

# 2017

YEAR IN REVIEW



Results through opening minds, filling hearts, and transforming lives.

# In This Issue...

<b>Spiritual Life Ministry</b> .....	3
By The Reverend Eric Posa	
<b>Community Life Ministry</b> .....	4
By Bonnie Guyer Graham	
<b>Faith in Action Ministry</b> .....	5
By Carol McKinley	
<b>Faith Development Ministry</b> .....	7
By Sara Lewis	
<b>Resource Ministry</b> .....	8
By Darlene Sarkela	
<b>Board of Trustees</b> .....	9
By Linda Selsor	
<b>Executive Functions</b> .....	11
By The Reverend Eric Posa	

**Our Staff Team:** *The Reverend Eric Posa, Interim Minister; Troy Fisher, Music Director; Sara Lewis, Director of Religious Education; Darlene Sarkela, Church Administrator; Bonnie Guyer Graham, Community Life Ministry; The Reverend Carol McKinley, Faith in Action Ministry; Marie Arensmeyer, Caretaker.*

**Board of Trustees** *(those who served in 2017): Linda Selsor, President; James Anest, Michele Hendrickson, Helen Henry, Don Melnick, Martha Nicoloff, John Tafejian, Wendy Tanner, and Fritz Wrede.*

**Olympia Unitarian  
Universalist Congregation**

2315 Division St. NW, Olympia, WA 98502  
(360) 786-6383 ♦ LiberalFaith@ouuc.org  
[www.ouuc.org](http://www.ouuc.org)





## Spiritual Life Ministry

THE REVEREND ERIC POSA, Accountable Person

Worship underwent changes in leadership in 2017. January–March, Rev. Perchlik led worship with much input from the

Worship Arts Team. The

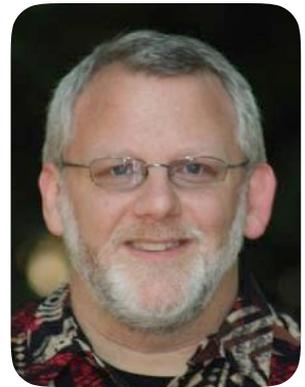
Team, chaired ably by Neil Marsh, stepped up in April–July, taking on more coordination in the wake of Rev. Perchlik’s leave-taking, though supported part of that period by Rev. Carol McKinley’s half-time “bridge ministry.” Since my arrival August 1, I have continued working with them as celebrants, and consulting with them on minor changes to worship, while also bringing numerous guest ministers to preach. (During ministerial transitions, I believe seeing multiple styles of & approaches to preaching is beneficial.)

The Pastoral Care Team is undergoing some shifts. After being directly minister-led for years, team member Bruce Bergquist stepped forward in spring

as primary point-of-contact person for pastoral concerns in the time between Rev. Perchlik and me.

My arrival has coincided with a growth milestone in the congregation: for the first time, OUUC’s membership surpassed 300 people in March 2018. Recognizing the growing complexity of serving members’ pastoral needs in a growing church, and also the minister’s reduced availability for direct pastoral visits as congregational needs increase, we are looking at instituting a chairperson for the team, and will continue to explore other changes as needed.

And, I am in communication with leaders of the Addictions Ministry Team about re-starting their service after some months of inactivity. I look forward to supporting their work. ✦



### OUUC Mission

**We are a liberal religious community that opens minds , fills hearts, and transforms lives.**

### OUUC Ends

- **We expand our knowledge, deepen our understanding, and strengthen and live our Unitarian Universalist identities.**
- **Our hearts are filled with experiences of wonder, awe, and connection to the spirit of life and love.**
- **People of all ages, identities, and circumstances are welcomed and connected in our loving community.**
- **The Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation responds to the needs of a changing congregation and world.**
- **Our lives and those of the larger community are meaningfully changed through our collaborative work for justice.**
- **We advocate for environmental justice and practice care for the earth.**



# Community Life Ministry

BONNIE GUYER GRAHAM  
Accountable Person

Community Life Ministry attends to the health of the congregation as a living, growing body. It

creates and maintains a congregational culture where all who step through our doors are welcomed, accepted, supported, and encouraged in their spiritual journeys. It develops and provides multiple pathways to strengthen and deepen participants' connection and commitment to their own growth, to one another, to OUUC, to Unitarian Universalism, and to the wider world, equipping all for leadership through discernment and development of their gifts.

