

Annual Meeting Agenda
Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, Texas
January 22, 2012

Call to Order

Invocation

Approval of Minutes of December 12, 2011, Congregational Budget Meeting

Receipt of Reports

New Business

Board of Trustees proposal for the long-range plan for Emerson
Social Action Council proposal for disbursement of 10% of endowment gain

Elections

1. Nominations Committee
2. Committee on Ministry
3. Board of Trustees:
 - Larry Huelbig, 1 year term
 - Wilson Arabie, 1 year term
 - Rachel Shada, 3 year term
 - Jay Jackson, 3 year term
4. Vice President, Sherle Frost Watson
5. President, Larry Huelbig
6. Treasurer, Billye Smith
7. Assistant Treasurer, Liz Gammell
8. Secretary, Mary Pedersen

Adjourn

2011 Officers	Sarah Boyd, President Beth Hill, Vice President Janet Meininger, Past President
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Trustees	Barb Adams Wilson Arabie Larry Huelbig Larry Kelly J. Aaron Knight Robin Sickles Sherle Frost Watson
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Treasurer	Billye Smith
Asst. Treasurer	Liz Gammell

Board Secretary	Mary Pedersen
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Annual Report 2011

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Minutes
Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church
Annual Congregational Budget Meeting
Sunday, December 12, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 12:16 pm by President Sarah Boyd. It was determined that a quorum was present. Becky Edmiston-Lange gave an invocation. Copies of the budget were made available to those in attendance.

Sarah reviewed the process by which the current budget was prepared. Planned contributions, which constitute the largest share of our income, dropped from 71% in 2011 to 67% projected for 2012. In part this reflects the impact of the 10% Solution for the Social Action grants, but nevertheless there was a real decline in pledging. The main features of the 2012 budget are 1) no raises or new hires, 2) supplemental fundraisers to bring in an additional \$32,000, 3) an increase in expected special collections, primarily for Social Action projects, and 4) reduced transfer from the Endowment to fund the new DRE position.

On the expense side professional expenses, the Worship Committee, Committee on Ministry, Communications Committee, Caring Committee, Adult Education and covenant groups were all reduced. The DRE salary is less than in 2011 because of the changeover from Barbara Stoddard to Katy Carpmann. The Leap of Faith initiative is concluded and its functions will be assumed by other groups. SAC was reduced to \$1000 from \$4000 to be in line with our policy manual regarding SAC funding. The current policy states that SAC funds are to be used for operations and seed money to Emerson task forces and not for donations to non-profits. Sarah also noted that the UUSC line item should be grouped with other denominational expenditures as was pointed out last week by deForest Ralph. The office expects that we can reduce our electrical consumption somewhat but water use may continue to be a problem if the drought persists.

Sarah recognized Stewardship chair Richard Loftin who detailed the results of the canvass drive. He said the church lost one \$50,000 pledge that should have been considered a one-time gift. Several other members had to reduce their pledges due to the weak economy; we had 22% in decreases this year compared with 14% last year. In contrast a number of members increased their pledges, helping to offset the \$50,000 loss. The total now stands at \$512,000 with 12 pledges outstanding; Richard expects the final sum to be around \$525,000. Stewardship is considering several ideas for supplemental fundraisers including a big trash pick-up project (so much per pound), a golf tournament, a Valentine's Day Sweetheart Dance, and perhaps a second auction.

As a point of information Sarah briefly described Will Irwin's work on a revision of SAC's 10% Solution in which a percentage of the corpus rather than the market gain of the Endowment would be devoted to SAC projects. Citing increased support in the congregation for social action, he believes that changing to this formula would provide a steadier income stream.

Sarah then asked for a motion on the budget. Eric Watson **moved** that the proposed 2012 budget be accepted and Richard Loftin **seconded**. The floor was then opened to discussion. deForest Ralph cited the lack of membership growth and attendance at services and said we need "an explicit intention" for growth. He said that Susan Smith, SWUUC Director, said in 2007 that the Bay Area UU congregation was the only one in the Houston area that is growing, and he believes it is because of their emphasis on covenant groups.

Barbara Crotty asked for a clarification on the DRE salary, which Sarah and Vice President Beth Hill explained is based on UUA guidelines that take experience into account. Ben Withers asked how much it would take to bring our salaries up to "fair compensation" level; Finance chair Tony Collins said it would take about \$50,000 overall. deForest said that our compensation is generous for our area, though others disagreed. Membership chair Eric Watson thanked deForest for his comments on increasing membership and said his committee is working on that. Jack Shada asked about cutting personnel costs.

SAC co-chair Phil Richardson noted that pledges have been essentially flat for 10 years, and that the last time we had a surplus without an Endowment transfer was in 2008. On behalf of SAC he objected to cutting their line item expense from \$4000 to \$1000, citing the results of the recent SAC survey. He stressed that the operating budget is different from the 10% Solution money and that raised by special collections, which are designated for specific projects. Phil proposed an **amendment** that would restore SAC's line item to \$4000, to be paid for by a 15% reduction in expense accounts and the funding for both the Stewardship Dinner and the Leadership School. Susan Raffle **seconded** the amendment. Bonnie

Homier pointed out that the SAC operating budget is to be used for start-ups and that she feels that SAC needs to publicize their efforts more. Tony said that SAC's request was for \$10,000 which was cut to \$4000 by the Finance Committee. That sum included \$2000 for ongoing commitments, mainly the international scholarships through the UUA. The Committee had already cut discretionary spending by 10%, and the Board cut SAC further to \$1000. Gabe Gelb reminded the congregation of our statement of purpose, which includes the phrase "to build a better world." He said that SAC is our public face to the outside community as well as to our own visitors.

Sherle Frost Watson, Board member and Communications chair, said that the Communications Committee requested \$7400, which was reduced to \$2000. Although the expense of the NPR ads is gone, the Committee had other avenues of publicity in mind, especially an increased use of social media. The reduced level of funding will make that difficult if not impossible. She added that this kind of publicity is what brings people in the door.

David May said that Phil's amendment, by reducing professional expenses, goes against Emerson's Bylaws, which state that the terms of employment are to be set by the Board of Trustees. Betsy Gelb, serving as parliamentarian, said she had anticipated this point and consulted an employment lawyer; she agreed with David. David said that SAC is receiving other funds ten times the amount under dispute, and referred to previous years in which some members objected to any funding of social action through the operating budget. Attitudes have changed since then, but David said he is opposed to increasing the deficit to restore SAC's \$4000. Will Irwin pointed out that the 10% Solution money does not go to SAC. SAC chooses the recipients of that fund, which have to be agreed to by both the Board and the congregation. He also opposed Phil's amendment, and said he would add \$3000 to the deficit instead.

Richard Loftin said that Stewardship is willing to accept a decrease of \$4000 to be split equally between Communications and SAC. He said that a number of expenses of this year's canvass were privately donated and that alternative sources could be found again. Carole Huelbig **called the question** on Phil's amendment, which **did not pass**. Richard then proposed an **amendment** that Stewardship's budget, now at \$6000, be reduced by \$4000, with \$2000 each going to Communications and SAC. Carole **seconded**. After a brief discussion, David **called the question** on Richard's amendment, which **passed with one opposed**. Discussion then returned to the original motion as amended. There was some talk for and against referring the budget back to the Finance Committee. Board member Wilson Arabie remarked that it is hard to "make the numbers fit," and that we need further contributions and fundraisers. He added that we need to keep members as well as bring in new ones. Ken Salzman expressed some confusion over the sources for SAC's funding. Tony spoke to the need to have all sources reflected in the financial statement for transparency. He added that the church leadership has to generate a fall-back position to balance the budget if membership numbers don't improve. There being no more discussion, Sarah called for the vote on the motion as amended. It **passed with two opposed**. The congregation applauded Sarah's leadership and hard work on the budget issue. The meeting was adjourned at 1:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Pedersen, Board Secretary

2011 Annual Report - Co-Ministers Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange

This Sunday after church services were over there were four separate meetings going on: Communications Committee; Social Action Council; Southwest Conference Annual Meeting Planning Committee; and Introduction to Unitarian Universalism. It is not unusual to find 15 to 20 (or as on this past Sunday over 30) members of the congregation engaged in planning and decision making to accomplish the goals of the congregation. Emerson is a very busy place and your ministers are also very busy keeping up, cheerleading and advising.

Of course, you most routinely see us conducting worship on Sunday morning. That hour is central to what we do as your ministers. Preparation for worship and coordinating all the moving parts that go into the worship service make up the largest parts of our concentrated effort. We intend with that hour to provide timely information from a Unitarian Universalist perspective that helps us all make sense of our lives, celebrate our joys, mourn our losses, and chart a positive pathway ahead.

Yet much of what we do as ministers is not that obvious. After all, what do any of us know of another's profession unless we perform the services of that profession ourselves? It is easy enough to imagine that we provide counseling to members of the congregation. Less visible is the fact that, for instance, we meet with every committee where it is possible for us to do so. Since many committees now meet at the same time, as with this past Sunday, we will miss some. Some are surprised at the amount of time we devote to these meetings but we regard ourselves as church program consultants and seek to augment Emerson's very impressive lay leadership with our wide ranging experience. We do know a lot about churches, about Unitarian Universalism, and about the wider resources available to Emerson from the Unitarian Universalist Association. We never seek to trump what lay leaders know – only augment with suggestions about what we think might be productive avenues to pursue. As mentioned above, the level of leadership by volunteers in the congregation is simply outstanding.

Every year, in conversation with Board of Trustees, we also select several emphases for our ministry which we believe are important to Emerson's overall success as a congregation. This past year our first goal was working with the DRE search committee to bring an outstanding candidate to Emerson as our new Director of Religious Education. In addition, once that selection was made, we felt it was also important to support the start up and integration of that new director into the life of Emerson.

We feel that the Search Committee hit a home run. Years of preparation and planning do not always pay off – this time they did. We are also very pleased with how well Katy Carpmann has stepped into her role and we believe the program will continue to thrive and grow as she utilizes her talents to support the great leadership of the Religious Education Committee and teaching staff.

Our second goal was supporting the Leap of Faith Team in their efforts to provide suggestions for Emerson's capacity to attract and integrate new members of the congregation. The Team's work has been outstanding and we would like to especially thank Linda Condit, Mark Andersen, Holly Gilliland, Sarah Boyd, Nancy Lipp and Ben Withers for their work on this team. Many of the suggestions the team have made, such as the development of Building Your Own Theology course, have already been implemented. The road map the team has outlined for the future of Emerson has a great deal of promise. The continued development of the Membership Committee is an important component of that road map. Another element which has already been implemented is the "Join Emerson Sunday" in which the benefits and obligations of being a member are explained to individuals on one Sunday a month after church.

In addition, it was time this past year to train new members of the Lay Pastoral Ministry Team. The training was held last spring and resulted in three new Lay Pastoral Ministers. (We also trained 5 individuals from the Northwoods UU Church who wanted to start this program in their own church.) LPMT continues to be a very important part of Emerson's life as a congregation.

