

**Annual Meeting Agenda**  
Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, Texas  
January 23, 2011

Call to Order

Invocation

Approval of Minutes

Receipt of Reports

New Business

-Social Action Council proposal for disbursement of Social Action Fund (10% solution)

Elections

1. Nominations Committee
2. Committee on Ministry
3. Board of Trustees
4. Vice President
5. President

Adjourn

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 2010 Officers | Janet Meininger, President<br>Sarah Boyd, Vice President<br>Brad Gammell, Past President |
|---------------|--|

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Trustees | Barb Adams<br>Gabe Gelb<br>Anne Goodman<br>Beth Hill<br>Bob Hopkins<br>Robin Sickles |
|----------|--|

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Treasurer       | Billye Smith |
| Asst. Treasurer | Liz Gammell  |

|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Board Secretary | Mary Pedersen |
|-----------------|---------------|

**Annual Report 2010**  
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Appendix A: Attendance for Adult RE Sponsored Programs

**Minutes**  
**Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church**  
**Annual Congregational Budget Meeting**  
**Sunday, December 5, 2010**

The meeting was called to order at 12:27 pm by Board of Trustees President Janet Meininger. She announced that David May would serve as parliamentarian. It was determined that a quorum was present. An invocation was given by Co-Minister Mark Edmiston-Lange.

Janet outlined the procedure for presenting the budget, and reminded the congregation that in order to vote, an individual must have been a member for 90 days prior to the meeting. (A check-in desk in the narthex had been staffed by Board members.) However, she added that everyone was welcome to attend the discussion.

Janet said the budget process is being integrated into a five-year planning process that is being developed by the Board. The five-year plan will be linked with projected income and expenses. Each year's budget will be considered in that context, with feedback going both ways. She referred to the Statement of Identity and Purpose and a Statement on Shared Ministry adopted at the last Annual Meeting, saying that the five-year plan is being developed in that context and stressing the importance of the congregation's input. Janet announced she will be giving an Adult Education session on planning next Sunday.

Janet then reviewed the process used by the Finance Committee to develop the budget draft based on input from the Committee Chairs and other groups and the results of the Stewardship campaign. She complimented the Stewardship Team on their timely and successful conclusion of the fund drive, and the congregation for their positive response. She described the two main features of this year's budget: the Finance Committee's proposal that the mortgage payment on Delaney Hall be paid out of the Endowment for the next three years, leading up to the balloon payment due in 2014, and the Board's proposal to create a contract staff position of Director of the Intergenerational Orchestra. Janet believes that the future of the church is bright, based on the successful fund drive and on Emerson's selection as one of only eight congregations in the country to take part in the UUA's Leap of Faith program.

Next Janet called on Finance Chair Tony Collins to present the income side of the budget. Tony led the congregation through the changes from previous procedures. The Planned Contributions line has been broken down to show new member pledges separately, and to allow a discount of 4% on the total amount raised in the canvass to account for the fact that some pledges may not be fulfilled. Tony said that as of today there are \$587,000 pledges in hand. Although a 4% discount is low compared to other churches, Tony said it is consistent with Emerson's history. Regarding new members, Tony said that this year was the first time this figure has been tracked separately, and going forward new members will be canvassed as they join. Tony believes that the church can raise \$10,000 more from this group than last year, estimating 50 new members. This brings the total of Planned Contributions to \$590,000, or 71% of our income. Other line items under income were adjusted to reflect last year's actual levels. The mortgage interest reimbursement from the Delaney Foundation will drop slightly because the principal is being paid down at a faster rate. The outstanding balance is around \$888,000, and for the current year our payment is \$59,000 interest and \$32,000 principal. The Finance Committee recommends that the principal for the next three years be paid out of the Endowment. Tony said the best option for us would be to pay the mortgage off right now out of the Endowment, but since the prepayment penalty makes that unattractive, this would be the next best thing. He acknowledged the objections that some people have about using the Endowment funds on an ongoing basis, saying that both the Finance Committee and the Board are of the same mind. Because this arrangement would be limited to three years he believes that pitfall can be avoided.

Janet thanked Tony for his presentation and called on Treasurer Billye Smith to present the expense side of the proposed budget. Billye said she would mostly speak of the broad picture, that details are available on the Intranet or the printed handouts prepared for this meeting. She said there has been no major shift in apportionment between various expense segments from this proposal compared to last year's budget. The

proposal does have a 3% raise for most current staff who did not get a raise last year, plus a larger allocation for health insurance. Not only have the premiums gone up, but the church is working toward the goal of 80% coverage, and aims for 70% this year. In addition there have been some staffing changes: we now have a full-time sexton, there has been a reorganization of the music staff (though this was budget neutral) and the Board proposes a new contract position for the Director of the Intergenerational Orchestra, to provide some compensation for what has been a very demanding volunteer position.

Janet recognized Past President Brad Gammell to speak to the EIO position. He forthrightly conceded his personal bias in favor of this action, he and his family having been part of the EIO from the beginning. Nevertheless he considers the EIO to be an important part of the church's outreach to people who might not otherwise be attracted here. He said that this is to be a contract position because the Board believes that Bill Atkerson's skill set is unique and unlikely to be matched by anyone else should he leave. Brad also alluded to Bill's talents in rewriting music to suit inexperienced musicians and his warm welcome to anyone who wants to join.

Janet thanked Brad for his comments. She then called on Vice President Sarah Boyd to present the motion. Sarah **moved** that the proposed budget be accepted as it stands. Pam Bass **seconded**. As the presenter of the motion Sarah spoke first in favor. Sarah spoke of how much she has learned about the church since joining the Board three years ago, and thanked the older and more experienced members for their guidance. She said this budget has been worked out over a year-long process, and her interactions with both individual members and Committee Chairs lead her to believe that the future of the church is bright.

Marian Wendelin spoke next, reading a communication from Bryan and Laura Emerson. Bryan said that as past Treasurer he would vote against the budget for its "inadequate income and unsustainably large expenses." Laura said that she too has been concerned about Emerson's increasing expenses, and lamented that we do not give enough to charity (at least "half the collection plate") since we must meet more and more overhead, resembling "a private club more than a church". She also said she would oppose this budget. Speaking for herself, Marian said she values the Intergenerational Orchestra very highly and supports the proposal to make its Director a contract position.

Christel Collins thanked everyone who worked on the budget, but she agreed with Laura Emerson's comments about our lack of charitable giving, and lamented the cuts in the Social Action Council's share. She objected to the notation that the reduction was "due to reduced expected need" and wondered how she could have given anyone that impression given our difficult economy. Mary Ann Stanley pointed out that special offerings contributed more than \$36,000 for charitable purposes outside the church this year and that people have many opportunities to support projects of their choice.

Janet recognized Phil Richardson, who said he would vote against the budget due to these concerns: record expenditures despite flat membership and pledge income during the past 5-6 years, unreasonably high estimates of income, an increased dependence on "special money" and over-reliance on the Endowment. Janet responded that the Board has asked the Finance Committee to study the use of the Endowment, and they found that often repayments to the Endowment do not show up in the Board minutes, whereas expenditures always do. She also said that the difference between capital expense and operating expense needs to be clarified. At the November Board meeting the Board asked the Finance Committee to draft definitions so that we can discuss and resolve this issue.

Robin Sickles spoke for the motion. He alluded to the inclusive nature of the process that led up to the proposed budget, allowing all groups and Committees to have their input. He does not consider this budget to be unrealistic, especially regarding our "untapped assets."

Janet recognized Will Irwin, who primarily objected to the proposal to pay the mortgage principal out of the Endowment. He reviewed the history of the decision to build Delaney Hall and the manner in which the money was raised. He said that at that time the congregation committed to paying the mortgage out of operating funds and that we should not change now. The fact that the Delaney Foundation has continued to pay the interest

makes this easier than it would have been otherwise. He said that if this proposal is passed the current congregation will be carrying none of the cost of Delaney Hall, instead shifting it to prior generations. He also warned against becoming dependent on the Endowment for ongoing funds, saying that the experience of other congregations has shown that this is unwise.

David Bates said he was neither in favor nor opposed but had a question and some observations . He asked what the current balance of the Endowment is (\$1.77 million) and what has its performance been this year (fluctuating but well ahead of indices). He remarked that expenditures that benefit the church for multiple years can properly come from the Endowment. He admitted to some unease about the \$50,000 gift, which may not repeat, but said that next year's mortgage payment would only increase from \$34,000 to \$37,000. He also pointed out that last year's budget projected a \$50,000 deficit , but we are close to break-even.

Janet said that the church values all contributions of whatever size, and that financial planning has to take year to year variance into account. But she added that she does not think that the congregation wants to "sit on its resources." She thinks that the emerging five-year plan will help us work through the volatility and use our resources to achieve our goals..

Brad Raffle said he agreed with Will Irwin's comments, and said that although he agrees with the rest of the budget he would like to propose an **amendment** that the budget be sent back to the Board, with the recommendation it be revised in such a way as to pay the mortgage principal out of the operating budget. After consultation with Parliamentarian David May, Janet asked Brad to **restate his amendment as a motion**, saying it would supersede the motion on the floor. Brad so **moved** and the motion was **seconded**. Janet reminded everyone that the discussion now shifted to the question of sending the budget back to the Board. Robin Sickles warned that this could affect other uses of the Endowment, including the 10% Social Action grant. Betsy Gelb said that she could not judge the argument that we would be shifting costs back to prior generations, but suggested that those who are concerned about using Endowment funds should get behind a campaign to solicit gifts and bequests for the Endowment. She asked that if it is decided to take money out of the Endowment, the Board should commit to a planned giving campaign in 2011. Therefore she opposes the motion to send the budget back, and backs the passage of the draft budget. Janet said that the development of a planned giving program is indeed one of the Board's goals for next year.

