian filmmaker Julia Barnes. We only met informally this year (during coffee hour) as well as online.

Both Toronto First and the CUSJ national Board offered moral and monetary support to the grassroots Indigenous women holding a 24/7 vigil over a 4 month period in front of the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada office. The demand was for federal action on child and youth suicide (#NOMIC Not One More Indigenous Child). It culminated in a December march, rally and gathering of Indigenous youth, elders and allies. Sadly, one of the 3 women who started the vigil, beloved Toronto activist, Carrie Lester, succumbed to cancer. As a warrior for

peace and justice, Carrie leaves a lasting legacy for those who continue the struggle for truth and *reconciliation*.

A few CUSJ Toronto Chapter members are also active members with the Reconciliation Working Group and supporters of the Green Team and Amnesty Group 142. Jack Dodds and Margaret Rao met with Minister John McKay, the new Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. He accepted CUSJ's brief on Bill C-59, *An Act Respecting National Security Matters*, but declined our request to appear before the Committee before second reading of the bill.

Financial: a budget of \$150.00 for purchasing eco-social justice films for the library was granted but not spent.

**Margaret Rao, Chair, CUSJ Toronto Chapter**

## Reconciliation Working Group

The RAW is requesting recognition as a Social Justice project of the congregation in 2018.

Chair: Gilbert Salgado, (647) 667-0754, gilbertunitarian@gmail.com

The Reconciliation Working Group was started in 2012 as the Aboriginal Awareness Group (the AAG), and is an approved social action project of First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto. Our mission is to better understand and to be supportive of the social justice issues of importance to First Peoples in Canada and to deepen our knowledge of indigenous spirituality.

### Objectives

1. Educational experiences for the congregation on Indigenous issues
2. Deepen the congregation's awareness of Aboriginal cultural and spirituality
3. Recommend action plans that could be undertaken in partnership with Indigenous groups, agencies and individuals and volunteer opportunities
4. Inform the congregation of learning opportunities in Toronto, such as Toronto Council Fire, the Native Cultural Centre, Dodem Kanosha and demonstrations organized by Idle No More

### Education & Experiences

*Reconciliation Working Group has offered several speakers, films, discussions and experiences after the Sunday service and some events are posted on our web page. In 2017 -2018 we had:*

- A Blanket Exercise, a powerful tool in understanding the loss of indigenous territory, led by Danielle Webber at a Sunday service in June 2017.
- Leland Bell paintings donation by RWG sympathizers and dedication ceremony.

- Kairos booklet distribution “Strength for the Climbing; Steps on the Journey of Reconciliation.”
- Promotion of Raymond Currie’s “Reconciliation Circles” to the greater Aboriginal Issues Working Groups in Toronto.
- Participated in public education on Indigenous youth suicides with Grassroots Movement of Tkaronto and their vigil for prevention from fall to winter.
- Reconciliation Working Group members have reviewed books on indigenous issues for Issues and Ideas.
- Indigenous art exhibits in Sunderland Hall (with the Arts Committee)  
Food catered by indigenous kitchens
- On International Women’s Day, a member gave testimony.
- Large congregational Scrupling on Reconciliation with Indigenous light lunch.
- A standing invitation to attend the Annual Pow Wow at Fort York every June.
- June 17<sup>th</sup>, “Bee Nation” an educational Indigenous film.

### **Volunteer opportunities**

We continue to expand our outreach through volunteering:

- NaMeRes (Native men’s Residence) on Vaughan Road (kitchen) & Pow Wow
- Reconciliation Working Group – planning and fundraising
- TDSB and YWCA Winona’s Place.

## **Amnesty International Group 142**

Amnesty International Group 142 is requesting recognition as a Social Justice project of the congregation in 2018.

**Prime Contact:** Ted Wood, Tedwood@rogers.com

**Supporters:** Art Brewer, Peter Brydon, Doug Buck, Kate Chung, Kate Cottington, Jack Dodds, Anne Gloger, Shirley Grant, Hanna Heger, Richard Kirsh, Terry Lee, Paul Mitchell, Margaret Newell, Susan Phillips, Margaret Rao, Gilbert Salgado, Judy Skelton, Ulla Stenman, Jeanne von Bronkhorst

Amnesty Group 142 campaigns to stop and prevent human rights abuses; our main focus is the rights of Indigenous Peoples. We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month and organize letter signing on the 4th Sunday of each month. We also organized Amnesty Sunday to celebrate International Human Rights Day.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples calls on all states to honour treaties and agreements with Indigenous Peoples, to protect Indigenous languages and cultures, and to uphold Indigenous Peoples' rights to lands, territories and resources. We organize actions in Canada and in Central and South America on behalf of Indigenous Peoples and will continue to do so in 2018-2019. We also participate in other Amnesty campaigns.