A fourth goal was working with our new Music Director Bonnie Wellington in building up and integrating the performing arts program at Emerson. With Bill Atkerson's first year as the paid Director of the Intergenerational Orchestra, as well as the development of the Emerson Players, the congregation now has a very full performing arts calendar. It is very

important to us that each of the parts view itself as one element of a larger whole, Emerson Church; and that the demands of each element of such a busy schedule complement one another. One thing is certain; we are in desperate need of more volunteers with the Audio Visual Team. The occasions when we need assistance with sound production has increased dramatically – more than the current volunteers can meet without putting their marriages or jobs in jeopardy!

The fifth goal was continuing our efforts on behalf of Social Action at Emerson and in the wider community. Emerson's profile in the community continues to grow because of steady and persistent efforts by the leadership and members of the Emerson congregation. So, for example, Mark was interviewed by Channel 11 news because they felt that the Emerson congregation was a reliable source for commentary. Becky led the invocation at this year's Crop Walk because, once again, Emerson's level of participation was outstanding. (Emerson provides 10-15% of the walkers for the entire city).

A new year stretches out before us. We have goals for this coming year as well (working with the Membership, Adult Education and Spring Conference Committees as well as the Social Action Council to support these important elements of Emerson's life. In addition we will be working with the Board of Trustees in developing a plan for a capital campaign to address several of our pressing capital needs. There are other emphases, such as the Coordinating Council's task force on Governance, which we believe will also create important additives for Emerson's effectiveness at meeting our statement of identity and purpose: to be the beloved community of faith, reason, and affection that welcomes all to grow in mind and spirit was we build a better world.

We want to thank the fantastic staff at Emerson. They are all gems and the congregation derives great benefit from the services of such energetic and talented people. And finally, we are also very grateful for the many lay leaders who make Emerson the vigorous congregation that we so enjoy. The Board of Trustees is simply outstanding – and our President, Sarah Stoffer Boyd – what a delight.

With Faith, Reason, and Affection,
Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange

2011 Annual Report - President's Report to the Congregation Sarah Stoffer Boyd

2011 has been a busy year at Emerson and the Board of Trustees has worked to advance the goals of the church. I have also written to the congregation each month in order to communicate on a regular basis what the Emerson events, issues, problems and achievements are.

Katy Carpmann joined our staff in August as Director of Religious Education and is bringing her skillful leadership to our youth and children, and creating a compelling program for them. Thank you to an excellent Search Committee, chaired by Kim Coolidge, for its hard work and successful conclusion. In November, Jennifer Nichols of the SWUUC District Office conducted a welcoming workshop for Katy where we laid out the background and the goals for our RE program. Jennifer led the attendees through exercises to learn what our UU youth look like, what the needs of our RE director are and what our challenges are.

Work continued on the Leap of Faith (LoF) project with the goal of growth in membership. Emerson was invited to join as one of eight aspiring congregations in the country. This UUA initiative, started in October of 2010, partnered Emerson with Cedar Lane UU Church in Bethesda MD. We exchanged visits and learned how to increase our explicitness around our faith. The LoF team has reported to the Board of Trustees, recommending three areas for change; adopting the AIMS format in congregational activities, changes in the governance structure of our committees, and the hiring of a part time membership coordinator and a part-time RE assistant in the next 3-5 years. The Leap of Faith (LoF) team accumulated many ideas for change during our partnership with Cedar Lane Church in Bethesda. Most of the ideas are incremental changes that can help us be more explicit in our faith. These ideas have been turned over to relevant committees, many of which have already begun implementing them. In addition, all reports are posted on the Emerson Web site.

The 2011 Jungle Safari Service Auction was a great success thanks to the leadership of Nancy Lipp and our volunteers. The auction also raised funds through a Fund A Need auction item to improve accessibility in our sanctuary. The pews

were cut down in four places to make room for wheelchairs and walkers, the carpet and molding was replaced, and soon, handrails will be installed leading to the chancel.

The Endowment Fund increase provided over \$45,000 for grants to qualified organizations through the 10% solution. These grants will provide much needed support to several non-profits in the Houston area. The awards are to be voted on at our annual meeting. Thank you to the awards evaluation team for their hard work at choosing the organizations that best reflect our UU values.

The board of trustees met in retreat four times, completing work on the long-range plan to be voted on at the annual congregational meeting. The May retreat was a special open meeting with Susan Smith. Susan brought the concept of taking the “balcony view” to Emerson and encouraged us to become more visible and to be more representative of the Houston community and its demographics. At the October retreat, the board outlined their goals for 2012. These include supporting the committees, the Leap of Faith recommendations, and also studying the use of the endowment fund, developing a process for handling the balloon payment in June of 2014, and analyzing the needs of Emerson and their costs.

This fall, Karen Van Horn, Larry Huelbig, Larry Kelly and I met with our Frost Bank representatives and discussed our ongoing relationship. There is every indication that Emerson will be in good shape to refinance if necessary. Treasurer Billye Smith and Assistant Treasurer Liz Gammel and Karen Van Horn have created new reporting forms that will facilitate this as well.

The 2011 budget called for a planned use of \$35,000 from the endowment for our new professional DRE. The year 2011 ended with a small surplus that will be rolled in the 2012 operations. New member contributions came in at 116% of planned, while planned contributions fell short at 95%. The summer time cash flow loan from the endowment has been repaid. On the expense side, the facilities costs were high due to the heat and drought. Several trees had to be removed and the sprinkler system repaired. Our total account balances, including the endowment funds, increased \$114,221 in 2011. The annual budget meeting was held on December 11, 2011. Billye Smith prepared the budget presentation and it should be noted that the budget is not balanced. The deficit will be addressed with increased fund raising, cost containment and increased income from leasing if possible.

Thank you to Janet Meininger, Past President and Beth Hill, Vice President for their support this year. Janet has been my mentor and advisor. Beth has led the Coordinating Council and although her job does not permit her to be our next president, I feel certain that her leadership will continue to serve Emerson well. I also want to thank outgoing trustees Janet Meininger and Robin Sickles for their contributions and service. My fellow trustees are all outstanding Emersonians and dedicated volunteers. They have greatly contributed to all of the work of the church this year. With board meetings, committee meetings and lots of homework, they are the source of our achievements. I would also like to acknowledge all of the members and friends for their volunteer work for Emerson. I cannot begin to list you here, but without your passions and devotion, Emerson would be a very different place. Thank you. I would like to acknowledge too, the committee chairs, both those who have completed their terms and those who are continuing to serve.

The staff has been a joy to work with and provided good advice along with tremendous service. I especially want to thank Becky and Mark for their encouragement and wisdom as I needed, Karen and Molly for their efficient and timely reports and information, Bonnie, Anita and Bill for inspiration, and Efrain for his ever cheerful help.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Stoffer Boyd

January 6, 2012

Annual Report 2011 – Financial Report
Billye Smith, Treasurer

Please see separate insert.

2011 Annual Report - Business Administrator
Karen Van Horn

2011 offered me many opportunities to get to know members of Emerson either in person, over the phone or by email. Thank you, Emersonians, for many years of continuous support.

Facility Usage

Emerson UU continues to be the “home-away-from-home” for the Houston Feldenkrais Training Program. The group will be training in Westwood Hall three times a year – May, September, and November – until their graduation in December 2013. Emerson hosted the 2011 Bioneers Conference November 11th and 12th.

Tanglewood Academy led by director, Glenda Lane, renewed their contract as did the Rebels Investors Group, Professionally Speaking Singles Toastmasters, and The Houston Tuesday Musical Group. Guitar Houston and UniTunes held their concerts at Emerson. Numerous neighborhood homeowners’ associations held meetings in WWH.

Emerson itself a very busy community; some of its usage included monthly board meetings, board retreats, coordinating council meetings, PAC theater events, sustainable potluck and movie series, solstice celebrations, spring auction, teacher training, recurring committee meetings and numerous one-time events. Responsibility for event set-up/clean-up is primarily handled by Efrain Vasquez, weekday/evening sexton, and Hans Coster, Sunday sexton.

Facility Maintenance

The heat and drought last year proved to be our major facility issue. Requiring additional watering, repairs to the sprinkler system and tree removal.

Routine/non routine maintenance included the following:

- Plumbing repairs, including repairs to the sprinkler system
- Sanctuary A/C repairs
- Appliance repairs
- Carpet Cleaning
- Lawn Maintenance
- Dead tree removal

Administrative

Assisted with the transition from the interim DRE to our full time DRE, Katy Carpman. Just prior to Katy’s hiring, three, much needed, Hewlett Packard computers were purchased for the office staff replacing machines that were six years old. Emerson member, Sigsby Rusk, installed them for us. Thank you Sigsby!!

Without the new machine, Molly Martin, Office Administrator for Communications, would not have been able to develop Emerson’s new website. Hopefully, you have visited it at www.emersonhouston.org.

Listed below are some areas of my responsibility:

- Attend monthly Board of Trustees meetings
- Attend staff meetings and retreats
- Maintain personnel files
- Perform Background checks
- Maintain all financial records and provide monthly reports to the Board of Trustees, Finance and Social Action Committees
- Maintain membership records according to Membership Database Procedures
- Perform end of year UUA certification
- Provide assistance to staff and members

In addition, I assist with the master calendar, negotiate lease renewals, schedule equipment maintenance, program the computerized HV/AC system, supervise the Office Administrator for Communications, sextons and respond to emails.

Emerson members, Mary Ann Stanley, Jill Rose, Nancy Lipp, Karen Tidholm, and Ann Goodman volunteer their time to provide assistance in administrative areas of the church. Nancy Lipp also delivers the Emersonian to the post office. Rita Loucks, Dana Bays, and others volunteer with folding the Emersonian.

Tom McDuffie continues to provide Efrain Vasquez, weekday sexton, with his Wednesday handyman guidance Thanks to all of you for volunteering at Emerson!!

Again this year, I wish extend my thanks to Emerson's Board of Trustees, Co-ministers, Becky and Mark, Molly Martin, Katy Carpmann, Bonnie Wellington, Efrain Vasquez, and Hans Coster for their continued support.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Billye Smith, Treasurer, and Liz Gammell, Assistant Treasurer, for their assistance.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Van Horn
Business Administrator

2011 Annual Report - Director of Music Bonnie Wellington

The year 2011 proved to be a diverse and productive one for the Performing Arts Department. Performances from each group within the organization set a new and higher standard than the year before, and the department as a whole is stronger than it has been in years. Musical performances from outside musicians along with collaborative performances within the department have made Emerson both more diverse and simultaneously more unified.