Jan Rosin agreed with Will Irwin's comments and said she supports Brad's motion. She does not feel it appropriate to give staff raises when so many members have not had salary increases during these difficult times.

Larry Huelbig said that when Delaney Hall was built, there was an expectation of increased membership that would support paying the mortgage out of operating funds, but there was also the realization that the building would be worthwhile anyway. He added that in the debate running up to the decision to build, everyone knew there would be a balloon payment in 2014 which would be either refinanced or paid out of the Endowment. He said that in view of the congregation's concerns he would support Brad's motion but does not necessarily oppose the budget.

Janet referred to the earlier comment about overcoming this year's projected \$50,000 deficit by complimenting the BOT on its management of 2010 resources and highlighting the work of our Business Administrator Karen Van Horn. Karen saved us untold thousands of dollars on the sanctuary roof repair, which quickly expanded to major drainage repairs that were reimbursed by insurance and the original contractor. The congregation immediately applauded.

Linda Condit said that she likes Betsy's idea of seeking bequests and she opposes Brad's motion.

Carolyn Craig **moved to close debate on the motion to refer** and her motion was **seconded**. Parliamentarian David May said that a 2/3 majority was needed, and the motion **passed**. Janet then called for the vote on Brad Raffle's motion to refer the budget back to the Board. Tim Lawrence **called for a paper ballot**. His motion

was **seconded** but **did not pass** (simple majority). The **motion to refer the budget back to the BOT passed by 40 in favor and 31 against.**

Asked by Janet to make some concluding remarks, Sarah Boyd acknowledged the vote and said the Board would do its best to bring another budget that would pass back to the congregation. Janet stressed that the budget belongs to the congregation, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Pedersen, Board Secretary

## **2010 Annual Report - Co-Ministers Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange**

**50th Anniversary Dinner** The year 2010 was punctuated by a number of events throughout the year celebrating Emerson's Fiftieth Anniversary, from theater performances to a Green Bazaar, and, of course, culminating in the wonderful Anniversary Dinner and program in October. The planning for these events had begun the year before with Don Whittaker at the reins but, oh so sadly, Don died quite unexpectedly in May. Fortunately for all of us, Ken McLeod agreed to step into the chair role. He and all the rest of the Anniversary committee are to be thanked for a most memorable celebratory year that left us all proud of Emerson's history and looking forward to Emerson's future with enthusiasm. Particularly meaningful to us during the Anniversary Dinner (so beautifully organized by Barbara Hopkins and Mary Ann Rusk) was the recognition of Susanna Painter who had served as secretary to the ministers for a good part of Emerson's history. When we came to Emerson we would have been lost without Susanna to steer and assist us. We cherish her support and affection. We would also like to make note of the Worship Committee's great job in co-coordinating summer worship services highlighting particular eras in Emerson's history.

**Board of Trustees** We work very closely in a partnership with the Board and feel that the congregation has been amply blessed this year by its Board of Trustees leadership. Janet Meininger has done a stellar job as president. We cannot thank her enough for her wisdom, long perspective, and unfailing belief in Emerson's possibilities. Vice president Sarah Boyd has helped develop the Coordinating Council into an important leadership role itself and we are looking forward to her service as president for 2011. Indeed, all the BOT members should be congratulated for their dedicated efforts and for the significant progress they have made on a strategic plan for the next years and the degree to which they have been responsive to the input and concerns of the congregation in developing that plan, as well as their making wise decisions in the many concerns that come before the Board.

**Time and Talent** Last Spring the Stewardship Committee launched a very innovative campaign for increasing volunteer participation at Emerson. It was a very good start in that we developed some of the core structure of the program. The effort will begin again early this spring and we look to make advances on the efforts that were just begun. Kudos to Jill Rose in particular, who spent countless hours organizing the data from those who filled out pledges for participation.

**Leap of Faith** Something of a surprise to us because we had not heard about the program was Emerson's acceptance into the Leap of Faith program. This major initiative by the Unitarian Universalist Association to select Emerson as one of eight congregations in the country that demonstrates great promise for growth is a major feather in the congregation's cap. The team has been selected and Linda Condit has graciously accepted the position as chair of our Leap of Faith program. We look forward to an exciting year of learning with our Mentor Congregation in Bethesda, MD and will be seeking ways by which Leap of Faith learnings can be put to use for the benefit of Unitarian Universalism in Houston.

**Stewardship Campaign** So much gratitude goes to Sarah Boyd, Will Irwin, Richard Loftin and David May for their relentless pursuit of this campaign. We had several major goals in this year's campaign. Generally the word was "increase" with one exception - decrease the amount of time it took to conduct the campaign. We came amazingly close to getting the campaign done in one month (with only a handful of pledges still to be made.) But we saw an increase in the number of pledges made, number of canvassers participating, and increase in the amount pledged. Although a few people reduced or dropped their pledge; increases and new and returning pledges more than offset that loss. When you take into consideration the overall economy, the fact that we almost made our goal of \$600,000 is truly an accomplishment. We are particularly excited that Richard and Alisha Loftin have volunteered to chair this coming year's stewardship campaign.

**Speaking of finances,** wasn't the Annual Services Auction a stupendous success, not only raising more than ever before for Emerson's coffers, but also providing a delightful evening for all attendees? Our hats are off to Barb Adams and Anne Goodman as well as all their supporting team.

**Religious Education for Children and Youth.** Emerson embarked this September on the new schedule of core classes at eleven o'clock to coincide with adult worship with the kids attending the first fifteen minutes in the sanctuary. To date, that change seems to be going well and may be a factor in the growth of the numbers of kids in our RE program this year. Certainly the leadership of our Interim DRE, Barbara Stoddard, and her work with a most devoted and productive RE Committee, under the leadership of Jay Jackson, are key factors in that growth. Barbara and the RE Committee have themselves been visioning for the future. They have initiated changes in the structure of the committee; inaugurated Emerson's first true Intergenerational program, *Gather the Spirit*; hosted a district wide OWL training which, among other attendees, trained Emerson members to teach all levels of OWL, enabling us to offer this seminal program in true multi-generational fashion in coming months. Meanwhile, the DRE Search Committee, under the most able leadership of Kimberly Coolidge, has attacked the task of finding and bringing to Emerson a dynamic and professionally trained Religious Educator with determination and vigor. Stay tuned for developments there.

**Staff** This year also saw its share of changes in staff. First, there was the change in the leadership of the Music Department. We were very sad at John Branch's retirement. We had developed a very close working relationship with him over the years and have a lot of affection and respect for him. John brought so many welcome changes to the Music program which expanded considerably during his tenure. But, at the same time, we were glad that Bonnie Wellington agreed to move into the position of Music Director. She had already proved herself in the position of Choir Director. The choir has deepened its craft and expanded its range under Bonnie's direction. They gave a most moving and ethereal performance of Faure's Requiem in May and a transcendent performance at December's Messiah Sing-along. We cannot say enough about the dedication of the volunteer members of our choir - that they come week after week to rehearsal on Wednesday night, and perform Sunday after Sunday, that they add immeasurably to the worship experience for all of us - well, it is truly amazing.

Continuing in the vein of staff changes, we welcomed Molly Martin to the staff as the Office Assistant for Communications mid year. Molly has brought considerable skill and creativity to that position. She is incredibly talented, ever cheerful and efficiently productive. She has quickly become indispensable. And yet we were also sad to say goodbye to Nancy Lipp as our office assistant. We knew we would miss her seemingly boundless caring and affection for our congregation and its programs. But, fortunately for us and for the entire congregation, Nancy has barely skipped a beat. She is still so very active - it seems she has a hand in just about everything! And, of course, Karen Van Horn, our Business Administrator has continued her steady, reliable, and dependable steering of our business ship. She also seems to pull miracles out of her hat when it comes to getting recalcitrant problems fixed or wresting another dime of savings for the congregational budget.

**In General** There has been so much that has transpired over the year 2010 - so many magical moments, so many moving programs, so much love and devotion exhibited by all our many volunteer laborers-of-love for the good of our congregation. We can hardly name and describe it all, but there are a few groups we would like to hold up for recognition: the folks behind the Welcome Mat Movie series and the Standing on the Side of Love petitions (nearly 200 signatures at last count) who continue to find ways to inspire us all to live our welcome to LGBT people; the Emerson Players, first with their Valentines Day production under Don Whittaker's direction and then, later, the production of Agatha Christie's mystery *And Then There Were None* under Tamekia Johnson's direction, who valiantly stepped up to fill Don's shoes so that the show could go on - and go on it did, in superb fashion; the Lay Pastoral Ministry Team and their abiding ministry of presence which brings solace, cheer and connection to so many of our congregants and for their planning for a training a new cadre of lay ministers in the coming year; the Social Action Council's needed and enlightening focus on Mental Illness this past Fall, in addition to its continuing programs that assist our wider community.