We attend to the health of our congregation. Caring Friends email group, our way of providing opportunities for people to care for one another when they are in need, continues to make a difference. Our members and friends support each other through cancer diagnosis, loss of a loved one, surgery, giving rides to medical appointments and to church, countless cards, and pitching in to help a family move. Our volunteer part time Parish Nurse Ann Yeo, RN, MSN, effective March 2017, logged an average 6-8 hours per week as she promoted health and wellness in the congregation and offered personal support to members and friends of OUUC during health crises and life transitions.

Our Hospitality Teams and Coffee Teams provide a warm welcome each and every Sunday. Ask how you can join them. Our Family Ministry Team is reforming, focused on creating a welcoming culture for families of all ages. Our Membership Team started work on creating a new, up to date, meaningful membership class. It's offered twice a year for anyone interested.

Our social groups welcome all for conversation and a chance to make friends. Our auction provides many opportunities for people to get together over a meal, or go on an adventure together. Thanks to everyone



at the Auction, we were able to pay the UUA General Assembly registration for the four members who served as delegates from our Congregation.

And on to the world, our Partner Church Committee continues to communicate and share with our Partner Church in Kissolymos, Romania. They write: "I am glad that we are able to correspond with each other and hope that we can also personally embrace each other soon. When are you planning your next visit for? We are very much looking forward to it!

We wish everyone the best of health!

With love, Levente, Orsi, Kristóf and Eszter, as well as the Kissolymos congregation." ♦



*Recognizing those at OUUC who give their time and energy, our Leadership Development Team gave everyone in the congregation the opportunity to thank others at OUUC for all they do for one another and for the congregation.*



# Faith in Action Ministry

THE REVEREND CAROL MCKINLEY  
Accountable Person

OUUC's Faith in Action Ministry responds to the needs of our world through service, financial support, education, witness, and advocacy, creating meaningful

transformation in us and the world through collaborative work for social justice, environmental justice and care for the earth.

In 2017 we responded to those needs through programs and advocacy that addressed:

## Homelessness, Poverty and Hunger

Books, Beans and Brownies earned \$12,500 to benefit Interfaith Works Overnight Shelter, Community Youth



*Volunteers in community kitchen.*

Services shelter, Sidewalk, and Quixote Village; OUUC's Community Kitchen volunteer team of 24 prepared and served 16

Friday night dinners this year; OUUC volunteers each month hosted and prepared meals for Interfaith Work's Overnight Shelter; the holiday Giving Tree collected toys, diapers, and funds for the minister's benevolent fund; a food drive benefitted Thurston County Food Bank. An Out of the Woods Task Force was created to research and recommend options for the B&G Annex property next door to the church.

## Racism and Intolerance

Dozens of OUUC members participated in community acts of witness and protest, including the Olympia's Women's March, vigils to mourn mass shootings, refugee and immigrant bans, and anti-Islam policies. More than 50 attended the July and October "White

Supremacy Teach-Ins" at OUUC. From 20 to 80 people attended the monthly "Race in Film Series" and other workshops, and discussions addressing racism.

## LBGTQ Understanding

Welcoming Congregation Renewal program was approved and a team formed; Pride Parade drew a large OUUC contingent to march behind a new banner.

## Environmental Justice

Green Sanctuary's proposal for a January launch of the OUUC 2018 Year of Environmental Action was approved.

## Learning Right Relationship

Interfaith gatherings focused on historic marginalization and ongoing inequities of Native American neighbors. "Learning Right Relationship" became a program of Faith in Action Ministry in June.

## Share the Plate

\$15,442. was donated in 2017 to six local nonprofits serving our community.

## Guest at Your Table

\$1,200 was collected by OUUC youth to support the UU Service Committee's national and international work to advance human rights. ✦



*OUUC members marching on the Side of Love.*

## Faith in Action



*Middle school auction.*



*Faith in Action: Guest at your table.*

## Faith Development



*Food Bank service project volunteers.*



# Faith Development Ministry

SARA LEWIS, Accountable Person

OUUC's Faith Development Ministry expands knowledge, deepens understanding, and strengthens Unitarian Universalist

identity in people of all ages and circumstances.