With the support of the congregation, we were able to bring onto the staff roster long time Emerson Intergenerational Orchestra Director, Bill Atkerson. Having supported the musical life at Emerson for over a decade, Bill has continued to develop the 'unique to Emerson' orchestra. Although the number of attendees in the spring was appearing to wane, this turned around in the fall. The number of participants is back up, and their performances this past fall proved to be some of the best sounds to have ever come out of the group; Bill's arrangement of *The Killer B's* (combination of music by Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, Brahms's Symphony No. 4 and Bach's Double Violin Concerto) was just fantastic and displayed a new level of musicianship within the orchestra.

The Worship Committee continues to support the Performing Arts at Emerson, and the 2011 Summer Worship Series proved to be a fantastic collaboration between the members of the Worship Committee and the Performing Arts Department leadership. The music performances during this period were appropriate to the services, and yet varied wildly in style and culture of origin. The goal was to have music during the summer months be just as present and as high a quality as during the normal Worship Season. Emerson instrumentalists, vocalists, and guest musicians including those versed in Indian Raga music stepped up to the plate, adding to the musical buffet last summer.

We said goodbye to two of our beloved section leads, Jessica Jones-McCann and Abigail Levis, and welcomed in two new talented staff singers, Ashley Neumann and Mary Brook Quarles. We welcomed back our Head Section Lead, Adrian Rodriguez who tirelessly takes on additional responsibilities, assisting the department in continual growth. Adrian was instrumental in wetting the musical pallet of the Religious Education Department, and helped take on mentoring Suoni Dolci. We have been tremendously blessed as a Department and as a Congregation to have such talented and dedicated lead singers.

The Emerson Players gave two stellar performances in 2011: *Love Letters* directed by Ken McLeod, and *Varney the Vampire*, directed by Hilary Henderson. Each of their performances this past year included members from multiple generations, with volunteers and staff alike participating. With each production one can see the attention to costume and

set design, and a deeper connection to the craft of acting. The Players also agreed to begin participating in Worship Services. Volunteers from the Players gave us their first ever ‘performed prayer,’ during Sunday Worship this past November. There was a time there that many weren’t sure if the Players would be able to move forward after the tragic loss of the much beloved Emerson Players Founder, Don Whittaker. Not only have the players risen from the ashes and honored Don’s memory, they have etched out and established their place here at Emerson, making them an invaluable part of the Department.

The Choir and Suoni Dolci continue to represent from the vocal side of the house. The Fall season began somewhat rocky for the Suoni Dolci, with their long time leader Anita Butt taking a much needed break. However, with their eagerness to learn, and with Adrian Rodriguez agreeing to come on as their new mentor, Suoni Dolci continues to progress. They started the season by performing *Nine to Five*, having learned the song in a way they had never practiced before: by ear only!

The Choir gave beautiful performances over the past year including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Vesperae solennes de confessore, K.339*, an all-time achievement for the choir, and *A Holiday Review: Manger Danger*, a home grown musical production that brought together numerous facets of the Performing Arts and Religious Education Departments, another all-time achievement. The working up of Mozart’s *Vespers* was incredibly challenging. Musically and technically, it was one of the most difficult pieces the Choir had ever performed. It was a testament to their dedication and love for the art of musical worship. The *Holiday Review* was something so special; written by Emerson’s own Andrew Hager, stage direction by Hilary Henderson, children’s music directed by Adrian Rodriguez, RE music coordination from Katy Carpmann, Emerson Players acting, fantastic solos from section leads, strong playing from previously known as *Waldo* band members and guest talent, the Choir singing and dancing, volunteer stage management, costume design, sleigh bells, donuts, lights, camera, action....I think you get the idea that it was *a lot* to put together. But, what a wonderful display of the Emerson community coming together to make something wonderful, unique, and funny! And, we made it ourselves. We are learning to come together and share the load, and in the end, the load turns out to be uplifting. With Suoni Dolci, the Choir, and the other musical ensembles rotating performance responsibilities throughout the Worship calendar, they are each able to provide a higher level of performance, and subsequently are able to get more out of their performances themselves. The ministers continue to provide valuable guidance and *trust* in the performing members and Department Staff. Kevin Crotty and Xavier Keys volunteered to assist with their instrumental talents on a regular basis, adding yet another dimension to the musical landscape. Each and every single week of the year the Audio Visual team continues to plunge ahead and work with our funny patchwork AV system and board....they’re in serious need of some extra volunteers by the way ;) We are so very blessed to have such a talented and tireless group of volunteers and staff. Goals for the future: continue to share and integrate each facet of the Performing Arts Department on a more regular basis, allowing more visibility into the depth and varied talents of the organization.

Yours in Musical and Performing Arts Faith,
Bonnie Wellington
Director of Music – Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church

2011 Annual Report - Director of Religious Education Katy Carpmann

Emerson is, indeed, an impressive congregation and I have been most impressed by everyone’s kindness and patience as I get to know the congregation. Molly Martin and Karen Van Horn make the administrative side of things a joy and Mark and Becky Edmiston-Lange are stalwart sources of wisdom and support. The RE Committee is a fun and committed group of people. This is the first job I’ve had where I actually look FORWARD to meetings.

Our Sunday School is dynamic and growing. Registration is roughly the same as last year, but attendance is up and we are seeing many new families. Many thanks to Jill Rose, who has spent countless hours helping to get RE registration data integrated into our church management software, and to Molly Martin who has helped to improve our RE webpages and publications.

The high school youth group (YRUU, for Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) continues to grow, with thirty-seven registered- many Sundays they run out of couch space! The wisdom, commitment, and deep caring of the youth give me great hope for the future of Unitarian Universalism and the world as a whole. Our middle school group is also thriving,

and we're making connections with Interfaith Ministries as part of our Neighboring Faiths study. Downstairs we've got excellent curricula and just plain fun for four different classes from preschool through fifth grade, and each of these groups is bonding and learning together. I encourage everyone to walk by any Sunday to witness the wonder of our children and youth.

We are working hard not only to have an excellent Sunday School program, but to create opportunities for the children to worship, to serve, and to celebrate with the entire congregation. We have been blessed by the dedication of Adrian Rodriguez bringing musical experiences into our 10 AM hour and encouraging us to all sing and perform together. We have included social action projects in our lessons and in special one-off occasions- I look forward to more cooperative projects as we build the beloved community.

I am sustained and encouraged by the amazing volunteers of Emerson- we have nearly fifty teachers, nine Coming of Age mentors, innumerable assistants, special events staff, and class parents- all pitching in for visions far grander than any one of us could imagine. It is my firmly held belief that we are all teachers and we are all learners- age is only a matter of creative pedagogy!

Given that I've only been here since August, I urge you to take the time to read the RE Committee report also included in this packet. There you will find more highlights of the RE program, as well as additional statistics.

Respectfully submitted,
Katy Carpmann

2011 Annual Report - Committee on Ministry
Co-Chairs: Valerie Blair and Edna Kelly

Members: Valerie Blair, Dick Cheney, Rachel Shada, Edna Kelly, Kris Taylor, Mark and Becky Edmiston-Lange. We were sorry that Rachel found it necessary to resign from the committee in the summer.

Description of Committee: This Committee shall promote and facilitate the ministry of the church, including but not limited to the relationship between the Senior Minister(s) and the congregation. Article V, Section E of Emerson Church's Constitution

The Committee on Ministry continued to work on moving the congregation toward greater participation in "shared ministry." Our ongoing efforts in this regard included:

- Participating in the Leap of Faith process by 1) meeting as a committee with the team from Cedar Lane UU Church, 2) meeting with the Leap of Faith chair, and 3) beginning to identify ways that the Committee on Ministry can support the implementation of Leap of Faith recommendation to "Make the UU faith more explicit in our congregation and in our daily lives."
- Providing "Spotlight on Ministry" articles for the monthly *The Emersonian*. Spotlights included RE teachers, Caring Committee, choir, office volunteers, Coming of Age mentors, ushers, intergenerational orchestra, stewardship, Lay Pastoral Ministry, Board of Trustees. (SEARCH Sandwich Makers and Covenant Groups were featured in 2010.)
- Featuring material from the "Spotlights" on the video screens in the Gathering Place.
- Extensive study and research regarding the need, potential and feasibility of a system for providing short term care for Emerson members, such as meals or transportation.
- Supporting the formation of a task force to design a behavioral covenant for Emerson.

Prepared by Edna Kelly, Co-Chair of the Committee on Ministry

January 8, 2012

Bios for 2012 Nominees

FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Larry Huelbig: Larry is an incumbent member of the Board of Trustees appointed in 2011 to fill a one-year vacancy. Upon request of the Board he is nominated for one additional year.

Wilson Arabic: Wilson is an incumbent member of the Board of Trustees elected in 2011 for one year. With concurrence of the Board, he is nominated for one additional year.

Rachel Shada: "I began attending Emerson Church in 2006 with my husband, Jack, and my son, Walter. My daughter, Wendy, joined us in 2007. Our family became members in 2006. For the past four years I have been a member and co-chair of the Emerson Worship Committee. I have also been involved in the Social Action Council, the Committee on Ministry and our religious education program. I have over ten years of experience in non-profit groups and higher education emphasizing health communications, community health and community empowerment."

Jay Jackson: "Jay Jackson and his wife, Barbara Waugh, started attending Emerson with their two children in 2006. Although that was their first exposure to the UU faith, they found a spiritual home and became members later that year. Since joining, Jay and Barb have taught a variety of classes in the religious education program. Jay joined the Religious Education Committee in 2008, served as chair of the committee 2009-2011, and represented RE on the Coordinating Council. In 2010-11, Jay was a member of the DRE Search Committee. Jay works for ExxonMobil and has lived in Houston for 20 years."

FOR COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY:

Kay Bergen: "Kay has been a member of Emerson Church since 1978 (with several years away in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she attended All Souls UU). She was a religious education teacher for many years while her children were growing up. She has led several adult workshops on grief and loss and most recently received training to facilitate the Adult OWL program. Presently, Kay serves on the Lay Pastoral Ministry Team. Kay retired from the position of Bereavement Coordinator at Houston Hospice, but still facilitates a grief group twice a month as a volunteer. She holds a BA in sociology from the University of Texas at Austin. She is married and has two children and three grandchildren."

Barbara Crotty: "Barbara has been a member of Emerson since 1989. During that time she has participated as a children's religious education teacher, an usher and a member of numerous committees. She has served on the Board of Trustees and the Stewardship Committee, as well as serving six years as coordinator of the Lay Pastoral Ministry Team. She has sung with the choir for over ten years. She is married to Kevin and has two adult children, Sean and Colleen, who grew up attending Emerson Church. A registered nurse, she works as a lactation consultant and the Coordinator of Childbirth and Parenting Education at The Women's Hospital of Texas."

Ken McLeod: "Ken has been a Unitarian Universalist since 1977 and the Director of Religious Education for seven years at the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge. He served on the Southwest District RE Committee for four years and completed the RE Renaissance program. Further, he was invited by the UUA as one of a dozen evaluators of denominational attitudes toward GLBT persons, an initiative that led to the Welcoming Congregation program.