And what have we two been doing all this time through all this activity and round of events and happenings, great and small? Why, we've been sitting back and cheering you on! Well, of course, we have been involved in everything we've mentioned to a greater or lesser extent. We, of course, are most visible during the public moments of Emerson's life. So, for instance, we routinely conduct worship and officiate at memorial services. But that is the tip of the iceberg. Whether it is recruiting, providing suggestions for leaders, working with the Board of Trustees and Emerson's many Committees, working with the staff, or providing private counsel, we daily put our oars into the water to advance the well being of Emerson, both the congregation itself and the individuals who are its community. But, as always, the vast amount of what we two do depends upon all that *you* do and the gifts you all bring to our common endeavor.

And, as in so many of years of ministry here at Emerson, there were too many deaths of beloved members (even one would be too many); tragically, two of those deaths were suicides. And this year has seen its fair quotient of serious illness, mental travail, and financial worry for our folks. Ministry is always a many colored tapestry of shared joys and sorrows, triumphs and disappointments; and this year has been no different than any other in that regard. But with every passing year our affection and esteem for this congregation and its people deepens and grows richer. You are interwoven into our very souls.

With faith and deep affection,

Becky and Mark

**2010 Annual Report - President's Report to the Congregation**  
**Janet Meininger**

2010 began with congregational approval of the Statement of Identity and Purpose, "Our beloved community of faith, reason and affection welcomes all to grow in mind and spirit as we build a better world". This paved the way for our next major goal, a long range plan. The Board of Trustees (BOT) has made significant progress on developing a **five-year plan**. Further revisions will be made incorporating recommendations of the congregation. Next steps include setting targets for evaluating progress toward goals, and linking our plans with financial projections.

We received an unexpected and very welcome boost to our planning process. Emerson was selected by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) as one of eight congregations in the nation for the **Leap of Faith program**. The goal of this program is numerical growth. We are solidly poised to increase our rate of growth in membership and revenue, but, in spite of efforts over many years, have not been able to "make the leap". This program is fully funded by the UUA.

The highlight of 2010 was the celebration of our **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary**. There were events all year long, culminating in our celebration dinner in October. We shared our rich history, our accomplishments, and our aspirations for the future. I congratulate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee and all who participated in the events. We are very grateful to Ken McLeod for taking on the leadership of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee after the sudden death of its champion, Don Whittaker.

The Emerson UU Church **Social Action Fund** (also known as the 10% solution) was activated the first time since this resolution was approved by the congregation in 2008. It is funded by 10% of the annual increase in the market value of the Endowment Fund as of September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. The Social Action Council selects recipient(s) for this fund, which are approved by the Board and by congregational vote. This year \$2,598 was generated for this fund, which will be awarded in 2011 after congregational approval.

The Board of Trustees appointed a search committee for the Director of **Religious Education** position to follow the two-year interim DRE, Barbara Stoddard. They were charged with tasks and a timeline for completion; they have been on target in their accomplishments to date. The RE program continues to thrive and grow as evidenced by an increase in the number of children registered and attending, volunteer positions that are filled, and high quality religious education programming for children that continues to attract families to Emerson. Collaboration across the entire congregation was required to change the RE schedule for children and youth and to have RE programming and worship service occur simultaneously at 11 AM.

Our treasurer prepared the full **budget** report, but there are several major points worth highlighting. Although we started the year with a projected budget deficit of \$41,494, we did not end the year with a deficit. The BOT approved an operating budget surplus fund at the beginning of the year, which allowed us to keep the surplus from 2009 in reserve for 2010 to meet budgeted expenditures. We of course did need it for our operating expenses this year. This 2009 surplus, combined with the careful management of our staff and oversight of the BOT and Finance Committee, the continuing support of members and friends through their contributions, and very successful fundraising efforts, we ended the year with a slight surplus. Early in the year the BOT and Finance Committee collaborated in revising the financial calendar and worked collaboratively to propose the 2011 budget; this budget was sent back to the BOT by the congregation at the December 5<sup>th</sup> congregational meeting and a revised budget was proposed by the BOT in January 2011. On the income side, we had a very successful canvass for the 2011 budget. This was completed in the month of October, thanks to the leadership of Mark Edmiston-Lange and the "stewardistas", Sarah Boyd, Will Irwin, Richard Loftin and David May. Also on the income side, the 2010 auction was led by two Board members, Barb Adams and Anne Goodman. Building on the successes of previous auctions they brought in new technology, new ideas, organized an energized committee, worked very hard, and had stellar results. We are not only grateful to all of those who worked on raising funds for Emerson, but to all of the members and friends of the congregation who responded with their contributions.

**Longer term financial issues** were also considered in 2010. The Board approved a revised Endowment Policy, which outlines in broad terms how the endowment should be used. The Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee are considering alternative scenarios for paying the mortgage for Delaney Hall (current balance approximately \$855,000). In October 2010, the President arranged a meeting with representatives of Frost Bank to let them know that we are making plans for handling the balloon payment on our mortgage, which is due in 2014. A secondary goal was to solidify our relationship with them, should we decide to apply for another mortgage for all or part of the balance. The Board is also examining our internal accounting procedures, making changes in our methods as necessary so that they comply with GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles). This will strengthen our position should we decide to apply for another mortgage.

We have made major strides with our **buildings and grounds**. We had the Sanctuary and Westwood Hall inspected and recertified for occupancy. The changes and repairs that were necessary to complete the process were minor. Summer was devoted to addressing the leaks that occurred with heavy rains. I am pleased to report that we are quite sure we have discovered and repaired the root cause of our leaks in the ceiling of the Sanctuary. It is fortunate that we were able to recoup much of the cost of discovery (blockage of an underground drainage pipe), the changes that were required to fix it, and the repairs to the Sanctuary ceiling. We had the roof drainage on the south side of Westwood Hall redesigned and rebuilt. In addition, this year we refurbished some of our grounds and plantings.

We have new **personnel** this year, filling two positions and reorganizing a third under a new position description. Molly Martin was hired as the office administrator for communications March 1<sup>st</sup> and Efrain Vasquez started September 15<sup>th</sup> as our full time weekday sexton. With the retirement of John Branch, there was a budget-neutral reorganization of the Music Department with Bonnie Wellington as the Director.

I have been honored to serve as your President during our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and I'm pleased to have this opportunity to thank all of you. I am deeply grateful to Mark and Becky for their loyal dedication and caring, for their expertise, and for their spirit of collaboration and celebration as we move forward as a congregation. I thank our hardworking and committed staff members, all the Committee and Council Chairs, committee and council members, teachers, volunteers, and participants in all the programs that make Emerson the vibrant community that it is. I refer you to the annual reports of our productive committees and councils and I commend them for their accomplishments.

I am particularly grateful to Sarah Boyd, Vice-President of the Board this year who has led the Coordinating Council and has been a major player in this year's successes. I am very grateful Mary Pederson our Board Secretary, Billye Smith, our Treasurer, Liz Gammel, Assistant Treasurer, and Brad Gammel, immediate Past-President. Brad will now be able to retire from the Board after four years of service. Thank you, Brad. I also thank outgoing BOT members for their excellent service, Anne Goodman, who has been a trustee for three years, and Bob Hopkins who served a one-year unexpired term. I thank Board members who are continuing, Barb Adams, Sarah Boyd, Gabe Gelb, Beth Hill, and Robin Sickles. The 2010 Board of Trustees worked hard, shared ideas freely, and brought varied experiences and points of view to the issues at hand. This BOT not only navigated the highs and lows of 2010, they examined issues with a long term perspective, making decisions this year that will be a solid foundation for EUUC to thrive and achieve new heights in future years.

Janet Meininger  
President, 2010

**Annual Report 2010 – Financial Report**  
**Billye Smith, Treasurer**

Emerson’s financial results follow. Improvement from the projected deficit was principally due to the results of the annual service auction and the planned contributions. The 2009 surplus provided the funds to cover the current year short-fall.

This is a simplified summary of the 2010 actual-versus budgeted performance:

|  | <b>2010<br/>Budget</b> | <b>2010<br/>Actual</b> | <b>Actual<br/>Better/<br/>(Worse)</b> |   |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>INCOME</b>                            |                        |                        |                                       |   |
| Planned Contributions                    | 550,000                | 571,563                | 21,563                                | Collected contributions exceeded projection   |
| Special Collections                      | 30,000                 | 30,771                 | 771                                   |   |
| Open Offering                            | 15,500                 | 10,666                 | (4,834)                               |   |
| Facilities Rent                          | 15,000                 | 17,674                 | 2,674                                 | Temporary rentals of facilities for events    |
| Tenant Income                            | 46,000                 | 47,828                 | 1,828                                 | Tanglewood Pre-school                         |
| Fundraisers                              | 22,000                 | 36,296                 | 14,296                                | Primarily proceeds from the annual auction    |
| Other Income                             | 5,100                  | 5,455                  | 355                                   | Sales of books, tapes, bank interest and misc |
| Mortgage Interest Reimbursement          | 59,120                 | 59,165                 | 45                                    |   |
| <b>Total Income</b>                      | <b>742,720</b>         | <b>779,418</b>         | <b>36,698</b>                         |   |
| <b>EXPENSE</b>                           |                        |                        |                                       |   |
| Ministry                                 | 194,390                | 191,704                | 2,686                                 |   |
| Congregational Support                   | 13,818                 | 13,387                 | 431                                   |   |
| Religious Education                      | 81,656                 | 86,152                 | (4,496)                               | Expenses for OWL Training hosted              |
| Music                                    | 57,814                 | 57,111                 | 703                                   |   |
| Denomination                             | 34,800                 | 34,822                 | (22)                                  |   |
| Special Collections Distribution         | 30,000                 | 26,502                 | 3,498                                 | Collections not yet disbursed                 |
| Social Action                            | 6,900                  | 6,156                  | 744                                   |   |
| Utilities                                | 50,900                 | 61,754                 | (10,854)                              | Cold winter and delay in water meter install  |
| Building and Liability Insurance         | 31,000                 | 20,948                 | 10,052                                | Reduced premiums                              |
| Facilities Maintenance & Repair          | 49,693                 | 67,741                 | (18,048)                              | Expenses for occupancy permit and staff       |
| Mortgage Principal Payments              | 32,425                 | 32,266                 | 159                                   |   |
| Mortgage Interest                        | 59,120                 | 59,308                 | (188)                                 |   |
| Administration                           | 146,485                | 140,649                | 5,836                                 |   |
| <b>Total Expense</b>                     | <b>789,001</b>         | <b>798,500</b>         | <b>(9,499)</b>                        |   |
| <b>Net of Income and Expense</b>         | <b>(46,281)</b>        | <b>(19,082)</b>        | <b>27,199</b>                         |   |
| <b>Special Collections not disbursed</b> |                        | (4,659)                | (5,215)                               |   |
| <b>2009 Surplus</b>                      |                        | 25,205                 | (5,215)                               |   |
|  | <b>\$ (46,281)</b>     | <b>\$ 1,464</b>        | <b>\$ 16,769</b>                      |   |