We are thankful for the ongoing support of the congregation for the extremely important human rights work of Amnesty International.

In the past year we participated in many actions:



- Prisoners of conscience in Iran
- Canada: rescind Safe Third Country agreement
- appoint ombudsperson for Canadian extractive industries operating in other countries
- Canada: stop Site C dam
- Canada: stop violence against Indigenous women and girls
- Colombian Indigenous action
- El Salvador abortion rights action
- Supporting Indigenous water and land defenders in Honduras and Guatemala
- Stop ethnic cleansing in Myanmar
- Stop slavery in Mauritania
- Support Indigenous people in Kenya
- On Amnesty Sunday we participated in 10 actions to free and support Human Rights Defenders in various countries
- At our annual holiday potluck we sent greeting cards to human rights defenders
- With two other Amnesty International community groups we organized the annual Amnesty Toronto fundraising auction.

On Amnesty Sunday, a special collection raised \$2,037 for Amnesty Canada. Group 142 had no expenses charged to the congregation other than use of the photocopier and meeting rooms.

**Ted Wood, Chair, Amnesty International Group 142**

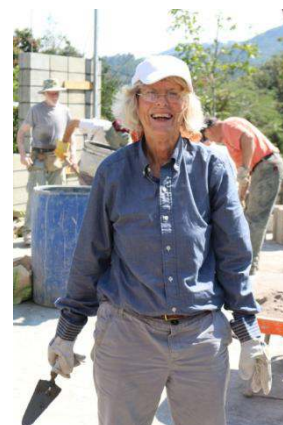
## Central America Community Development

The Central America Community Development project is requesting recognition as a Social Justice project of the congregation in 2018.

**Prime Contact:** Richard Kirsh, [Richardkirsh@sympatico.ca](mailto:Richardkirsh@sympatico.ca)

**Supporters:** Sue Berlove, Art Brewer, Peter Brydon, Judy Clark, Wendy Dines, Margaret Kohr, Johanna Lanfranco, Nancy Lee, Terry Lee, Wendy Peebles, Ulla Stenman, Ted Wood, Harold Wright

Our goal is to build understanding between people and help improve social, economic and living conditions in Central America. We do this



primarily by helping with the construction of community facilities requested by indigenous NGO's in Honduras and Guatemala.

In 2017/18, 30 people, including 9 members and friends from First, helped build 3 kindergarten schools in Honduras, giving 100 children per year the opportunity to get a better education.

We also collaborated with World Accord, CHYM radio and Vocab Communications to promote the Construction Expeditions in the KW area and to sponsor a musical fundraiser for World Accord and the construction expeditions.

#### Finances

The \$100 operating budget was spent for a piñata, candy and decorations for Central America Sunday (\$98.78 actual). The CA Sunday special collection generated \$1,325 in donations which helped fund two \$1,000 youth bursaries. The remainder came from the 2016 special collection. The bursary fund has a balance of \$2,371 for future use. Thank you for the generous support.

#### Other Activities

In April, we held a planning meeting with World Accord for the 2018 trips. In August we held a virtual meeting which increased the youth bursary from \$500 to \$1,000 to make it more compelling. On Saturday, Sept 23rd, we decorated First for Central America Sunday, the next day. In September and October, we sponsored 3 coffee hour information tables to help promote participation in the trips.

Since 1997, over 500 Canadians have participated in our Construction Expeditions, including over 100 Unitarians – almost 60 from First – representing 22 congregations (Saint John to Vancouver), have built 44 community facilities, contributing 1,000-person weeks of volunteer labour and many hundreds of thousands of dollars for construction materials. They each had rewarding firsthand experience working with local people in the mountains of Honduras and Guatemala building schools, training and community centers, and houses.

## **Friends of New Visions Toronto**

Friends of New Visions Toronto is requesting recognition as a Social Justice project of the congregation in 2018.

**Prime Contact:** Barb Wentworth, barbw@ica.net

**Supporters:** Sue Berlove, Allan Brand, Judy Clarke, Helen Kong, Melissa Lobo, Sean McCaughey, Sorlie Maddox, Ulla Stenman, Beth van der Weerd, Jeanne Von Bronkhorst, Beth Windeler

With heavy hearts, we are mourning the loss of Mark Jorgensen. This year, 2017, has been a quiet year of change. We did not collect contributions nor incur expenses related to Friends of NVT. Early in 2017, Tea with Mark was winding down along with Mark's energy. The outpouring of love at his memorial service buoyed up family, friends, staff and roommates at NVT. Now is the time for change and transformation for Friends of New Visions Toronto. As noted in the April Journey Group documents:



*“Much of the time, meaningful change is a much subtler art. It sometimes requires stillness, and listening, and waiting. It’s often about patience not perfection; depth not dominance; attention not improvement.”*

The commitment to connecting with, supporting and welcoming people living with developmental and physical challenges has not changed. So, we ask that Friends of New Visions Toronto remain as a social justice program for 2018 in a bit of a hiatus while we patiently wait for its new form and focus to emerge. With much gratitude.