- In 2017 we did this through:
- Serving approximately 120 children and youth with childcare, Sunday Religious Education Classes, Our Whole Lives sexuality education classes, Coming of Age, High School Senior Bridging, a weeklong Chalice Camp, and youth programming including retreats and camps
- Offering 43 unique classes for adult education, including a core UU educational series, membership classes, and classes covering other categories such as social justice, health and well-being, and spiritual practice with 179 registrants
- Holding small group ministry "Circles of the Spirit" for 50 participants, and then transitioning into a new small group ministry model with two Covenant Circles and one open Soul Matters

Discussion Circle meeting once a month.

### Fun Highlights:

- The children voted to work on homelessness for their annual service



Sunday morning youth religious education class.

project, created care packages and held a bake sale which raised \$180 for EGYHOP (Emma Goldman Youth and Homeless Outreach Project). They made a video about their project: <https://vimeo.com/218655752>.



2017 week-long Chalice Camp.

• Open and collaborative brainstorming sessions were held for lesson planning for the children's program, bringing additional opportunities for input and feedback to a larger group of interested parties.

• We held our first ever All-Day Bridging Retreat for our high school seniors as a chance to pause and reflect on the major life-transition of graduation and adulthood ✦



## Resource Ministry

DARLENE SARKELA  
Accountable Person

The Resource Ministry enables and supports the Mission and Ends of OUUC by providing essential infrastructure and resource management functions.

**Office:** One of the primary functions of the Resource Ministry is office administration. In 2017 office staff were continuing the transition to new church management software. We began using the new software for online giving. For the first time church members were able to login to their own accounts to donate, review donation records, and view tax statements. We also redesigned the weekly e-blast and some of our other publications.

**Buildings and Grounds:** The dedicated members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee accomplished much in 2017.

A major task was the management of the B&G Annex (the house next door to the church). The committee worked with the Board of Trustees to assess the condition of the house and to consider possible options for the building and property. Clean-up was a big job (it took five pickup loads and a large trailer). The empty building required regular checks (plus painting over tagging and repairing locks broken from break-ins).

Work in the main building included installing a hanging art system in the sanctuary, removing the old



*B & G Annex (house next door).*



speaker system, creating a mat to reserve wheelchair space, repairing rain gutters, adding a coat rack to the Commons, and balancing the heating system.

The ongoing work of maintaining the grounds continued. In 2017 this included installing a drain line, repairing fences, repainting stripes on the concrete steps, cleaning storm drains and the drainage swale, blowing leaves and debris, spreading bark, planting, and hiring a contractor to remove dead trees. We continued the Adopt-a-Plot program which involves many members caring for individual sections of the landscaping.

OUUC's children are enjoying a new playground. The members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee cleaned and primed concrete walls to prepare for the



*New playground and mural.*

painting of the mural, installed rubber mats, constructed a landscape wall, and arranged for a contractor to install the climbing log and timber rounds.

Maintaining the buildings and grounds is work for all of us and the Buildings and Grounds Committee provides the volunteer leadership to do all that work. Please help with whatever part you can. ✦



## Linkage Meetings for Info & Outreach

BY LINDA SELSOR, PRESIDENT

A considerable focus of your Board of Trustees this past year has been the establishment of a system of frequent and

regular linkage meetings with the congregation. This is in addition to our regular contact with the congregation through the weekly e-mail bulletins, both regularly scheduled and special congregational meetings and more informal conversations in the Commons. Linkage is the term used in the policy governance system to reflect the board's regularly planned and purposeful connection with the congregation for conversation around important topics for our congregational life together. Linkage meetings provide an opportunity for the board to provide information and updates and to hear from the congregation about their ideas and concerns.

Our monthly linkage meetings have included the topics of listening and conversing about: the future of the annex building; how to proceed with an anticipated budget shortfall; the roles of the congregation, the Board, and the Leadership Development Committee in the upcoming ministerial search process; thoughts about how best to use the money from the sale of the annex building; and reconnecting with the results of the 2017 linkage meetings where we fleshed out our Ends statements by focusing on our "hearts desires" for the future of our congregation. In the latter, we wanted to determine whether those results are still most important to the congregation in 2018. Future topics for linkage meetings include discussion of proposed bylaws changes; a question and answer session before the April annual meeting; "The Church of the Future"; and further opportunities for discussion about the ministerial search.