## Church Funds

Emerson's cash-and-investment position increased during the year. The Endowment Fund balance at 12/31/10 was \$1,856,448 compared to a \$1,621,707 balance at 12/31/09 an increase of \$234,741 (14%).

The following is a summary of Emerson's cash and investment position at 12/31/09 and 12/31/10:

| <b>ACCOUNT BALANCES</b>       | <b>12/31/2009</b> | <b>12/31/2010</b> | <b>Change</b>  | <b>Description</b>   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| Operating Accounts            | 87,145            | 113,589           | 26,444         | Used to collect and disburse fund for operating activities. Year-end balances are high because of prepaid pledge collections for the following year. |
| Dedicated Contributions Accts | 90,544            | 100,943           | 10,399         | These funds have been donated for specific purposes and are held until the funds are needed.   |
| <b>Endowment Accounts:</b>    |                   |                   |                |  |
| Money Market                  | 154,783           | 106,113           | (48,670)       |  |
| Investment -- Unrestricted    | 724,924           | 1,026,335         | 301,411        |  |
| Investment -- Restricted      | 724,000           | 724,000           | -              | Endowment funds equal to mortgage balloon amount restricted by board action to insure available capital.   |
| <b>Total Account Balances</b> | <b>1,781,396</b>  | <b>2,070,980</b>  | <b>289,584</b> |  |

## Financial Records and Policy Review

A review of the church financial records was conducted in early 2010 with no significant findings. A more formal review is planned during 2011. In addition, policy and procedures will be reviewed. Recommendations for bringing policy and reporting standards into accord with generally accepted accounting principles will be given to the board within this calendar year.

I wish to thank Liz Gammell for her work as Assistant Treasurer. Her efforts in the review of the financial records of the church were invaluable. Karen Van Horn's continued professional handling of Emerson's business affairs is a vital asset to the congregation. I deeply appreciate her service.

Respectfully submitted

Billye Smith  
Treasurer

**2010 Annual Report - Business Administrator  
Karen Van Horn**

As Emerson's Business Administrator my responsibilities are quite varied.

**Facility Usage**

To start off the year Emerson UU hosted the 2010 YRUU Youth Rally the weekend of January 15th – 17th. It was very well attended.

Beginning May 3, Emerson UU became the special “home-away-from-home” for an extraordinary group of adult students from Houston, and from halfway around the world. These students are immersed in a unique educational process called the Feldenkrais Method®. The Method uses movement and directed attention to develop awareness, in the service of improving the quality of human experience and function. The students began their four-year journey toward teacher certification, and accreditation as practitioners of the Feldenkrais Method®. Students came from Texas (Houston, Austin, Arlington), Oklahoma, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania – and one Houstonian expat flying in from Kazakhstan!

The group will be in training in Westwood Hall three times a year – May, September, and November – until their graduation in December 2013. If you peek in the windows, you are likely to see something unusual! You can watch their Welcoming video and others on YouTube.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m\\_1d-ccyAkg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_1d-ccyAkg)

There were Emerson programs, teacher training workshops, OWL Trainers Training, Emerson program events, Dinner Theater events, Emerson's 50th Anniversary and numerous one-time events. Responsibility for event set-up/clean-up requirements are primarily handled by Efrain Vasquez, weekday/evening sexton, and Hans Coster, Sunday Sexton.

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 Club.

Guitar Houston and our own UniTunes continue to hold their concerts at Emerson.

**Facility Maintenance**

The following, in addition to routine maintenance, required much of my attention during 2010:

- Arrange for installation of second water meter for irrigation system
- Obtain Certificates of Occupancy for both Westwood Hall and the Sanctuary
- Sanctuary lighting
- Delaney Hall fire alarm wiring problems
- Sanctuary roof leak and subsequent drain issues
- Westwood Hall wood roof overhang replacement

**Administrative Responsibilities**

This year I served on the Search Committee for the Office Administrator for Communications position. We were very pleased to recommend Molly Martin for the position. I also led the search for the full time Weekday/Evening Sexton position, with assistance from the Personnel Committee.

- 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, Nancy Lipp, Karen Tidholm, Jill Rose and Anne Goodman volunteer their time to provide assistance in administrative areas of the church. Nancy Lipp also delivers the Emersonian to the post office after our super in-house editor, Molly Martin, produces, edits and folds it with assistance from the folding fingers, Rita Loucks, Dana Bays and others. Thanks to all of you!

Again this year, I wish extend my thanks to Emerson's Board of Trustees, Co-ministers, Becky and Mark, Barbara Stoddard , Molly Martin, and Bonnie Wellington for their continued support.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Van Horn  
Business Administrator

**2010 Annual Report - Director of Music**  
**Bonnie Wellington**

This past year was one of transition. And with transitions there are always rough patches, as well as great opportunities. I have learned and continue to learn a great deal about the music department, and the church at large. The music department continues to grow both in diversity and in musicality.

The duties required of the Director of Music at the church are certainly beyond that of a half time position, which supported the initial separation of roles into the Artistic Director and Music Director Positions. The two roles were then re-merged into one: the Director of Music. However, it was clear at the time these two positions were merged that assistance would be required in order to meet the objectives of the music department. One of the section lead roles was augmented, entitled the "Head Section Leader," and the duties required of this new position were to include those previously required of the section leads, as well as 10% of the Music Director's monthly duties (i.e. music filing, AMC music ordering, stage management, etc.). This has worked relatively well so far, and will continue to be defined in the year ahead.

The choir showcased two major performances: Gabriel Faure's *Requiem*, and for Vespers George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*. Each performance marked a new standard of performance for the regularly performing musicians of Emerson. The music was both challenging and rewarding. We were able to utilize the talents of musicians from outside the church, creating both a higher performance quality, as well as new musical relationships. The *Messiah* was also advertised as a Sing-A-Long, something not done at Emerson before, and allowed for "music as worship," to be that much more accessible to the audience. General attendance is still an issue.

Music as Ministry has meant many things in 2010. The choir experienced many losses and gains, both by individual members and as a group. There were broken arms, surgeries, new members, weddings, the passing of fellow singers and loved ones of members. On each and every account, the group came together and made music, transcending the circumstances. Our beloved Don Whitaker died, quite unexpectedly, and both the choir and Emerson players came out in support.

The Emerson Players put on a wonderful performance of *Ten Little Indians*, in spite of their loss, and in doing so honored Don's memory. It was a great performance, and revived the players in their future endeavors. They continue to plan for future productions, and acquired Hillary Henderson as a new leader. Hillary has been an enormous asset to both the Players and the choir.

Communication with the Worship Committee and Audio Visual Committee has continued to improve. Programming of summer music was very successful as well as diverse. Defining a monthly schedule with performance structure has aided in creating balance between departments: balance of choir performances, Suoni Dolci, solos, Waldo, EIO, etc. Placing a more even distribution of responsibility of performance time to each group has allowed for a higher level of musicianship. Instead of pumping out an anthem a week, the choir is responsible for a maximum of two anthems a month. Suoni Dolci is performing a monthly anthem, and the section leads are showcased regularly with solos. This kind of structure has allowed for both a variety of performance mediums as well as a higher quality in each performance.

The Performing Arts Council (PAC) has been an enormous asset to both me and the music department in general. Mary Ann Rusk does a wonderful job of scheduling recurring meetings, creating an agenda, and making sure that points in the agenda are brought to light and discussed. Stephen Lipp maintains and manages meeting minutes to ensure that information is communicated/distributed throughout the department.



Restructuring of the Music Library has been an ongoing project, but so far has been very successful. Adrian and I purged the library of music that is no longer appropriate to the overall vision of Emerson. Antiquated and isolating music was donated to Emerson members teaching in area schools. Research was done in order to purchase music that will fill out and diversify the music library.

The music made this past year would not have been possible without the assistance of the section leaders, Jessica Jones McCann (soprano), Abi Levis (alto), Adrian Rodriguez (baritone), and our accompanist Anita Butt. In order to maintain the continued growth and diversity within the music department, it is imperative that we have qualified leadership. Without these individuals lending their talents, we would not have been able to accomplish all that was.