Ken has been a member for two years, but has attended for 4-5 years. He chaired the 50th Anniversary Committee, was an organizer of the Welcome MAT film series, and is a member of the Lay Pastoral Ministry Team. He is trained to facilitate the Adult OWL curriculum and directed the Emerson Players in LOVE LETTERS. He is a Licensed Social Worker with a private practice and was formerly an Associate Professor Theater. "

FOR NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Vanessa Morales Knight: "Vanessa has attended Emerson Church since 2004 and has been a member since 2005 with her husband Aaron and their two children, Ben (11) and JoJo (7). She has served on the Early Childhood Committee, the Religious Education Committee, and is an active member of the Emerson Players. She is a second generation Houstonian

and a UU since 1998. She is a lawyer by profession, but would much prefer to be a *bon vivant* -- or perhaps a chanteuse."

Karen Tidholm: "I grew up in Oklahoma City in a large family very committed to our Methodist Church. I graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a BS in Medical Technology. As a young adult, I was drawn to the Unitarian faith. I became a member of Emerson in 1982 and knew right off that I was among kindred spirits. As my three daughters grew up, I was very active in religious education. Later, I served on the Board of Trustees, and most recently on the Membership Committee. After many years of being a stay-at-home mom, I now enjoy part-time work in an antique shop. I am often out of town visiting family, from my 83 year old mother to my four month old granddaughter."

David Bates: "David and his wife, Katherine, have been members of Emerson since 1982, except from 1990-1998 when they lived in Dallas, where they were members of Horizon UU Church. David is a past president of the Board of Emerson and has served as an adult leader of LRY, an RE teacher and a mentor in the Coming of Age program. He has served on the Membership Committee, the Nominations Committee, the Personnel Committee and the Board of Trustees. He currently serves on the Worship Committee. David is a Partner in the law firm Gardere Wynne Sewall LLP."

David Bergt: "Dave is 68 and, along with his wife, Jeannine, and children, Amber (9) and D'Andre (5), has been with us at Emerson for the past five years. Dave is well travelled, both geographically and theologically. Before landing in Houston many years ago, his "faith journey" began as a Lutheran (his Dad was a Lutheran missionary in Japan), dabbled in Christian Science, moved on to Presbyterianism and now has found a home in Unitarian Universalism. In the past four years, Dave has served on the Religious Education and Ushering committees and is a regular participant in two of the Emerson book groups."

2011 Annual Report - Adult Religious Education Committee **Co-Chairs: Norbert Welk and Robin Sickles**

Committee members following retirement of Ken Salzman & Mary Ann Stanley on June 30, 2011: Megan Evans, Robin Sickles (Board Liaison & co-Chair), Norbert Welk (co-Chair) and Dr. Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange (Advisor and Spiritual Mentor).

Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision: Emersonians living their lives based on UU principles.

Mission: Provide intellectually and spiritually stimulating programs supporting UU principles.

Chair retires: Ken Salzman, having served as committee chair for the Adult RE Committee for 6 years, declared in Jan. his intention to retire at the end of June, 2011. **Mary Ann Stanley**, a major contributor to the committee for the last 6 years, will retire from the majority of her functions at that time, continuing her contribution putting out the monthly Adult RE brochure of activities. She will also repeat her class on UU history in the fall.

Adult RE Committee continued our popular offering of 'classes' following a 'small group discussion' format on the 3rd Sunday of each month, labeled "Exploration Sunday". The dedicated leaders/facilitators of these groups are Ann May, Carolyn Truesdell (2 years each), Nancy Lipp, & Barbara Stoddard. Barbara Stoddard's class was canceled in Jan. due to lack of participation. Thank you for your valuable contribution to the Adult RE program. The 'Sunday morning Speaker's Series' continued apace.

The **MultiGenerational Class "Gather the Spirit"**, focusing on the critical function of **Water** in our lives continued in the spring, using a new UUA curriculum, and facilitated by Barbara Stoddard. This class was offered on the 2nd Sunday in place of an Adult RE program.

Once again, we were honored with a 2-part series by our own Laura Emerson, a generous contributor to the Adult RE program.

The Welcome MAT program, a monthly program showing movies dealing with various aspects of the GLBT life style, continued this year. Started as a demonstration of our commitment to our status as a Welcoming Church, it has drawn a

few outsiders into our facilities. Unfortunately, attendance has dropped off to the point where, at one session, the author was the only attendee. The format is being reviewed with the intent of dropping the movies, substituting 4 Adult RE sessions next church year.

The Adult RE presentation on the Adult OWL offering drew a limited response of interested adults. Kay Bergen and Ken McLeod were to lead the program but in the fall it was decided that interest was too limited for the evening time slots proposed and it was decided not to pursue the program until a larger class could be constituted.

Once again Judy Richardson stepped forward, and, with the able assistance of Phyllis Burchfiel and Pam Lewis (Dreamworks, '08-'09), has developed a 5 part series on Women at Midlife starting their monthly presentations on the 2nd Sunday, in Jan., 2011. Taking pre-registrations in order to insure a manageable turn out, the course was rapidly over-subscribed, resulting in a waiting list for the next offering. When the course concluded in May, there was significant interest in it being repeated in the fall.

A report on the Adult RE aspects of the Leap of Faith program, a mutual mentoring program with the Cedar Lane church in Bethesda, MD, indicated the extensive activities included under Adult RE at their church which are handled separately at Emerson; i.e., circle dinners, covenant groups, continuing education classes (when LLU was still here), etc. This expansion was suggested as something worth exploring by Emerson's Adult RE Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Ken Salzman, Chair

New Committee Leadership: The Adult RE Program began the new Church year in September with new leadership and a full slate of Adult programs through the year. Norbert Welk and Robin Sickles (co-chairs) took over for Ken Saltzman. It was only appropriate that it took two people to do the job that Ken had done so remarkable well for these many years.

The theme of presentations in the fall focused on church governance, the long term strategic planning of the church's resources, and how our beloved community can recognize and embrace diversity, beginning with diversity among our current members in regard to age and attendant concerns and values that may be age dependent.

Based on recommendations by the **Leap of Faith program** we continued the dialogue on how the many programs within Emerson that provide spiritual fellowship for its adult members may be viewed in a larger educational context.

We continued and add to the many of the spring programs as the grass roots efforts of our congregants to provide their own inspiration for programming continued with the "Explorations Sunday" on the third Sunday. A new group lead by Mary Ann Stanley utilized UUA educational materials to study UU history. The "Women at Mid-life" program continued to meet on the 2nd Sunday at the same time as our regularly programmed Sunday Adult RE. Mark Edmiston-Lange oversaw the Thursday evening six week program "Building Your Own Theology," which ran for two hours on six consecutive Thursdays (September 22-October 27) and attracted more than 20 people. The facilitators for this program were Kenneth Jones, Sally Phillips, Holly Gilliland, and James Dean.

In the fall Emerson changed its offering schedule for the Youth RE classes to coincide with the regular 11:00 service. Thus those adults with children who often may have come early to drop off their children and stay for the 10:00-10:45 ARE programs came instead directly to the services. Monthly attendance numbers for the calendar year 2011 compiled by Mary Ann Stanley for the ARE programs discussed above are:

January	257	(includes the budget meeting 1/23 attended by 171 persons)
February	106	
March	122	
April	75	(only three weeks of ARE in April)
May	118	
June-Sept.	121	(ARE begins to wind down in June and begins again in mid-Sept.)
October	74	(only three weeks of ARE in October)
November	70	(only three weeks of ARE in November)

December 82 (only three weeks of ARE in December)

Respectfully submitted,
Norbert Welk and Robin Sickles, Co-Chairs

2011 Annual Report - Buildings and Grounds Committee

Chair: Tony Collins

The Buildings and Grounds Committee is short-handed. The functions are split between myself, Mary Pedersen, who looks after the landscaping, and Karen van Horn, who manages anything involving contractors.

The high point of facility changes this year has been the sanctuary, funded from the Services Auction. The cuts to the pews for accessibility are in place. Handrails leading up to the chancel will be there soon. Honor to Sarah Boyd for this initiative.

The parking lot has been repainted, and traffic lanes changed to the north of Westwood Hall. Please note that the shaded parking spaces are no more, to allow reasonable access to the visitor parking area.

Our other notable activity has been due to the drought. We lost three trees, two of which have been removed. We had to make repairs to the irrigation system, and we had a major break in the water main on the south side of the campus.

We would welcome more members on the committee, on both Buildings and the Grounds sides.

Tony Collins, Chair

2011 Annual Report - Caring Committee

Chair: Gwen Essinger

The primary responsibility of the Caring Committee is to provide appropriate support to individual members of our church community when a loved one dies. This, most commonly, involves providing a setting, with refreshments, where the family can accept condolences from friends and family after a memorial service. This is a very important service provided for our church family by our church family.

I wish to thank the wonderful members of this committee, who always respond willingly and generously when asked to help. I welcome any suggestions from church members and I am always happy to add new members to our committee.

Gwen Essinger, Chair

2011 Annual Report - Circle Dinners

Chair: Gwen Essinger

Circle Dinners are a long time special activity at Emerson UU Church. They are an opportunity to connect with members of our church and enjoy a meal and conversation.

We meet every other month on the third Saturday night of September, November, January, March and May. We meet in members home in groups of eight to sixteen people, except for the May dinner when we meet in Westwood Hall. This is an adult only activity. The meal is pot-luck so that it is not a lot of work for any one person. We have approximately 100 people participating. We always welcome new participants. If you would like to join us, call Gwen Essinger at 713-799-1244 or gwenessinger@sbcglobal.net.

Gwen Essinger, Chair

2011 Annual Report - Communications Committee

Chair: Sherle Frost Watson

Members: Pat Grealy, David May, Molly Martin, Mary Ann Stanley, Sherle Frost Watson, Ron Lewis, Wendy Adair, Mark Edmiston-Lange

Several areas of interest received special focus during 2011.

1. Social Media

- New Emerson website launched
- Facebook/Twitter Promotion
 - We're adding more Tweeters than Facebook Friends. Tweeters tend to be from outside Emerson and we're adding about two new ones per week; Facebook Friends are more likely to be Emersonians and we have over 300 followers.
 - **Emerson received recognition in February as one of the Best UU Congregational Tweets**
 - Six people attended Molly's RE class.
- The UUA Houston Network held a workshop for congregations on social media on March 5. Emerson attendees: Mark E-L, Molly, Pat, Sarah and Sherle. **UUA has adopted the Emerson Social Media Policy (developed by Pat and Molly) as its model.** Emerson is actually ahead in this area in many ways. We will keep in touch as this area grows.
- Periodically items were submitted to ultimatememorial.com, the online Chronicle site for our neighborhood, and they were mostly published but require repeated follow up.