### Bridge Ministry

The Board assured continuity of pastoral services through a Bridge Ministry contract in May with the

Rev. Carol McKinley, searched for an Interim Minister and contracted with The Rev. Eric Posa beginning August first. The board also recruited, after consultation with our Accountable persons, a Transition Team to work with our Interim Minister.

### Annex Options

After initial exploration last year by a task group considering future use of the Annex and feedback from the congregation, the Board established a subgroup to explore steps necessary to sell the Annex. This led to a recommendation from the Board to sell the Annex which was affirmed by a two-thirds vote of the congregation. The Annex has sold and, again, after consultation with the congregation, the Board decided that the proceeds will support the search process, cover costs incurred in preparing the property for sale, and reduce our mortgage.

### Ministerial Search

The Board contracted with the UUA Regional Transition Office for consultation services during our upcoming search for a settled minister. We initiated the process of selecting search committee members in collaboration with the Leadership Development Committee (LDC) and the Transition Team. All members of the congregation have been contacted for recommendations on those among us who can best do that important work over the coming year. A subgroup consisting of representation from the LDC, Transition Team and the Board will screen applications and make recommendations to the board.

### Governance Policy Refinement

The Board began the work of refining Governance Policies by approving an Endowment Policy and revising the Monitoring Calendar for regular reports on how we are doing on work toward accomplishing



our Ends and staying within our policy guidelines.

### Budget Development

The Board approved a challenging budget for presentation to the Congregation after considerable work by our staff, the Finance Committee and Treasurer.