**2010 Annual Report - Interim Director of Religious Education  
Barbara Gay Stoddard**

2010 was a year filled with renewal and change. We continued to honor and cherish our traditions while exploring ways to move forward with our vision and mission for religious education programming for children and youth at Emerson.

I hope you will take a moment to read the annual report of the Religious Education Committee to get a feel for the great works this committee has accomplished over the last year. It has truly been a pleasure working with this dedicated group of Emerson's loving family. I entreat you as well, to read the report from the DRE Search Committee to see the important work entrusted to these folks.

At this time there are 145 children and youth registered in our program. This is in comparison to fewer than 100 registered at this time last January. As you all are aware, the RE Committee worked with the congregation and the Board of Trustees to change the time that we hold our core Religious Education classes. Prior to September 2010, the average attendance in RE classrooms for children and youth averaged below 50. From September – November 2010 we now experience an average of 70 young people during the 11:00 service hour.

During the 10:00 hour, which we share with Adult RE, we now hold our Coming of Age class with 15 eighth graders enrolled. We have introduced the new "Community in Action" program for children Kindergarten through 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Our senior high youth (YRUU) meets during both hours on Sunday mornings. With the change in hours for programming, most of our 8<sup>th</sup> graders now attend "class" with their 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade peers during the 11:00 hour.

The committee continues to work on its new structure and how to deliver programming that best suits Emerson's families. Energy and love abound. What a pleasure!

Each month, I meet with the UU Religious Educators in the Houston Area. We provide support to each other but also plan joint events and programming for all our area UU churches. In addition, there is a monthly meeting of folks involved with Houston Area Youth Programming. This group helps in the planning of Gulf Coast Rally and various other joint youth events.

Because there are so many things occurring in Emerson's RE program I decided to list several highlights of the past year. I believe I speak for the entire RE committee in saying, we hope that you will consider the ways that you will become or will continue to be involved in "RE" regardless whether you have children in the program or not.

January

Emerson's youth group (YRUU) hosted the annual Gulf Coast Rally at Emerson – Jan. 15 – 17.

7-9<sup>th</sup> Grade OWL (Our Whole Lives, sexuality education) continues at Emerson for 30 youth from the Houston Area.

10-12<sup>th</sup> Grade OWL held at First Unitarian Church – Emerson youth in attendance.

DRE Search Committee formed. Goal to hire new Religious Educator who will begin August, 2011.

RE Committee holds annual retreat to discern vision and mission. Began work on changing times of core RE classes.

February

Feb. 7 – 1<sup>st</sup> Annual "Souper Bowl" Sunday, held at Emerson for benefit of Houston Food Bank – in partnership with the Social Action Committee. Young people created "canned food sculptures" to raise money as well as food.

Feb. 12 – 14 – Interim DRE attended RE Conference in Fort Worth sponsored by our South West UU District.  
Feb. 27 – Emerson hosts workshop on Radical Hospitality: Creating Beloved Community for All Children, presented by Sally Patton.  
Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18 and May 16 – began holding 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday “worship” in place of classes for K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade.  
RE committee begins to develop upcoming “RE Survey” and proposals for time changes.

### March

Mar. 27 – 28 – Coming of Age group holds Vision Quest Retreat.  
RE Committee begins to develop new committee structure and development of new policies.  
Adult RE and Children/Youth RE partner to offer a multigenerational program monthly beginning Sept. 2010.

### April

In partnership with Social Action, we hold annual “Easter Canned Food Drive”.  
Earth Ministry Committee led “2<sup>nd</sup> Hour” programming for children K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade for 1<sup>st</sup> 3 Sundays to create Grocery Bags for the Earth.  
Apr. 18 – Senior Youth Service (YRUU). Fantastic!  
RE Committee starts “survey” of congregation.  
Teacher recruitment for summer and next church year begins.  
Interim DRE leads focus group for DRE Search Committee.

### May

May 2 – Coming of Age Service – Amazing!  
May 16 – Last Day of Classes - -Current 5<sup>th</sup> Graders welcomed into Middle School Group and current 8<sup>th</sup> Graders welcomed into YRUU.  
May 23 – 1st Intergenerational Flower Communion Service – led by Mark and Becky Edmiston-Lange & Barbara Stoddard.  
RE Committee begins to make plans for introducing new program changes to congregation in Fall & starts to review survey results.

### June

Summer programming begins – Culture Club – World Tour – we traveled around the world this summer.

### July

Interim DRE attends Dwight Brown Leadership Experience along with Sarah Boyd – July 25 – 30.  
Several Jr. and Sr. youth attend various UU summer camp experiences as both counselors and campers.  
Sr. Youth met during summer for movies and a weekend social action and play.

### August

Aug. 14 – Youth Advisor and Youth Leadership Development workshop held at Emerson.  
Aug. 14 - Spirit Play training held at Emerson Unitarian Church  
Aug. 28 – Houston Area – teacher training held at Emerson.

### September

Sept. 11 – RE Teacher Training for those unable to attend Aug. 28 session  
Sept. 12 – Welcome Back Brunch for RE families during 10:00 hour – to help kick off the “flipping” of hours.  
Sept. 19 – New Community in Action Hour program begins during 10:00 – Classes for Preschool – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade begin at 11:00  
Coming of Age begins with a class of 15.  
Youth Rally in January to be hosted by Bay Area church – one of Emerson’s youth is elected as Co-Dean.

Sept. 23 – 26 – OWL Training hosted by Emerson. Sessions led for Elementary, Youth and Adult levels. 5 people from Emerson attended.

RE Committee begins work under new committee structure.

#### October

Oct. 31 - Annual Halloween Haunted House and Carnival – Incredible!

Oct. 22 – 24 Interim DRE attends annual professional conference for Liberal Religious Educators (LREDA)

RE committee begins work on organizing OWL programming for K-1 and 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade groups.

#### November

RE Committee begins work on pageant prep, hanging of the greens event

Meeting of OWL teachers for upcoming elementary level programs

#### December

Dec. 3 – Hanging of the Greens – Inspiring!

Dec. 12 – Preliminary meeting for parents of youth in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade regarding OWL.

Dec. 19 – Holiday Pageant – Just Stupendous!

**2010 Annual Report - Committee on Ministry**  
**Chair: Linda Condit**

Members:

Linda Condit, Chair  
Valerie Blair  
Dick Cheney  
Betsy Gelb  
Rachel Shada

The Committee on Ministry (COM) began the year with the culmination of several projects. The congregation approved a proposed statement of identity and purpose and a change in the description of the COM in the church's constitution to better reflect its new role.

As part of its effort to promote "shared ministry," the COM decided to revisit the committees and spirituality-focused groups that seem most central to ministry. The purpose of these visits was to discuss the statement of identity and purpose, to learn about developments since our last contact, and to highlight accomplishments and areas for focus. In order to focus on shared ministry work in the church, the COM prepared "spotlights" on the covenant groups one month and on SEARCH sandwich making another month. Other groups will be highlighted in the future. This is a way of recognizing and appreciating ministry work that groups are doing at Emerson.

The COM worked throughout the year to provide input to the Board of Trustee on the long-range plan as various versions became available.

Committee members supported the Stewardship Committee's Time 'n' Talent campaign by staffing tables to discuss opportunities and interests. This was deemed to be an important way to help individuals with their ministry in the church. Another project highlighted the opportunity to carpool and an explanation of the carpool parking. The COM also helped arrange for chalices and candles for committees to use during their meetings.

The COM expects to be involved with the Leap of Faith project, a UUA initiative. Emerson was one of eight congregations selected to be mentored by a larger church in our areas of interest.

## **Bios for 2011 Nominees**

### **Board of Trustees**

#### **Larry Huelbig – 1 Year Term**

Larry Huelbig and his wife, Carole Huelbig, have been active members of Emerson since 1977. Larry has served Emerson in a number of roles, including: president and board member; co-leader in two Emerson construction/renovation projects; chair or member of committees, including Long Range Planning/Growth Planning, Aesthetics, Finance, and Adult Education; Sunday school teacher; capital campaign co-chair; and host or leader of discussion or survey groups.

Larry is in the process of retiring from his position as partner in the business litigation section of the law firm of Haynes and Boone, LLP to practice on a reduced schedule at a smaller law firm.

#### **Larry Kelly – 3 Year Term**

Larry Kelly has been a member of Emerson since 1985. His activities in the church have included several years as chairman of Building and Grounds. He has been delivering Food for Seniors (Inter-Faith Ministry) for over 6 years. He is married to Edna and they have two grown children in Colorado and California. His business is in real estate investments and he has been in commercial real estate business for over 40 years. Special interests of his include Eastern religions and Chinese martial arts. Some hobbies are surf fishing, travel, Chinese calligraphy and playing Bluegrass music.

#### **Aaron Knight – 3 Year Term**

J. Aaron Knight was born in Richland, Washington, but his family moved to Houston before his first birthday. He grew up in the Spring Branch area. Raised Episcopalian, he served as an altar boy.

Aaron earned a Ph.D. in political science from Texas A&M University in College Station and has taught politics at various universities and colleges across Texas for over twenty years. He is currently the Chair of the Department of Applied Social Sciences at Houston Community College, Northeast.