2. Campaign of Gratitude experienced limited usage.

3. Leap of Faith messaging added to website. Also, Molly created an excellent presentation for Mark's presentation in New Orleans at the Leap of Faith conference, which is now used on the screens in the Gathering Place.

4. Our CLVI licensing fee does not cover all the movies we've been showing, ie First Fridays and Sustainability. Even if we do not publicize the movie outside the church, we are violating the law if we do not pay the fees. RE has amended their process. Coordinating Council members were advised that, if there is any question, movies can be vetted by Molly to ensure that they are being presented legally.

5. We started posting the weekly **Wayside Pulpit** message on the street using our currently available signage; one side has the sermon information and the other has the Wayside message matching the one in the Westwood Hall window that week.

6. Following a healthy discussion on the 2012 budget we agreed to fund the activities that are specified in the addendum below.

- The KUHF/KUHA ads funded jointly through the UUHouston network of churches are ending with 2011. First and Bay Area dropped out of the participating pool, so the cost for continuing became prohibitive. Additionally, the Communications Committee does not view our participation as an effective means of drawing people to Emerson. Therefore, our budget proposal included a variety of new initiatives (GL Yellow pages display ad, Facebook ads, mailers) that we need to test in order to determine if we get more out of them; we think we will but we have to spend the money to see. However, we will continue to work with the Metro Strategic Planning Group on possible joint efforts.
- We are also dropping our ad in the regular Yellow pages.
- We will be working closely with Membership to determine which of our initiative is effective in bringing in new members.

Addendum: 2012 draft budget (We were approved for \$4,000.)

Comments

Website hosting and list serve with uuism.net	\$ 132	continue current expense
GL Yellow pages listing	\$ 128	continue current expense
GL Yellow pages display ad	\$ 416	enhance GLBT outreach new outreach effort; expenditures will be targeted demographically and utilized in \$250 increments ; if we don't see results, we can stop future expenditures
Facebook/Google ads	\$ 1,500	
Temporary street side signage for events	\$ 360	two events new outreach effort; mailings will be targeted geographically with a family content focus; timing for the two mailings will be staggered with the Facebook ads so we have a better idea of the impact of the different modes of communication
Mailers*	\$ 2,178	
Metro Strategic Planning Group joint initiatives	\$ 2,500	
TOTAL	\$ 7,214	

* \$1,440 is for postage

2011 Annual Report - Denominational Relations
Chair: deForest Ralph

The vision for the Denominational Relations Committee is one in which every member of the Emerson congregation has embraced the concept that the freedom of our religion goes hand-in-hand with the responsibility to share part of our time, talents, and resources in support of our religion as a religion. The overall mission for the Committee is to promote and provide direction to our efforts to be engaged with other UUs at local, districts, and national levels. To further this involvement, the Committee will be supportive of Emerson's participation in the Houston Area Network; encourage more participation in Southwest District activities, such as attendance at the General Assembly and full participation in the Statements of Conscience process.

In addition to Relations within the UU religion, the Committee will be alert to involvement in, and promotion of, interfaith activities in the Houston area that are compatible with our Principles and where we can make a difference.

For 2012, the Denominational Relations Committee will:

Work with the SWUUC Committee

Work with Ministry for Earth in the intra-UU and interfaith activities

Promote Emerson's participation in the UUA's Statement of Conscience procedures, both at Emerson and at General Assembly

Promote greater attendance and participation at General Assembly by Emersonians

Raise the level of awareness of Emerson's role in the affairs and future of Unitarian Universalism

Promote and raise Emerson's profile and influence within the Houston religious community and the community at large.

One of the primary goals for 2012 is to build a strong Committee of similar minded, dedicated Emersonians, so that Emerson can provide leadership at all levels, both within our UU religion, and in the wider community.

deForest Ralph, Chair

January 2012

2011 Annual Report - Director of Religious Education (DRE) Search Committee
Chair: Kimberly Coolidge

For the past two years, the Director of Religious Education (DRE) Search Committee and our Interim DRE, Barbara Stoddard, worked hard to attract and welcome our new Director of Religious Education, Katy Carpmann, to Emerson. In January of this year, we conducted a mail-out campaign to members of the Liberal Religious Educations Association (LREDA), and posted the opening on our website and on the LREDA Employment Opportunities Homepage. Additionally, Mark, Becky, and Barbara Stoddard spread the word about our search at several professional conferences by sharing the *Are You Our Next Director of Religious Education?* tri-fold with interested parties. Subsequently, we received applications from all over the country.

In February, the committee generated an interview question list from our guide, *The Search for Religious Leadership: Best Practices for Unitarian Universalist Congregations* and additional input from Barbara Stoddard and the Religious Education Committee. We also reviewed the applications and narrowed the field to three candidates, all from different U.S. time zones, whom we interviewed by phone.

In March, the Search Committee took the next step by interviewing our top candidate, Katy Carpmann, in person. After spending time with her over dinner and a full day of interviewing, we all were extremely impressed with Katy's professionalism and enthusiasm for the role of DRE at our church. Becky received glowing recommendations from Katy's references and everyone on the Search Committee agreed that Katy was exactly the right person we needed to lead our growing RE program. Representatives of the Search Committee made the official recommendation at the Board of Trustees meeting in March.

So after two years of work as a committee, we were beaming on Sunday, May 15th when Mark and Becky finally had the opportunity to introduce Katy to the congregation and when she officially started her full-time duties on August 1, 2011.

Thank you to all of the members of our committee for their dedicated work during this exciting process including Kimberly Coolidge, Chairperson, Pam Bass from the Personnel Committee, Jay Jackson from the Religious Education Committee, Alisha Loftin representing the parents and volunteers in the RE community, Alia Nazir from the Youth Advisory Committee, Robin Sickles from the Board of Trustees, and Becky Edmiston-Lange as our ministerial representative.

The DRE Search Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the congregation and the Board for all the support you have given our committee in filling the vital position of Director of Religious Education at Emerson. We believe that a strong DRE like Katy will be an invaluable resource not just for our own RE families, but to our entire community. She will also help define and grow a culture of faith, reason, and affection for Houston and the Unitarian Universalist community as a whole.

Kimberly Coolidge, Ed.D., DRE Search Committee Chair

2011 Annual Report - Finance Committee
Chair: Tony Collins

The committee has two main responsibilities: review of the financial results, and preparation of the budget. Our members are:

- Will Irwin
- Dan Barfield
- John Homier

- Dick Cheney
- Tony Collins

And ex-officio

- Mark Edmiston Lange
- Billye Smith , Treasurer
- Beth Hill, vice-President

This year, we followed the financial calendar fairly closely. We solicited input from the committees in spring, and built several draft budgets in late summer. These budgets were based on different projections of income, especially the pledge campaign. Then in fall we revised the plans and submitted them to the Board. Together, we adapted the draft budgets to the reality of the pledge income, and delivered the result to the congregation for approval in December.

Tony Collins, Chair

2011 Annual Report – Investment Committee Co-Chairs: Will Irwin and Dick Mullineaux

2011 marked a decision to make a major change for management of the Endowment Fund for the 3-year period from 2011 to 2014 when the mortgage on Delaney Hall must be refinanced. The Investment Committee has the dual responsibility for achieving above average returns on our investment and for being able to meet potential demands by the congregation for funds without endangering the long-term viability of the endowment fund itself.

This responsibility led to the decision to close all equity investments managed by the Mitchell Group while alternatives were evaluated. This decision was executed on March 5, 2011 and \$1,924,558 was transferred to the Charles Schwab EUUC Endowment account bringing the total of that account to \$2, 030,000. After careful evaluation of options it was decided to invest \$1,000,000 in fixed income instruments for 3 years and place \$1,000,000 for equity investment in the energy industry managed by the Mitchell Group. The Mitchell Group were advised that the investment committee desired these funds not be invested in energy equities until such time as they considered it wise to do so.

The remaining cash is in the Charles Schwab Endowment Fund account to provide for possible requests for transfer to the operating account.

This short-term tactic will be reviewed at the end of the 3 year period to determine the future long term strategy.

Dick Mullineaux, Co-Chair

2011 Annual Report – Lay Pastoral Ministry Team Chair: Dick Cheney

The Lay Pastoral Ministry Team (“LPMT”) is a group of volunteers who provide a confidential Ministry of Presence to Emerson congregants and friends as an extension of, but not a substitute for, the pastoral care services of Co-Ministers Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange. Lay Pastoral Ministry support is usually requested during times of life transition, such as illness, death of a loved one, marriage, divorce or separation, birth, loss of employment, retirement, or confinement to a nursing home. LPMT members develop confidential relationships that vary from a brief ministry of one or two phone conversations to visits sustained over many years.

Early in 2011 we welcomed three new members* after they completed their extensive training program, along with four “trainees” from Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Church. Throughout the year, the Emerson team

- Provided many hours of Ministry of Presence to many Emersonians;
- Continued the Joys, Sorrows, and Milestones candles and cards in the sanctuary. Every Sunday an LPMT member prepares the bowl to receive the tapers, extinguishes and removes the tapers after the service, and gathers any cards deposited in the two boxes. At our monthly meetings, we lift up the Joys, Sorrows, and Milestones that

are mentioned on the cards or otherwise known to us. Several of the cards also requested brief contacts for pastoral attention; and

- Delivered holiday poinsettias to a number of Emersonians with limited ability to travel.

Linda Orr moved out of Houston in mid-summer, and no longer serves on the team.**

The members of the team during 2011 are

Kay Bergen	Phyllis Burchfiel*	Dick Cheney	Joe Dowlen
Edna Kelly	Pam Lewis	Mina McDuffie	Tom McDuffie
Ken McLeod*	Linda Orr**	Sally Phillips	Jim Porter
Judy Taylor	Barbara Thorn	Jonathan Watson*	

Dick Cheney, Chair

2011 Annual Report - Landscape Committee **Chair: Mary Pedersen**

This committee, a subcommittee of Building and Grounds, works to maintain our landscaping in a manner consistent with our Green Sanctuary and LEED Certification guidelines. No chemical fertilizers or herbicides are used, and pesticides are used only to control fire ants. The drought made this past year a considerable challenge and spring will show how many plants and trees we have lost. Over the last few years we have worked to add more native plants which are drought-resistant. We had one work party on November 19 with a turnout of eleven, and did some much-needed trimming. Effective December 31 2011, I have resigned as Landscape Chair. My thanks to all who have helped.

Mary Pedersen, Chair

2011 Annual Report - Leap of Faith Team **Chair: Linda Condit**

Members: Mark Andersen, Sarah Boyd, Linda Condit (chair), Rev. Mark Edmiston-Lange, Holly Gilliland, Deborah Landis, Nancy Lipp, and Ben Withers.

Emerson was selected in 2010 to be one of eight churches poised for growth to participate in the Leap of Faith program. After attending the UUA's kick-off meeting in New Orleans, the team identified its challenge and expanded its membership. The challenge identified as being the key to growing our membership is "to make the UU faith more explicit in our congregation and in our daily lives." This challenge has inspired many of our recommendations.