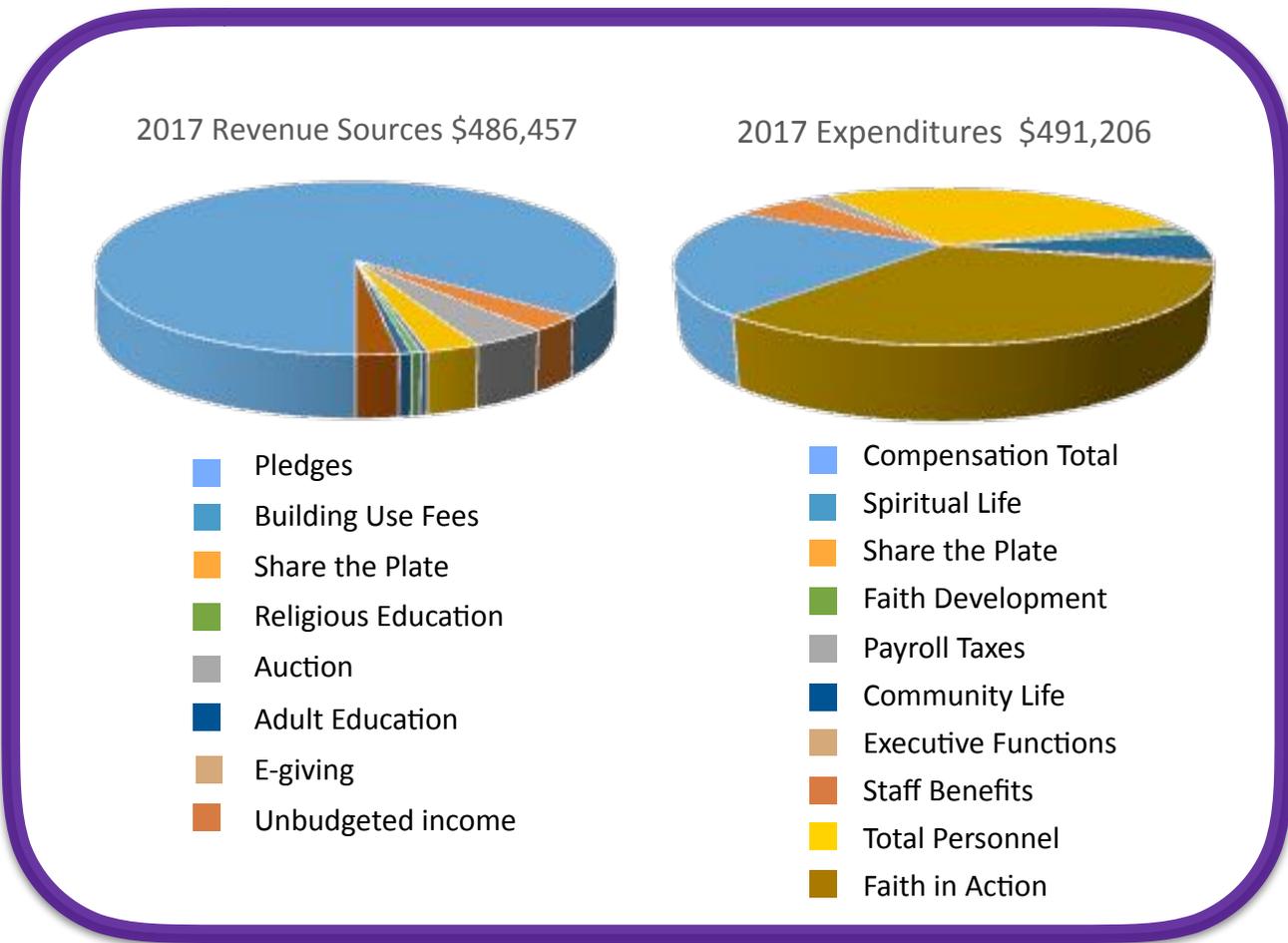
### Bylaw Revision

The Board prepared bylaws revisions for presentation to the Congregation at the April meeting that help clarify the role of the Minister as Head of Staff and Executive.

To accomplish this, the board added several retreats and work sessions to orient new members;

determine how best to engage the congregation (the genesis of monthly Linkage Meetings); review the Interim Minister's preliminary report and findings; conduct a Zoom update on reporting under policy governance with national consultant Laura Park; and, address concerns from congregants. In the process we developed a trusting and productive relationship with our Interim Minister.

It's been both a challenging and rewarding year that has deepened our commitment to work on behalf of the congregation and support one another in the process. ✦





## Executive Functions

THE REVEREND ERIC POSA  
Accountable Person

To say that 2017 was an eventful year at Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation, would be to diminish the complex set of

events, perceptions, interpretations, and emotions experienced by our various members. And also, the church achieved a great deal during this time and into early 2018.

As 2017 began, you were being served by Rev. Thomas Perchlik in his first year of ministry with you. That ministry ended in early April, with Rev. Perchlik's negotiated resignation after several people expressed concerns about his ministry while others had a very positive relationship with him. Unsurprisingly, his resignation and related agreement that was confidential between minister and board members, triggered some hurt feelings and distrust. That distrust particularly has been directed toward the Board of Trustees and the current "policy governance" model. That became clear at the September 2017 board meeting when 19 congregants shared "Expectations for finding a new minister" (their memo's title).

Since that commitment to confidentiality will not be violated under any circumstances, I will be interested to see to what extent forgiveness and trust re-building will be engaged by members and leaders. I gladly will serve as I can to facilitate such healing work. And I look forward to continuing work with the new board—work that has already begun—to fully implement all the principles of our new governance model, including a consistent and rigorous schedule for board monitoring of the minister's executive functions.

After Rev. Perchlik's departure, our own Rev. Carol McKinley stepped forward to serve ably as half-time "bridge minister" before my arrival on August 1st as full-time interim minister. The interim tasks included working with the Transition Team (Riley McLaughlin,



Jean Phillips, Sara St. Clair, Polly Taylor, and chair Kent Canny) to set meetings in my first five weeks with over

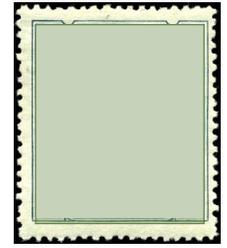
50 church leaders at various levels to gain insights into many church issues. We followed up in November with a series of fishbowl conversations that explored insights from multiple perspectives in the church. We also held a Congregational Conversation on March 18, 2018, that explored some of these surprises and hopes.

All this transitional work affirmed an overall positive regard for where OUUC is today. Given the history, size, location, and recent events of this congregation, all of the issues (positive & negative) you now face were quite normal and expected. The only surprise, as I've said before, was your high activity level. This almost 300-member church has the breadth and diversity of programming I would expect from a congregation of almost 400 members. Particularly notable throughout these transitions is how the ministries of the congregation continued, largely unfazed by the real, but relatively small-scale, conflict. That you sustain such levels of effective ministry is a testament to your commitment and energy, and bodes well for your future. ✦



**Olympia  
Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation**

2315 Division St. NW  
Olympia, WA 98502



# 2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