Aaron and his wife Vanessa discovered Unitarian Universalism roughly twelve years ago after moving back to Houston. They have two boys ages five and ten. Since joining Emerson in 2003 they have both been active in the Religious Education program. Aaron is also a member of the Art Committee and he plays percussion in the Intergenerational Orchestra

#### **Sherle Watson – 3 Year Term**

Sherle Frost Watson is originally from Philadelphia and was transferred to Houston in 1999 for a short-term assignment. She is a business writer, currently employed with the ethics & compliance group in the law department at Halliburton. Sherle and her husband, Eric, came from different religious backgrounds, but they discovered Emerson together six years ago and have the mutual joy of sharing this community, this faith tradition, and the choir. Sherle also chairs the communications committee and volunteers with the League of Women Voters and Literacy Advance. Between them Sherle and Eric have three married daughters and one son and are expecting their first grandchild in May.

### **Committee on Ministry**

#### **Edna Kelly**

Shortly after joining Emerson in 1985, Edna began teaching a children's Religious Education class with Constance Chien. She served as secretary for the Board of Trustees for three years, and since 2006, she has felt honored to be a member of the Lay Pastoral Ministry Team. Through Emerson, Edna and her husband Larry became volunteers with Interfaith Ministries Food for Seniors, giving them immense satisfaction with an effort of only a couple of hours a month. Edna also took up IM's offer of becoming a Neighbor-to-Neighbor after Hurricane Katrina and remains friends with Rose, now returned to New Orleans. IM has so many rewarding

and valuable programs in our community. Recycling, composting and other forms of “green” living are also long-term interests. As a volunteer La Leche League Leader for over 30 years, Edna provides information and support to breastfeeding mothers. Besides providing the superior infant food, breastfeeding is the most ecologically sound form of infant feeding, using none of our earth’s precious resources that are involved in the production, packaging, preparation, and waste disposal of artificial breast milk, or formula. Edna is a retired school librarian, and she and Larry live in West University.

### **Kris Taylor**

A member of Emerson since 2000, Kris Taylor freely confesses to her religious past as a frustrated “heretic” Methodist and, later, Presbyterian. You’ll see her in the Gathering Place once a month as a greeter, and at least that often at the Emerson Bookstore. On the route to a 25-year-plus career in school public relations, Kris made brief, early stops as a classroom teacher and a television reporter/ producer. She has been chief communications officer for three school districts, served as a consultant to approximately a dozen others, and now works as an independent public relations counselor and writer. She holds a master’s degree in communications from the University of Texas and an accreditation in public relations (APR). When she’s not dreaming up communications campaigns and cranking out copy, she goes for the boring stuff – cooking, gardening, reading, needlework, music (from the Rolling Stones to Rossini), trying to corral an unruly Cairn terrier named Harley, and trips to cooler climates.

### **Nominations Committee**

#### **Laurie Hammons**

Laurie is a member of the choir and a past member of the board of trustees, the RE committee, search committee, auction committee, growth planning committee, Women’s Alliance, and Sew Be It. She has also served as past co-chair of the canvass committee, Food committee chair, Sunday school teacher, UNICEF carnival chair, and assistant director of religious education. She and husband Bill have two daughters who grew up at Emerson. They have been members since 1983 and have attended General Assembly 10 times. She is employed by Rice University, in the Center for Education, which focuses on teacher development and education policy. Laurie treasures her friends at Emerson and the opportunity for spiritual and intellectual growth.

#### **Nancy Lipp**

Nancy Lipp joined Emerson in 2006 but has been a Unitarian for 11 years. While at Emerson she has been an active member of the Membership Committee, has coordinated the Covenant Groups, is a member of the Stitcher’s group and the daytime book club. For two and a half years, Nancy worked as office staff and since that time does volunteer work in the office.

#### **Mary Ann Rusk**

Mary Ann has found membership at Emerson to be a spiritual and meaningful experience. She values the friendships and community found here. Her activities at Emerson include RE teacher when her two sons were attending, twice President of Women’s Alliance, Chair of Performing Arts Council, member of the choir, Caring Committee, Emerson Players Group, 50th Anniversary Committee, previous member and chair of Nominating Committee. Mary Ann has worked on many fund raisers at Emerson including the 2010 Service Auction.

**2010 Annual Report - Adult Religious Education Committee**  
**Chair: Ken Salzman**

**Committee members at year end:** Megan Evans, Ken Salzman (Chair), Robin Sickles (Board Liaison), Mary Ann Stanley, Tim Tyler, Eric Watson, and Dr. Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange (Advisor and Spiritual Mentor). We are pleased to welcome Norbert Welk and Barbara Greer as new committee members in 2011. Sherle Watson handles publicity for the committee.

**Vision and Mission Statements:**

**Vision:** Emersonians living their lives based on UU principles.

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

**Environment:** Emerson's "Statement of Purpose & Identity" was approved by the congregation at the annual meeting in Jan. There is some concern that, having invested the time and energy to develop and pass this statement, now "we – Emerson UU Church – can check that one off. We have defined who we are," which, clearly, we have not.

In an effort to reduce the strain on younger children, the starting time for the Sunday service was set back to 11:00AM. Given that the EIO and Adult RE share the space in Westwood Hall in close time-proximity on Sunday morning, this has resulted in the shortening of the time available for Adult RE speakers to 45 minutes. So far, the search for another venue for Adult RE has been unsuccessful.

**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, Judy Richardson, Carolyn Truesdell (2 years each), Nancy Lipp, Mary Ann Stanley, & Barbara Stoddard. Thank you for your valuable contribution to the Adult RE program. The 'Sunday morning Speaker's Series' continued apace.

In August and September, as a result of pressure from a member of the congregation, the committee put together a 3-part series on Immigration. This turned out to be a very popular offering. In the final presentation, Bill King, the invited speaker, brought with him as an 'expert' on the subject, Charles Foster, a senior partner in the law firm of Foster Quan.

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

Again this year, as an affiliate of the Boniuk Center, Emerson hosted three of their World Religion Lecture Series in January.

The "Couples Enrichment Program", so generously taken on and developed by Kay Kamas and Jim Porter, scheduled for presentation in April and May, did not generate enough interest, so was cancelled.

The Welcome MAT program, a monthly program showing movies dealing with various aspects of the GLBT life style, continues 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.

In order to expand Emerson's coverage of the OWL program, volunteers were recruited to be trained as facilitators for the Adult OWL curriculum. A training for the facilitators was held at Emerson. The training of the Adult OWL facilitators was paid for out of the Adult Ed line item budget. The schedule for offering this training to Emerson adults is in development.



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 to start in January, 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Salzman, Chair

Attachment: Appendix A: 2010 Attendance Figures

## **2010 Annual Report - The Audio-Visual Committee**

**Chair: Empty**

The AV committee of Emerson Church participated in a total of 73 events, including weekly services, Memorial services, weddings, solstice celebrations and special concerts in 2010. The committee produced somewhere in the vicinity of 300 CD copies, about 200 of which were paid for and the remainder were courtesy copies for performers and or family copies of memorial services. We purchased no new major equipment during the calendar year, only replacing a couple of worn out cables. We hired no professional help during the calendar year and spent no budgeted funds.

The equipment the AV team operates is currently functional, though we have been challenged to track down random noises in the equipment and to attempt to fully understand the wiring that is in place. There will be an effort to create a capability inventory in the first quarter of 2011 to determine what we actually can do with the current systems we own prior to preparing a plan for potential enhancement if needed.

The committee membership remains stable at an understaffed level of 5 participants. We lost one member and late in the year gained one, but the committee desperately needs additional volunteers to supplement the team, and requests the help of the board to accomplish successful recruiting. We currently do not have a chairperson.

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## **2010 Annual Report - Buildings and Grounds Committee**

**Chair: Tony Collins**

It has been an active year for Buildings and Grounds! It started with a decision to put in a second water meter for watering the grass. This cuts the cost of watering in half because we are not charged for sewer disposal when we are pouring water into the ground. To get the meter installed requires a permit, and the City now checks for a Certificate of occupancy before issuing the permit. Unfortunately, the City had lost their copy of the certificates for Westwood hall and the Sanctuary, and to make it worse, we had lost our copies too.

As a result we had to have these buildings inspected and to nobody's surprise, the inspectors generated a list of non-conformances. Most of them were fairly minor, but it still took several months to get them corrected and then re-inspected.

Our next issue was with Westwood Hall. Mark E-L noticed the overhanging part of the roof was sagging. A few weeks later I happened to be standing there during a thunderstorm and saw that it was raining through the roof! We fairly quickly found that this was maintenance too long deferred and that the roof timbers had rotted out. The damaged timbers have now been replaced, and the roof rebuilt, on both sides.

Many of you remember that we have had a running problem with roof leaks in the sanctuary. With all my fingers crossed, I now assure you that they are solved. The story starts with Bob Hopkins climbing up to the roof after it had rained and finding a small lake, not draining through the roof drain. Our first guess was that there was a problem in the pipe running outside from the drain. That was wrong, although there was a missing support. Then we checked from the outside and found a problem dating back to the construction of Delaney Hall; the electrical conduit had been drilled through the drain, allowing dirt to partially fill the drain. This was quite dangerous, so it had to be fixed, with lots of digging. Luckily, we had our Certificate of Occupancy, so we could get the required permit! Once the dirt was removed, the roof STILL didn't drain. After digging up the sidewalk by the sanctuary, we found that the underground drain had been filled with concrete when Delaney Hall was built. Somebody had misread the blueprint which required a different part of the drain to be plugged! Once the concrete was replaced by new pipe, the drain has worked exactly as it was supposed to! Karen van Horn was very busy from April to September dealing with all these issues and we were all much relieved that all the holes in the ground had disappeared in time for homecoming.