## Green Sanctuary Group

The Green Sanctuary Group is requesting recognition as a Social Justice project of the congregation in 2018.

**Prime Contact:** Marg Wiebe, margarete.wiebe@sympatico.ca

**Supporters:** Cathy Brown, Kate Chung, Linda Heron, Helen Kong, Sorlie Madox, David Photiadis, Melissa Simas

Each month the congregation’s generous donations to the Green Fund on Earth Day contribute \$162.65 towards supporting Bullfrog Power, which adds to the energy grid, on our behalf, sustainable forms of renewable energy that will reduce the environmental impact of fossil fuels. The Green Team provides a weekly Green Moment article for First Light. We will continue these activities next year. We are pleased to have been involved in these environmental activities and advancements this past year:

- Worked with children’s classes to grow and plant seeds outdoors
- Provided input to plans for an accessibility path in the Secret Garden
- Worked with the Environmental Advisory Group on a wish list for a potential new site
- Monitored room temperature in Sunderland Hall to reduce heating costs
- Switched from petroleum based paraffin candles to eco-friendly beeswax
- Sent letters in support of full funding for the Transform TO50 Climate Action Plan
- Gathered signatures for a petition supporting Bill M151 to ban single use plastics; created a “plastics monster” sculpture and delivered it to Deputy Minister of the Environment’s office.
- Planned and participated in Earth Day worship service



Looking ahead, we will continue to monitor and report on how the City progresses with the TO50 Climate Action Plan and we will apply for re-certification as a Green Sanctuary.

As part of this application, we will be asking the congregation consider covering the monthly costs of Bullfrog Power in its annual budget.

**Marg Wiebe, Chair of Green Sanctuary Group**

## Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU UNO)

The UU-UNO is requesting recognition as a Social Justice project of the congregation in 2018.

**Prime Contact:** Eryl Court, [eryl.court@outlook.com](mailto:eryl.court@outlook.com)

**Supporters:** Bill Bellfontaine, Ellen Campbell, Kate Chung, Jack Dodds, Shirley Grant, Fred Lautenschlager, Mo MacMahon, Margaret Rao, Debby Tiffin, Margaret Vandembroucke,

The UU-UNO did not actively fundraise in the congregation during 2017. Two meetings were held with supporters.

**Eryl Court, UU-UN Envoy**

## Financial Reports

### Funds Management Committee

#### Overview

The mandate of the Funds Management Committee (FMC) is to oversee the congregation's long-term capital funds. The assets at December 31, 2017 totaled \$1,262,808 and comprised eight funds, designated as either endowed or expendable:

- Endowment Fund (endowed)
- Foundation Fund (endowed)
- Rouff/Mackie-Jenkins / Teaching Congregation Fund (endowed)
- Heritage Fund (expendable)
- Ratcliffe Growth Fund (expendable)
- Teaching Congregation - First Allocation (expendable)
- Endowment Available to Spend (expendable)
- Opportunities Fund (expendable)

For expendable funds, both earnings and capital can be withdrawn. For endowed funds, only earnings may be withdrawn unless the congregation grants special permission to withdraw capital, as described in the by-laws.

The capital funds are segregated from the congregation's operating funds. Each fund is tracked individually and pooled into one investment account managed by a professional third-party investment manager. The manager, Alan Harman, is with a large, reputable investment firm (Scotia McLeod), and was chosen in 2008 through a formal evaluation and selection process. Criteria included commitment to Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) using a formal screening protocol (at this time, Jantzi Sustainalytics).

#### Membership

In 2017, the Funds Management Committee comprised: Nathan Cox (from May 2015), Wayne Lepine (from May 2016), David Priebe (from May 2017), Joe Clarke (Board Representative, from May 2016)

### Policy Compliance Framework

The management of the congregation's long-term capital funds is governed by the congregation's By-Laws, Financial Policies and Investment Policy. The committee has developed a series of policy monitoring tools to meet the by-law and policy requirements, and to report compliance to the Board. These tools are used based on the committee's annual Calendar of Activities.

The Investment Manager, in consultation with the FMC, creates an Investment Policy Statement reflecting the congregation's by-laws and policies. This document dictates how the Investment Manager will manage the investment account.

### Funds Management Committee Activity

On a monthly, quarterly and annual basis, the committee reviews the fund reporting received from Scotia McLeod for compliance and performance monitoring.

The FMC meets annually with Alan Harman, our Investment Manager at Scotia McLeod. We have reviewed the current composition and annual performance of the investment account and discussed the Investment Policy Statement. The FMC remains confident in Mr. Harman and recommends we continue to have him manage the congregation's long-term capital funds.