Early in 2011 we were paired with our mentor church Cedar Lane UU Church in Bethesda, MD and their team members – David Devlin-Foltz, Nancy Janssen (chair), and Rev. Heather Janules. Many of our ideas were mined on our trip to visit Cedar Lane in March and from their visit to Emerson in May. Final recommendations and detailed reports on visits to both churches are on Emerson's Leap of Faith site.

Major Recommendations

The first is to adopt the Emerson AIMS to Grow model and its use by other committees in contexts such as Emerson AIMS to Serve. We *awaken* interest about Emerson in the greater Houston Community and *involve* those who come as visitors. Then we *motivate* prospective members into increased activity within Emerson and becoming members. Next we help members to *shine* the light of our faith in the congregation and the wider community.

The second recommendation is to update the church committee structure to have fewer standing committees, which would be umbrella organizations for various working committees and groups. This recommendation encompasses having committee charters and term limits for committee chairs as well as leadership development. The Coordinating Council will have a leading role in this effort.

The third major recommendation is to increase the paid staff with two part-time positions of a Membership Coordinator and a Religious Education Assistant over the next 3 to 5 years.

Other Recommendations

Our report contains numerous other ideas, which have been shared with various committees, and many have been put into practice. For example, we had two classes with six sessions of Building Your Own Theology. We think that a covenant group will result from this. We also have some faith statements to post on the website. Another example is the “Join Emerson Sunday” with the opportunity to sign the membership book. Also, the wayside pulpit (quotes on our sign in front) is a great way of being more explicit about our faith.

Communications and Implementation

Communications are of key importance to this project. Team members are each assigned to a specific key committee and have been sharing info and getting input along the way. We have a Leap of Faith site on the Emerson website and have had articles in the newsletter as well as in e-blasts

We presented our report “Taking a Leap of Faith: Roadmap to Change” to the Board of Trustees in November and to the Coordinating Committee in December. Then on February 5th, we are slated to give a presentation at an Adult Ed session. Further communications are planned in the newsletters and e-blasts.

In April the Board approved our charter, and a key responsibility of our team is to assist with putting recommended programs and changes in place. Even though our team will be concluding its formal work in the first half of 2012, team members will continue to work with their assigned committees for the foreseeable future. Ultimately, the committees will be responsible for instituting changes in their areas of responsibility.

Linda Condit, Chair

2011 Annual Report - Library Committee Chair: Arthur Pedersen

The Library Committee, consisting of Carolyn Craig, Jo Irwin, and Arthur Pedersen, continued to meet periodically to maintain the library. New books were added and, occasionally, some books were removed. Our thanks to all who donated books to the library.

Arthur Pedersen, Chair

2011 Annual Report - Membership Committee Chair: Eric Watson

Membership in the last year at Emerson has remained flat; a remarkable feat considering that main line denominational churches in the US are experiencing a decline in membership. We can attribute this maintenance to excellent greeters, monthly join Emerson Sundays, the new RE director and the spiritual challenges from the pulpit that appeal to modern liberals.

Members 2011; Adams, Barbara (board liaison); Adams, Brent; Cain, Claudia (Greeter); Edmiston-Lange, Becky (ministerial rep); Gelb, Betsy; Goodman, Ann; Heffernam, Jacquelyn (greeter coordinator); Hendrick, Joann; Jorgeson, Tom; Landis, Deborah (co-chairman); Lipp, Nancy; May, Ann B. (greeter); McElrath, Margaret; Nelson, Max (greeter and photographer); Taylor, Kris; Tidholm, Karen (past chairman); Watson, Eric (co-chairman)

Eric Watson and Deborah Landis came on as new Co-chairmen in May 2011. Karen Tidholm the former chairmen needed a break after many years of faithful service. Karen graciously agreed to continue with the many administrative and background tasks she has always done and to train a couple of our members to handle those tasks.

Deborah had most recently been liaison to the Membership Committee from the Leap of Faith committee.

Eric has been in the choir for many years and wanted a change from Adult Education where he had served for many years.

The most important thing to report is that this committee consists of some great self-starting enthusiastic volunteers. Deborah and Eric are co-chairmen in name only; all they have to do is an agenda and pick a meeting time; this wonderful committee does the rest.

The chairmen believe the first priority of membership is maintenance, in other words focus on what will keep folks at Emerson once they are here. The next job is to actually increase church membership.

Conversations with our newest members indicate an overwhelmingly interest in growing their spirituality, and giving of their personal time and resources to serve liberal causes. The new members did not come here to sit in the pew, be entertained and send in money every week. The spiritual challenge of Becky and Mark's sermons and service opportunities at Emerson are exactly what our newest members are seeking.

This committee includes greeters who are on the committee, but prefer to only perform that invaluable function. This is particularly significant because the vision to maintain membership is to encourage involvement, but not burn out. Greeters can greet as little or as much as they are able and are also provide an excellent "entry level" involvement for new members.

The first major change was to implement "Join Emerson Sunday" once a month. This is done in the Library after church one Sunday a month and occasionally before the service at 10 am to accommodate parents with children. This new format provides an opportunity to explain what is expected of membership and makes it more intentional than simply completing a card. New member recognition continues twice a year during the Sunday service to publically recognize those who have joined in the last 6 months.

This past year also included incorporating many new ideas from Cedar Lane, our Leap of Faith partner. An important initiative for 2011 and continuing into 2012 is gathering specific information from visitors on how they found Emerson. We need to know for example if it was Twitter, Google, Facebook or beliefnet. This information will be used for future marketing.

Eric Watson, Chair

2011 Annual Report – Partner Church Committee Co-Chairs: Martha and deForest Ralph

Unitarianism, as a religion, was first articulated in the mid 1500's, in Transylvania, by Francis David. It was here that the name "Unitarianism" was first applied to our religion. After the fall of communism in 1989, UUs in North America were again able to contact, and support, the Unitarians in Transylvania and Central Europe. In 1993, the Partner Church Council (UUPCC) was formed as an affiliate of the UUA, to coordinate and enhance the support efforts.

The Partner Church Committee is Emerson's link to the UUPCC, as well as to our partner church in Transylvania, St. Nicholas. Through our association with the UUPCC, we participate in the support of UUs around the world, primarily in Central Europe, the Khasi Hills in India, and the Philippines. Our partner church, St. Nicholas, is located in the town of St. Nicholas, in the eastern part of Transylvania, which is now part of Romania. The people in that area are ethnic Hungarians. In Hungarian, the town is called Gyergyoszentmiklos, in Romanian, it is Gheorgheni. St. Nicholas has a congregation of about 125. Until November of 2008, it was the "daughter" church to the Unitarian church in the nearby larger city of Csikszereda. The Special Offering in April 2011, was for St. Nicholas.

Committee Co-Chair, deForest Ralph serves on the Board of the UUPCC. In February, he went to the Board meeting in San Mateo, California, and in June to the annual meeting of the UUPCC, held in conjunction with the UUA General Assembly, in Charlotte, North Carolina. DeForest also participated in monthly phone conference Board meetings. The UUPCC works with the UUA's International Office, and through it, it works with the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU), which is the international organization for the national UU associations.

While in California, he visited Starr King, one of our UU seminaries and visited with the Balazs Scholar and his family. The daughter was in need of some surgery to correct a problem left over from surgery when she was a baby, and deForest was able to arrange for her to have the corrective surgery here in Houston at the Shriner's Hospital.

For 2012, the Committee plans to promote a trip to Transylvania this fall as part of the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women that will be held in Transylvania in early October. Also, the Special Offering in February will be in support of the Balazs Scholar program, and the one in April will be in support of St. Nicholas.

Martha and deForest Ralph, Co-Chairs

January 2012

2011 Annual Report – Performing Arts Council **Chair: Stephen Lipp**

The umbrella council for all musical happenings at Emerson UU Church has continued to meet monthly on the third Sunday at 12:30 p.m. to update each group's activities.

The council is made up of members representing the following groups:

Audio/Visual, Choir/Music, EIO, Emerson Players, UniTunes, Waldo, BOT liaison – Beth Hill

Topics on 2011 monthly agendas included:

- The contract for the EIO director was added to the 2011 Budget. With it, EIO director Bill Atkerson for the first time became a paid member of the church.
- The Sanctuary lighting and sound problems were discussed. Some of the lighting problems were resolved. The buzz in audio recordings was diagnosed and removed. A/V's work with the April service auction was exemplary. Although one new committee member has been found, A/V continues to be understaffed and overworked.
- Loan of Equipment Policy was completed in 2011 with a new inventory of A/V equipment made.
- **The choir performed *Vesperae solennes de confessore (Vespers)*, for soloists, chorus, and orchestra, K.339, by Mozart for the spring concert in May.**
- Emerson Players Performances in February 2011 and October 2011. With the second performance a set of portable stage lights was purchased, via the Don Whittaker Theater Arts Fund, which has subsequently been used for several other performances. Also with the second performance, Hilary Henderson assumed leadership of the troupe.
- The Emerson Intergenerational Orchestra performed Sibelius' "Finlandia" in March, a selection from "Sweeney Todd" in May, "The Killer B's" in October and the Christmas Medley and "Sleigh Ride" in December.
- Various groups performed in the sanctuary during the year, including the "Austin Troubadours" in April.
- Effective September 2011, Head Section Lead Adrian Rodriguez became the leader of the smaller vocal group Suoni Dolci. Suoni Dolci performed monthly throughout the church "year."
- UniTunes continued its policy of booking top acts to the church. Attendance has been steady with some acts drawing 200 or more but with most drawing in the neighborhood of 100.
- The Christmas Vespers service became a Holiday Revue, with combined participation of the Emerson Players, the chancel choir, Waldo and the newly formed children's choir under the direction of Adrian Rodriguez.

Stephen Lipp, Chair

Personnel Committee - Annual Report 2011 **Chair: Jim Porter**

The Personnel Committee members during 2011 were Pam Bass, Sarah Boyd, Bill Burchfield, David Bates, Janet Meininger, Brad Gammell and Jim Porter (chair)

Pam Bass, David Bates and Brad Gammell rolled off the committee at the end of 2011. We thank them for their generous service.

Major activities during 2011 for the Personnel Committee included support to BoT for the hire of a full time Director of Religious Education, compensation for the co-ministers, staff compensation recommendations for the 2012 budget and revision of the Employee Handbook (still underway).

Jim Porter, Chair

Religious Education Committee - Annual Report 2011

Submitted by: Kay Kamas

The Religious Education Committee is composed of seven members with Jill Shaffer, Florrie Snively, and Judy Williams serving their 1st year; Linda Daichman and Kay Kamas serving their 2nd year; and David Bergt and Faisal Nazir serving their 3rd and final year. Our Board liaison for 2011 has been Aaron Knight.