On a more uniformly positive note, we had an amazing turnout in June to beautify the grounds, with bushes and trees trimmed, flowerbeds weeded, vines removed, and an impressive set of new plantings. Kudos to all who participated. - Tony Collins

**2010 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. We provided this type of caring for six families during 2010.

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, Chairperson

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**2010 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](mailto:gwenessinger@sbcglobal.net).

## 2010 Annual Report - Communications Committee

Chair: Sherle Frost Watson

The Communications Committee (formerly known as the “PR Committee”) has responsibility for the internal and external communications for Emerson UU Church. The members and their portfolios are as follows:

Wendy Adair: e-blast

Mark Edmiston-Lange: general consultation and ideas; ministerial liaison

Pat Grealy: Past Chair, web master, Bering St sign; outside publications contact; staff email contacts

Ron Lewis: web site

Molly Martin: staff liaison, Emersonian, e-blast, order of service, Facebook, Twitter publication, etc.

David May: Houston UU Network liaison and KUHF announcements; Wayside Pulpit

Mary Ann Stanley: web site, Sunday PowerPoint announcements

Sherle Frost Watson: chair, press releases

**An outstanding addition to all of our efforts this year was the hiring of Molly Martin. She has shown enormous initiative and creativity in all of her endeavors this year – the Emersonian, the e-blasts, Facebook, Twitter, the PowerPoint announcements – we could go on and on. When you read of our activities below, just think “and Molly.” Thank you, Molly, for all you do!**

**Emersonian:** The four-page monthly Emersonian plus a quarterly supplement has continued throughout 2010. The quarterly supplement was added in August 2008 to provide a vehicle for longer articles by the ministers and the Board. The Emersonian and its supplement are emailed to many members and friends to keep the costs down, but some 200 are still being mailed.

**E-Blast:** Knowing that many people do not print the monthly newsletter and put it on the fridge for the month, a weekly e-blast, gathered by Wendy Adair from all the material mailed to [pr@emersonhouston.org](mailto:pr@emersonhouston.org), is emailed each Wednesday.

**Emersonhouston.org:** So many of our visitors tell us that they chose to come to Emerson because of what they found on the web site. Pat Grealy, Ron Lewis and Mary Ann Stanley keep current information about upcoming sermons, adult education speakers, RE activities, special programs, past and present copies of the Emersonian and quarterlies, and social action emphasizes, as well as information about Unitarian Universalism, past sermons, and fellowship groups within the church.

**Information Monitors:** The two flat screen monitors mounted in the Gathering Place provide on the spot reminders of announcements, upcoming events, etc. Mary Ann Stanley compiles the weekly PowerPoint presentations.

**Press Releases:** With the changes to the Belief Section of the Houston Chronicle Sherle Watson has been actively seeking alternatives, such as [ultimatememorial.com](http://ultimatememorial.com), but nothing has proven to be entirely satisfactory. We will continue looking for new options next year.

**Bering Street Sign:** Thanks to Pat Grealy, we can read what the sermon will be the next week as we leave church each Sunday.

**Wayside Pulpit:** David May changes out the pithy sayings mounted in the Westwood Hall window each week.

**KUHF/Houston UU Network:** David also manages the cooperative public service announcements that the UU Network buys on our local PBS station.

An Emerson presence has been established on Facebook and Twitter. We are close to 200 friends on Facebook and feel that building our web presence can only enhance the reach of our communications.

The Committee welcomes new members. Although we now cover all the above assignments, we are stretched pretty thin and would appreciate sharing some of the jobs such as the Bering Sign. We could also use help from anyone interested in enhancing our social media presence. The Committee meets only every other month. Please contact Mark, Sherle or Pat if you are interested.

Sherle Frost Watson, Chair  
(minutes are attached)

### **Communications Committee Minutes - January 24, 2010**

Present: David May, Mark Edmiston-Lange, Pat Grealy, Wendy Adair, Sherle Watson, Nancy Lipp and Mary Ann Stanley

Janet Meininger stopped in for a visit before the meeting began to wish us all well. She consulted with Pat Grealy about possible options for providing online feedback from members to the board. They tentatively planned for a web page that could be completed and submitted and this would not be readily available to the casual browser of the Emerson web site.

#### **1. Discussion of policy re: attachments to e-blast – Wendy**

The consensus of the committee is to limit attachments to the e-blast to the newsletter and quarterly, plus any item that the board deems important enough to include. It was also decided to shorten the e-blast as much as possible by using two or three sentences to describe the activity and then provide a link to a fuller description on the web. To serve the needs of the congregation, Pat and Mary Ann will ensure that information is put on the web in a timely manner. A good example is the weekly “what we’re doing” from Barbara.

Wendy has been sending the quarterly and the newsletter in separate emails so as to avoid kickback. We email approximately 540 people and mail to about 254. New member have their choice to receive by email or hard copy. We will determine just how much it costs to mail each newsletter and then decide if we want a serious campaign to move everyone possible to email.

#### **2. Discussion (and show and tell?) of Twitter – Pat**

Pat distributed a print out of a UUA article on congregations’ use of Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and Podcasting. Pat has established a Twitter account that he visualizes will be used for emergency messages to the congregation. After some discussion, the limitation of this method seemed to be such that our efforts might be directed in a different direction.

It was noted that there was already a Facebook for “Emersonians.” No one on the committee was sure who had created the page or how it was set up. Many churches already have a Facebook page and we need one, too. The question, then, is about control so that we can limit negative entries. The Facebook discussion has stalled. At this point I will assume that Brian Coolidge is willing to manage it. I still am uncertain if we need an additional, more restricted, "official" page. The Facebook "fan" pages I have seen referred to might be what I am thinking of.

It was decided that we definitely want to put audio of the sermons on the website. Mary Ann will contact Jill Rose or Kevin Crotty about getting just the sermon electronically.

#### **3. Can we be the communicators for all the committees without being ON the committee? Do we want to be? If so, how best to set up the process? – Sherle**

Sherle brought up the problem of coordinating publicity efforts of all the committees. David spoke from experience that they will be all too happy to dump poster, stories, press releases, etc. on our laps if given the opportunity. Wendy proposed a different approach: we offer to be consultants. Mary Ann will reiterate our availability at the Coordinating Council.

4. **"Time" canvass on the operations of the committee - Mark**

The Stewardship Committee, recognizing that time and talent are contributions to the church just like money, will hold a "time" canvass this spring. Each person who volunteers in some capacity at the church will be asked to estimate the number of hours s/he donates each year. The committee is asked to estimate their contribution in EVERYTHING that you do in a year and send it to Mary Ann. (The next step will be a job description of each of those things, so be thinking!) Pat was the first to respond, and his will give you an idea of how to do it:

| <u>Hours</u> | <u>Task</u>                       |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| 24           | Bering St Sign                    |
| 2            | Web Host administration           |
| 4            | Email and alias accounts          |
| 4            | Listserve account maintenance     |
| 24           | Web site design issues            |
| 180          | Web page updates and maintenance  |
| 120          | Emerson related email read/write  |
| 12           | Communications Committee meetings |

I notice that he hasn't included his RE activities, so his will go up.

5. **Connections/interface of new "Communications Office Assistant" with committee – Nancy**

The committee decided that it was premature to discuss without knowing the new person's strengths. The item was tabled until the next meeting.

6. **KUHF – David**

David reported that the Metro Fund which Emerson holds for the UU churches in the Houston area is \$200 short of being able to pay for the ads that are currently running on KHUF. Two of the churches have not contributed because of internal money problems. He has worked out with the station that they will wait for payment because one of the churches may be able to contribute \$100.

**Communications Committee Minutes - March 28, 2010**

Attendees: Pat Grealy, Mary Ann Stanley, David May, Mark Edmiston-Lange, Gabe Gelb, Sherle Frost Watson

1. January 24, 2010 minutes approved unanimously
2. Recognition for web site remodel
3. Progress on web page for online feedback from congregation members to the Board – After discussion, we decided that the simplest approach would be to add a new email link on the Contact Us page of the web site for the Board of Trustees, with all Board members to be copied. Pat will set this up and send to Janet Meininger for feedback and testing. Upon confirmation we will broadcast the new accessibility feature in the Eblast. (Note: Pat has completed the set up and sent the link to Janet.)
4. Facebook/Twitter – Should we be soliciting an "expert" from the congregation under the Time 'n' Talent banner? After discussion, we decided this would be an appropriate role for Molly. Sherle will draft a brief "social media monitor" role description for review by the committee. (In addition, Brian Coolidge's

proactive assistance with Facebook was noted. Would he have an interest in joining the Comm Comm?) (Note: Pat has followed up with Brian, who will be helping to get Molly up to speed.)

5. Sermon audios are being regularly posted on the web site thanks to Ron and Pat. We will continue to inform the congregation of this availability via Eblasts and the Emersonian.

6. Communications Committee “consultancy” for other committees – Sherle will bring this concept forward at the next meeting of the Comm on Committees on April 3. We may be of particular assistance to that group and/or the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Team led by Don Whittaker. Sherle will also remind them that Molly can assist with the Style Guide so their communications have the “Emerson look.”