During 2017, the FMC completed its review of the benchmarks used to measure the overall performance of the portfolio and its guidelines on sector concentration for equities.

The existing policy stated: "The maximum weight of equities in any one of the ten S&P industry groups shall not exceed by more than 5% the weight for that S&P industry group in the MSCI World Index."

The FMC had three concerns with the existing policy:

- The MSCI World Index lacks screens for SRI, which we require.
- The MSCI World Index is an internationally weighted index, while our portfolio is invested primarily in Canadian securities.
- The 5% upper limit on equity sector weightings compared to the index was intended to promote diversification and reduce the risk of having "too many eggs in one basket." However, it could constrain a professional investment manager from actively managing sector risk and limit investments in sectors that offered greater reward and/or less risk.

After reviewing alternatives to the MSCI World Index, the FMC recommended adopting the widely recognized Jantzi Social Index as our portfolio's benchmark, as it is based on the Canadian market using SRI screens. Additionally, the FMC recommended that the sector concentration upper limit be increased from 5% to 10% greater than the weight for the industry group in the index. This would allow the Investment Manager greater latitude to actively manage sector risk, while still promoting a reasonable level of diversification.

The FMC recommended to the Board of Trustees that the existing sector concentration policy be amended to read: "The maximum weight of equities in any one of the industry groups shall not exceed by more than 10% the weight for that industry group in the Jantzi Social Index." The board adopted the policy change on March 14, 2017.

## Policy Compliance Issues

### *i. Industry Concentration*

The portfolio continued to be non-compliant in 2017 with the limit on the concentration of equities by industry sector as specified in the investment policies (6.3). Given that the Canadian economy is heavily dependent on natural resources, and Socially Responsible Investment policies significantly limit our access to that sector, our investment manager had slanted our portfolio towards Canadian financial institutions. At the FMC's request, the Board had temporarily suspended the policy requirement. However, following the update to the sector concentration policy, the board informed the Investment Manager of the new policy and requested that the portfolio be brought into compliance with the new policy within 12 months or less. The Investment Manager brought the portfolio into compliance with the new policy in January 2018 and it has remained in compliance since then.

### *ii. Operational Risk Management*

Once again, in 2017 we were extremely fortunate to have the continuing efforts of Kathy Thompson in maintaining her funds management spreadsheet and in compiling the figures presented in this report. Nonetheless, as expressed to the Board in previous years, the FMC continues to be concerned that such a critical financial management process is not integrated into the congregation's mainstream bookkeeping systems and processes with appropriate backup resources and quality control processes. Kathy is currently training the Finance the Bookkeeper on how to maintain the spreadsheet.

## Performance

In 2017, there was \$84,296 of income (realized gains) generated by the activity on the portfolio, plus \$74,426 unrealized gains due to an increase in the market value of the portfolio.

The Annual Net Return of the investment fund is the total of all interest, dividends, realized & unrealized gains & losses, less management fees for the calendar year. Each year we set a Target Annual Net Return of inflation plus 3.5%. For 2017, the Target was 5.00%. The Actual Annual Net Return was 12.61%, which exceeded our target and which was significantly better than the S&P/TSX Composite Index, which was up 6.51%.

We also set a Target 5 Year Annualized Return of annualized inflation plus 3.5%. For 2017, the Target was 5.04%. The Actual 5 Year Annualized Return was 7.80%, which exceeded our target and which was better than the S&P/TSX Composite Index at 5.88%.

## Distributions

The congregation has two types of long-term capital funds: expendable and endowed (see Section 1 for the list). For expendable funds, both earnings and capital can be withdrawn. For endowed funds, only earnings, not capital, may be withdrawn. Any use of withdrawn/distributed money is subject to the terms of each fund.

In calculating the amount available for distribution from the endowed funds, it is necessary to retain some of the earnings within the fund to prevent the value of the capital from eroding because of inflation. This adjustment for inflation becomes part of the capital going forward.

The Stabilization Amount for an endowed fund is defined as the difference between the market value and the real capital value of the fund. At the end of each fiscal year, for endowed funds other than the Endowment Fund, when the Stabilization Amount is positive, the entire amount

becomes Income to be Distributed. Otherwise, there is no Income to be Distributed. For the Endowment Fund, 80% of the Stabilization Amount becomes Funds Available to Spend and is no longer part of the fund. The remaining 20% remains in the fund.

## **Audited Financial Statements**

Complete audited financial statements for 2017 were signed off by our auditors, Grant Thornton, in May of 2018. No anomalies or issues for correction were raised during the auditor's report to the Board of Trustees.

Complete copies of the statements are distributed with the materials provided for the Annual General Meeting on May 27, 2018 and will be available via a link from First Light as well as in hard copy from the office on request.