2011 has been a year of transition for the committee and for the R.E. Department. We said goodbye to Jay Jackson who served as Chair last year and did an absolutely exemplary job. We also said goodbye to our interim R.E. Director, Barbara Stoddard, this past summer and **welcomed our new R.E. Director, Katy Carpmán**, in August. Katy very quickly proved herself to be extremely competent, personable, fun, bright, professional, organized, resourceful, etc, etc. It has been a joy for the committee to work with her and be guided by her professional and personal wisdom even as she was “getting up to speed” on life at Emerson. Regarding curriculum decisions, the committee **focused on UU values in order to be consistent with the results of our congregational survey**. We had an unexpected budget short-fall discovered after the summer, which was remedied by transferring unused DRE Search funds into the R.E. budget. And, we were fortunate to have **Ben Withers as our Leap of Faith liaison** - he provided us with valuable feedback regarding the religious education program being “a key element of sustained growth in our congregation.” He shared with us what we were doing “right” and also recommendations for improvement in areas related to curriculum, use and care of volunteers, and over time, the benefit of increasing paid staff by adding an assistant DRE or someone dedicated to Coming of Age and YRUU.

Registration and attendance numbers have been strong this year. There are currently **143 children registered in the R.E. program** (23 in the nursery & preschool, 55 in Kindergarten thru 5th grade, 28 in middle school, and 37 in YRUU). **Average attendance for 11 AM Sunday School classes is 76**, with an average of 41 at 10 AM (Multi-age, Coming of Age and Young Religious Unitarian Universalists). We also have an impressive squad of dedicated teachers, mentors, advisors, and other **volunteers - an average of 31 people each week!**

Highlights of the year include:

- **providing the OWL curriculum** for K/1st graders and 4th/5th graders beginning in January;
 - **our youth along with other area youth hosting the Houston Youth Rally** over MLK weekend at First Church;
 - partnering with the Social Action Committee in **Souper Bowl of Caring**
 - **Cordelia Wilkes winning** the Boniuk Center's religious tolerance essay contest
 - witnessing 14 of our middle school youth completing the **Coming of Age program** in May and participating in an **area-wide bridging ceremony**;
 - having a **volunteer appreciation lunch** in May, on the same day we had our first visit from Katy;
 - **providing the Dr. Seuss curriculum** for our summer R.E. classes,
 - having **over 20 H.S. youths attend the July YRUU beach trip**
 - **YRUU continuing to meet over the summer**, organized by Carla Hill;
 - **successful teacher recruitment** led by Linda Daichman;
 - **a successful Homecoming & RE registration**, facilitated by helpful, clear and concise brochures created by Katy;
 - **a VERY successful Unicef Carnival**, on Halloween, organized by Karen Nazir, Karen Benson, and Susan Green, which raised \$1,100 in addition to a generous Sunday plate collection;
 - a helpful **Faith Development “Start-Up” Workshop** on Nov. 5 facilitated by Jennifer

Nichols, District Director for Lifespan Faith Development, in order to clarify and support Katy's position as R.E. Director and to enhance our ability to work together to create dynamic programs;

- a wonderful holiday season with our **children participating in the Holiday Revue**, with Adrian Rodriguez directing their special children's song, and **staging a splendid Christmas Pageant**, Good King Wenceslas, directed by Hilary Henderson with choral assistance from Adrian Rodriguez. Also, **the Mittens (and more!) Tree provided warm clothing to Montrose Grace Place**, an organization that serves homeless GLBT youth.
- adding **children's nametags**, each with a symbol signifying the class curriculum.

Two ongoing challenges are: **First, streamlining the drop-off and pick-up of our students for classes on Sunday morning.** For example, since many of the parents are also teaching and must stay with their class until all are picked up, they are unable to pick up their own children in a timely manner. Various remedies have been tried and we continue to work with this process to maximize safety for all of the children who are in the pertinent age group (nursery thru 3rd grade). And **second, finding a viable format for the 10 o'clock hour.** To date, this hour has not been heavily attended, and because it serves a wide age span from Kindergarten thru middle school, choosing curriculum has been challenging. We also hear that many children prefer to have this hour as supervised free play/social time since they have a structured hour from 11:15 - 12:15. Currently, we have varied plans including a curriculum-based hour, rehearsal time for special programs, and supervised free play.

Going forward this year, we will:

- **plan our curriculum map for the next five years**, since 2012 is the last year of the current map;
 - **focus on recruitment, training, support and celebration of volunteers;**
 - **continue to improve our presence on the church website;**
 - **publish an RE Newsletter;**
 - **assess our space needs and make contingency plans** for the future since our enrollment numbers are climbing.
 - **look forward to increased collaboration between the R.E. program and many church committees as well as individual members.**

We have a **committee retreat planned for January 21** where we will be addressing these and other relevant issues.

Kay Kamas, Chair

2011 Annual Report – Social Action Council Co Chairs: Christel Erickson-Collins & Phil Richardson

The vision of The Social Action Council (SAC) is **A Church Community 1) where everyone is committed to service, within and beyond the Emerson Congregation, based on the seven principles and 2) where we are leaders in the Houston Community and share, individually and collectively, financial and time resources with organizations systematically and democratically chosen and sponsored by the congregation.** SAC's mission and policies will be made available when SAC's website is updated. SAC is responsible for coordinating all of Emerson's Social Action projects and Endowment Grants. It also coordinates Special Collections and other fundraising for various charities and natural disasters. The Council meets every month and regularly educates the Congregation through the Emersonian and E-blast newsletters, a table in the Gathering Place, the Order of Service and SAC webpage.

Some of Emerson's 2011 Social Action projects were the following: **February SouperBowl of Caring:** 952 items and 1038 lbs of food and \$2,460 were contributed by Emersonians. Building and judging the food sculptures again was enjoyed by both our youth and adult members.

Heifer International: Coming of Age class members Alex Arabie and three others selected an ambitious service project. They collected more than \$6,000 over three months to purchase an Ark of animals for Heifer International to give to indigent farmers outside the USA.

Groppe Scholarships: A group of four members led by Sherle Watson has been tremendously busy supporting two students who are the first in their family to go to college. They raised funds, set criteria, sought applications and chose two students to sponsor. Funds were collected through private and special collections. The students now attend Houston Community College and are being tutored and supported by Emerson members who are part of Sherle's team.

April/May Social Action Survey: 112 Emersonians returned surveys which were made available in the Gathering Place and online for about four weeks. We appreciate your feedback and discussed your views during the June 12 Adult Education hour and June Emerson Board meeting. Emerson's diverse population completed the survey. 36% began attending Emerson since 2005 whereas 20% began attending before 1980. 47% came to Emerson from another denomination and 34% from another UU church whereas 19% had no prior church affiliation. Of that diverse population, only 2% think that we are doing too much social action but 32% want more social action. 94% with an opinion want us more recognized in Houston and told us how: 72% with an opinion said focus on fewer, large impact activities. The highest interest was in education and food projects with lowest interest in social advocacy. 27% replied that they already work on the SAC Committee or its projects with another 19% indicating an interest in participating in these activities. Although only 14% are against using any money from the operating budget for social action, 43% want to increase it from \$4,000 to \$10,000 per year or more. Similarly although 16% are against using the endowment for social action, 46% favor continuing the 10% Solution and 26% want to increase it with a higher % of the gain or a fixed % of the endowment balance.

April and October Rebuild Together Houston: This year Emerson again partnered with First Church and Northwest UU Church to renovate two homes for Houston's elderly. Teams of approximately 25-30 volunteers scraped, painted and repaired these home to the delight of their owners. The volunteers enjoyed working and visiting with each other and restoring homes for which their owners were pleased and proud.

2011 Endowment Grants: An Endowment Grant Evaluation Team comprised of Barb Adams, David Bates, Tony Collins, Will Irwin, Carolyn Truesdell and Phil Richardson was formed in September to solicit proposals from the congregation. It reviewed and evaluated the 13 Grant requests from the congregation and presented its recommendation to SAC on December 4. SAC approved the Evaluation Team's recommendation which was sent to and approved by the Emerson Board at its December 20 meeting. The Award recipients for the \$45,430 maximum Award will be voted on by the congregation at its January 22, 2012 Annual Meeting.

Time and Talent Fair: SAC manned a table at the Time and Talent Fair to enlist additional members for Emerson's social action projects.

Pennies for Peace and ANSWER: RE and SAC collaborated on this project to build schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan. While funds were being collected, the public was made aware of the fiscal irresponsibility of this program. Our project thus was discontinued and a decision was made jointly with RE to divert the donations to ANSWER, a program that sponsors education of children in Nepal. The aim of this organization is to move families upward in society through education and eventually to erode the harmful effects of the cast system.

June Pride Parade: On June 25 over ten Emersonians joined with members of other Houston UU churches to walk in the Pride Parade. This was a concrete way for Emerson to honor its commitment to being a Welcoming Congregation.

Emerson Abolitionists: This Fall Kay Kamas formed the Emerson Abolitionists to help combat the serious problem of human trafficking in Houston. Her group has met several times and has worked on a safe house for victimized women and girls and adopted a family for Christmas.

November Self Watering Containers: SAC and Emerson Ministry for Earth (EMFA) are collaborating on this pilot project initiated to provide Houston Food Bank clients with self-watering containers and vegetable plants to promote healthy eating and food sustainability. SAC funded the project through its operating budget funds. Construction has been

overseen by Zena Taylor, Christel Collins and EMFA. The initial project for 25 containers was expanded to over 50 due to savings and a generous donation. Construction began at the Bioneers Conference and will continue in March 2012 along with the planting. The Food Bank is partnering with Emerson to ensure appropriate distribution and follow-up evaluation.

Gordon Elementary School Science Project: A major effort this year was to build the science program at Gordon Elementary School, a Title I overflow school in southwest Houston. Bob Hopkins presented Science Boxes from the Houston Museum of Natural Science to the fourth grade classes every week or two. We also collected and distributed copies of National Geographic, Scientific American and Smithsonian magazines to each fourth grader. SAC helped expand the Gordon School Science Center for all grade levels with \$1,000 from its operating budget for science materials, such as an aquarium, live butterfly kit, rock and mineral collections, laboratory supplies and math teaching aids. Gay Gustafson contributed natural science teaching collections.

International Scholarships: Social Action Council sponsors three international students who go to school in India and Romania through the Hopkins Scholarship Program. This commitment was made by Emerson's on a multi-year basis. Another 12 students are being sponsored to attend school in Nepal through the ANSWER-Nepal program thanks to 11 generous Emerson members. None of these scholarships costs over \$300.

Month	2011 Actual	2012 Planned
Jan	Haiti Earthquake Relief through UUA	Harris County Drug Court Foundation
Feb	UU Partner Church	Denom.Relations Comm.Balazes Scholarships
Mar	National Water Day	UU Ministry for Earth
Apr	Denom.Relations Comm.Balazes Scholarships	UU Partner Church
May	Last Organic Outpost	Groppe Scholarships
June	Bering Omega	HATCH
July	School Supplies	Last Organic Outpost
Aug	International (Partner Church) Scholarships	International (Partner Church) Scholarships
Sept	Mental Health (Gathering Place)	Houston Rescue & Restore
Oct	UNICEF	UNICEF
Nov	Neighborhood Centers/Adopt a Family	Mental Health (Gathering Place)
Dec	Children at Risk	Blackwood Educational Land Institute

SAC 2011 Operating Budget

<u>Expense</u>	<u>\$ Cost</u>
SAC Survey Software	72
Rebuild Together Houston Supplies	79
Matching Funds for Somalia Famine	1,000
CROP Walk T-shirts	200
2 India Scholarships (multi-year Emerson commitment by BOT)	247
Gay Pride Parade Giveaway Advertisement	172
Organic Outpost Water Bill for Drought	500
Gordon Elementary School Science Class	996
Self Watering Containers	421
Total Expenses	3,687
SAC Operating Budget	4,000
Surplus Not Spent	313
Respectfully submitted by: Christel Erickson-Collins & Phil Richardson, SAC Co-chairs	

Annual Report 2011 - Spring Gala and Auction Report

Co Chairs: Sarah Stoffer Boyd and Nancy Lipp

The annual Emerson Service auction was held on April 30, 2011. The Jungle Safari Theme was used throughout, from the decorations and food, to the costumes and entertainment. Approximately 120 people attended, and 129 items were donated including 16 dinners or parties and 12 other events. The Auction Team hired Andrew Bost, a professional auctioneer from Austin and felt that his UU background and auction style was a good fit for Emerson. The evening began with the silent auction and safari themed food in the Gathering Place. As the Silent Auction closed, the guests were entertained outside by the KoumanKe'le African Dancers, and then entered Westwood Hall. In the future, the entertainment will be inside Westwood Hall to improve the timing of our auction evening.

The live auction was completed by 9 PM and the close out went well, as the receipts were ready by the time the door prizes were presented. Because of the need for a printer, the closeout was done in the volunteer workroom. Special thanks to Laurie Hammons and Sarah Hager for entering all the data on auction night.

A new item for Emerson was added to the live auction. It is called "Fund a Need" and guests were encouraged to bid on improving the accessibility in our sanctuary. This item raised \$12,250. So far the sanctuary pews and cushions, carpeting and carpet molding have been modified to accommodate four wheelchairs. Handrails leading to the chancel have been ordered but not installed.

The auction goal was budgeted at \$35,000 and the auction achieved 18% over goal thanks to everyone who participated, volunteered, donated, bought and cheered us on. Our underwriters were Alisha and Richard Loftin, Carolyn Truesdell and Dick Cheney, Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange, Sarah and Charles Boyd, Gwen Essinger, Mary Ann Stanley, Addison and Judy Taylor, Barb Waugh and Jay Jackson, Linda and Mike Condit, Barbara and Kevin Crotty, Linda and Sean Daichman, Martha and deForest Ralph and Helen and Norbert Welk Ben Withers. Thank you too for the beverage service provided by Liz and Brad Gammell and Robin Sickles, Silent Auction Entertainment provided by Anita Butt. Thank you to Robin McElfresh for introducing us to the KoumanKe'le' African Drum and Dance Ensemble. Nancy and Sarah would like to give our utmost appreciation to the most awesome Auction Team in recorded history: Barb Adams, Brent Adams, Jennifer Carney, Jacob Carney, Linda Condit, Kevin Crotty, Margie Elliott, Gwen Essinger, Anne Goodman, Sarah Hager, Laurie Hammons, Bill Hammons, Joann Hendrick, Tom Jorgensen, Larry Kelly, Stephen Lipp, Robin McElfresh, Janet Meininger, Ken Salzman, Rachel Shada, Jack Shada, Robin Sickles, Mary Ann Stanley, Kris Taylor, Alma Villarreal, Sherle Watson, Eric Watson. Special thanks to Molly Martin for the auction poster design.

The financial summary:

Sponsorships	\$ 3,100
Purchased Items (includes Fund a Need)	\$53,768
Purchased Tickets	<u>\$ 1,710</u>
Total Revenue	\$58,578
Less "Fund a Need" gift fund	-\$12,250
Less Expenses	<u>-\$ 5,105.85</u>
Net Unrestricted Revenue	\$41,222.15

Jungle Safari Food Service Report

Purchases and Food Preparation: Janet Meininger, Maryann Stanley and Kris Taylor worked on the food purchases and preparation and Robin Sickles and Brad Gammell purchased beverages. Kris Taylor and others worked on the decorations. In planning the menu, Janet and Robin visited several African restaurants for food sources. They decided that none of the items would have broad appeal because of the appearance, messiness, or extent of heat/spices. Instead, foods from North Africa were emphasized and items were given fictitious names that evoked a safari or African theme. Number of attendees estimated in advance was 120.

Menu:

Beverages:

Silent Auction: Wine, Beer, Water, Fruit Juice

Live Auction: All of the above, Coffee

Food:

Silent Auction

Fruit Trays (Pineapple, Mango, Strawberries, Blackberries)
Vegetable Tray (Grape Tomatoes, Cucumber Slices, Baby Carrots) with Yogurt Dip
Meatballs with Chermoula Sauce (Tomato Based with N. African Spices)
Two Kinds of Petite Quiche (Florentine and Swiss Cheese/Bacon)
Hummus and Red Pepper Hummus with Pita Bread and Pita Chips
Chicken Bites with Artichoke and Jalapeño Dip, Falafel Bites
Assorted Cheeses and Crackers (gluten-free rice crackers included)
Mixed Nuts

Live Auction

Mini cupcakes (carrot cake, lime cake, rum cake)
Brownies, Carrot Cake, Bar cookies (pineapple—coconut bars)
Turkish Delight (World's First Sweet), Assorted Turkish Cookies

Silent Auction, Food and Beverage Tables

Center Pieces --Donated

Tablecloths were a gift from Tim and Mindy Lawrence to Emerson Church and they have been used for several major events at Emerson; I received them from Mary Ann Rusk and had them pressed. There were enough for the food tables/beverage table and most of the silent auction tables.

Table Skirts (Kiwi Green, Terra Cotta and Olive Green), disposable, were purchased

Paper Napkins Tropical Blue, Kiwi, Terra Cotta (Cocktail Size)

7" paper plates Tropical Blue, Terra Cotta

12 oz cups for Water/Beer

9 oz cups for Wine/Fruit Juice

Decorative Picks for meatballs, fruit, vegetables etc. (Extras will be stored for future events).

Set Up Serving and Cleanup

Several volunteers (about 4 for food and 4 for beverages) helped with set up, serving and cleanup. There were two food tables, one large beverage table. Some food items were placed at available spaces on the silent auction tables and the beverage table(baskets of sliced cheeses and crackers and mixed nuts). This worked well. Meatballs were served hot in chafing dishes, one at each of the two food tables. All food was easy to pick up. For eating we provided picks, not forks. Serving tables were set up so that they could be accessed from all sides; this was helpful at the peak time when there were a lot of people circulating back and forth between the silent auction tables and food tables.

The set up included a staging area consisting of three tables and the counter in the welcoming area by the elevator with a screen to hide the staging tables. We kept extra fruit, sauce, etc. on the staging tables; volunteers replenished the trays as needed. Meatballs with sauce were kept warm in crock pots on the counter. This was accomplished with extension cords to the one outlet that is available in this area. Volunteers transferred meatballs from the crock pots to a bowl and carried them to the serving tables to replenish the chafing dishes as necessary. Next time we would have more wastebaskets and pay attention to placing them throughout the Gathering Place. Desserts and coffee were served in Westwood Hall and the beverage service was moved there for the live auction. The Gathering Place was cleared of food during the live auction. At the end of the evening, cleanup was greatly facilitated by our sexton. Our auction chairpersons arranged for him to work after the auction to take down tables, vacuum, empty the trash and prepare the Gathering Place and Westwood Hall for Sunday morning activities.

Sarah Boyd, Co-Chair

Annual Report 2011 - Worship Committee Co Chairs: Carolyn Truesdell and Rachel Shada

As a standing committee at Emerson UU Church, the Worship Committee (WC) has two primary roles: providing worship services the twelve Sundays a year when the ministers are away from the pulpit and giving the "Welcome" at the beginning of each Sunday's worship service.

In 2011, the WC coordinated individual services in March, May, June, October, and November, and six consecutive services in July and August. This year the “last” service of the year coordinated by the committee fell on January 1, 2012 rather than the last Sunday of the December due to the Christmas holiday. The congregation was exceptionally positive about the WC’s seven summer services which were inspired by our statement of purpose: “Our beloved community of Faith, Reason, and Affection welcomes all to grow in Mind and Spirit as we Build a Better World.”

The committee members work diligently to include members of the committee and the larger congregation in the services we plan. However, to insure quality and variety in our services, we often seek outside speakers to whom we award an honorarium. In 2011, six of our services featured Emersonians as pulpit guests. The other six services highlighted visiting pulpit guests, including Alejandro Chaoul (MD Anderson), Earl Canfield (ANSWER), Bob Tucker (Center for Contemporary Theology), Mike Pardee (Boniuk Center), Jeff Kripal (Rice University Religious Studies Program), and Elliot Gershenson (Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston).

The Committee is comprised of a small number of dedicated members: David Bates, Susan Raffle, Janet Meininger (our Board representative), and deForest Ralph, with Carolyn Truesdell and Rachel Shada serving as co-chairs. Ex-Officio members include our Music Director Bonnie Wellington – (who has been invaluable in coordinating music for the WC led services) and Mark Edmiston-Lange. Katy Carpman, Director of Religious Education, attends the meetings occasionally to coordinate activities with the children. Janet Meininger (our Board Rep) and Sarah Boyd (Board President) also went above and beyond this year and supported the WC by pitching in with our weekly Welcome.

As a point of consideration, the WC appreciates that this year’s budgetary planning is even more difficult than most for the Board of Trustees. However, we are concerned by the second consecutive year of significant cuts to the Worship Committee budget. The Worship Committee depends on the money in our budget to award honoraria to our pulpit guests. Consistently cutting the available funds to do so will compromise our ability to offer the quality of services we provide that our fellow Emersonians have grown to appreciate. While we do our best to invite and include members in the services we plan, this is not always possible. Thus we feel it is imperative that our budget not be further cut. We do a lot with a little in the summer months and other Sundays when the ministers are away but are concerned that further reductions will adversely affect our efforts. We hope this will be considered in planning future budgets.

We are looking forward to another productive and successful year in 2012. In addition to planning our Summer Series, the WC hopes to identify ways to incorporate more lay participation in worship services and will continue to seek new members to join our merry tribe.

Yours in faith and service,
The Worship Committee