7. Time canvass (Pat and Ron had already submitted) – Mary Ann (2-3 hours/week on PowerPoints and 3 hours/week on the web site) and David (one hour/month on the wayside pulpit and four hours/year as KUHF liaison) submitted their time. [Note: Sherle spoke with Wendy after the meeting and got hers, too.(2 hours/week)] Report will be submitted to Mark ASAP.

8. Molly’s responsibilities are taking shape. Mary Ann will be training her to take over the PowerPoints for the Gathering Place ASAP. Sherle will ask Karen about funding for Molly to get trained in DreamWeaver. Also, the software needs to be moved from the volunteer computer to Molly’s. Pat will work with her so she can take over the web page updates and maintenance and free him up for more esoteric matters. Over time she should be able to move into the web master role. Our intention is to challenge her without overwhelming her.

(NOTE: Funding for the online course has been provided by Betsy Gelb.)

9. KUHF Metro Fund status – David has not yet heard if the Galveston church paid their share as promised; he will follow up with Karen. Emerson headcount is up to 472, which will make our contribution this year \$2,460.

10. Web usage – After discussion we concluded that to the greatest extent possible we need folks to get to our web site. One issue is possibly displaying a banner on Bering (similar to UniTunes) on a regular basis with our web address, logo, and an invitation to visit. (Note: Pat has already followed up with Beth Hill to learn more about the UniTunes approach – cost, compliance with city regs, etc. and is waiting for her reply.)

11. Press releases – We discussed how discouraging getting any information into the Belief section of the Houston Chronicle has become. Mary Ann suggested that Wendy might be able to take on the role of publicist and find additional venues to “get the word out.” (Note: Sherle and Wendy discussed this after the meeting. See Addendum below.)

12. Budget – Increase from \$120 to \$132 for web site hosting and list serve, uuism.net; increase from \$2250 to \$2460 for KUHF, Yellow pages unchanged at \$500; gay Yellow pages unchanged at \$128; total this year = \$3292. We may need a little bit more (\$150-\$200) for (1) a banner and (2) training for Molly if Karen can’t manage it.

Addendum:

Conversation with Wendy

1. Wendy advises that the best publicity is promoted through personal contacts, which means during the workday, and that’s not possible for her. She is not aware of anyone else in the congregation who has this background and might be retired, and therefore have time Monday-Friday. However, she offered a practical alternative. She will compile a list of alternative print media, smaller local newspapers, etc. for Molly and create a media announcement template for her. Then, based on a regular schedule, Molly can distribute

announcements from our events calendar. While not ideal, at least until a volunteer publicist can be identified, this will give us more coverage.

2. Wendy had not seen the revised template Molly drafted for the Eblast, so I've resent it to her and she will work with Molly and use it as a model to give the Eblast the same look/feel as our other materials.
3. One other idea from our conversation – Do we survey the folks who visit Emerson to find out how they learned about us? Do we know if the KUHF ads are bringing in members? If they're not, Wendy says we could probably use that money to get a couple of really good Emerson-only ads published each year that might be a better “draw.” I will raise the issue of “how do they find us?” with Karen Tidholm on April 3. I realize this could be a philosophical issue, so let's put it on the next agenda for discussion.

#### Email from Pat

1. I heard back from Beth about the UniTunes sign - we can use their ground supports; she does not recall specifics of their cost for the sign or checking any ordinances; I need to remember to measure their sign, especially the width, if we want to use same ground supports. I have attached a quick-and-dirty sample, although I am not crazy about the "join us" phrase (maybe omit that phrase completely?). There are plenty of online vendors with costs in the range of \$50 - \$100 without my checking all the details.
2. Good plan from Wendy using local small newspapers. I had sent Sherle a spreadsheet of contacts, admittedly dated, that had been handed down from Jerry Wendelin and modified slightly by me. It was mostly email contacts for PR distribution and most were not really very useful, in my opinion. And, I had not been using it much in the past year or so. But, I believe I had included one or two of the local suburban newspapers like Southwest News and Houston Community Newspapers (Bellaire Examiner, River Oaks Examiner, etc.) that get thrown for free in people's yards. In addition to sending them our PRs, I personally think HCN might be the best place to spend some money on print ads if we consider that. To start, I might suggest a joint ad with UniTunes promoting the start of next year's concert series. the print ads are pretty expensive though from what I can tell, although big discounts are offered for contracting a series of repeating ads.

#### **Communications Committee Minutes - June 13, 2010**

Attendees: Pat Grealy, Mary Ann Stanley, Mark Edmiston-Lange, Gabe Gelb, Molly Martin, Ken Salzman

1. March 28 minutes approved unanimously
2. The website remodel was recognized
3. Communicating to the Board – Pat forwarded info to Janet Meininger and created an email that will contact all board members.
4. Facebook/Twitter – There was a brief discussion about how Facebook works. Molly agreed to put together instructions on use of Facebook for novices.
5. Communications Committee - “consultancy” for other committees – We agreed that we should do whatever we can for other committees and Molly will let the Committee know if she is overwhelmed. Other committees should contact Molly for their PR requests.
6. Time Canvass - Mary Ann was to email Sherle about this issue.



7. Molly's Training – training is going well and Pat suggested we have a monthly Web-only communications meet up.
8. KUHF Metro Fund status – This is paid.
9. Web usage Banner – Molly researched a banner for the worship service time change, so she offered to create a banner promoting the website only. Fast Signs' quote is \$107 for a 72''x48'' banner. Pat will deal with the PVC that will hold it in place. This committee will pay for the banner.
10. Feedback on Eblast – Pat said he'd been getting good feedback on the redesign of the Eblast.
11. Posting Sermons other than E-L's Online – it was agreed that any member of the congregation who gives a sermon should have it posted online. There were some concerns about broadcasting the Youth Sunday services, so we agreed they should be requested, and not posted.
12. Contacting UUA Social Media – Molly agreed to contact the UUA and let them know our current Facebook and Twitter
13. Social Media Policy – Pat presented a draft Social Media policy and Molly agreed to fill in the blanks so it can be submitted to the Board for their approval.
14. Promoting Facebook/Deleting Facebook Group Page – Pat contacted Brian Coolidge about this and is going to wait a couple of days to hear from him on how to delete the group page.
15. Canvass – Mark wants an interactive pledge form for the canvass in the Fall. Molly said something like that was easily doable with Google docs and offered to put something together. Pat cautioned that we need to verify the pledges.
16. Gratitude – Mark wants to start a campaign of gratitude and wondered how we could put it on the website. Molly thought it could be a Facebook and Twitter campaign and then the comments compiled and put somewhere on the website. She is going to start publicizing the campaign and will get with Pat and Mary Ann once we have responses.

### **Communication Committee Minutes – August 29, 2010**

Attendees: David May, Mary Ann Stanley, Pat Grealy, Molly Martin, Gabe Gelb, Mark Edmiston-Lange, Sherle Frost Watson

- June 13 minutes approved unanimously
- Facebook/Twitter Progress
  - More than 100 Emerson Friends on Facebook
  - Adult Ed programs are being Tweeted/Facebooked to other groups and the Houston Press
  - Molly will post the "how to" instructions for Facebook/Twitter on the Emerson home page
  - Gabe will encourage Board members to "Friend" Emerson
- Social Media Policy
  - Board okayed "Policies Governing Content Presented on Emerson's Facebook Page" and sent an informational copy to the UUA, which has expressed enthusiasm and may use it as a model for others

- Molly has been asked to be the administrator for the “Emerson Youth” Facebook page and is applying the same policies of regular content review and oversight (Sherle will notify Barbara Stafford.)
- Campaign of Gratitude is getting some entries – Molly will start sending a confirmation of receipt.
- Banner for time change cost \$159; we’d like to have others. If we change out the banner often, it will not be permanent signage that falls under Houston regulations. UniTunes and the Bazaar will put up their own. Maybe the Arts Committee has \$\$\$ for a Vespers banner. Mary Ann and Sherle will check with Maryann Rusk and Bonnie Wellington.
- New business
  - Mark reported that the UUA’s “Leap of Faith” initiative will pair Emerson with a larger church to see what can be learned about growing our congregation; program will begin in October and includes a week in New Orleans. Details about who will represent the congregation will be forthcoming.
  - Mary Ann volunteered to assist Robin McElfresh in organizing the advertising for the October Bazaar; MA will notify the Committee of what further support is needed and whether we need to meet on September 19 to plan.
  - David reported that we’re starting another KUHF announcements cycle; people look for a church more often in September and January
  - Gabe asked the Committee to send a resolution to the Board to participate with other liberal churches in advertising as part of Emerson’s new strategic plan; he provided sample text. Sherle will circulate draft language for the Committee’s consideration.
  - David suggested using a leftover supply of postcards for a mailing campaign in the immediate street area around the church in January 2011. Three mailings would be optimum. He and Molly are going to look for the stock and see how many we still have.

### **Communication Committee Minutes – October 24, 2010**

Attendees: David May, Mary Ann Stanley, Pat Grealy, Molly Martin, Mark Edmiston-Lange, Sherle Frost Watson

- August 29 minutes approved unanimously
- Facebook/Twitter Progress
  - More than 140 Emerson Friends on Facebook
  - Discussed promotion
    - Molly will send a reminder to current “friends”
    - Pat will send “encouragement” to Board members to become “friends”
    - Possible thematic “game” type promotion
- Time and Talent: Sherle will follow up with the people who said they were interested in our committee
- Campaign of Gratitude is getting some entries – Molly will promote
- Banner for time change cost \$180; we had another for the Bazaar. Would like to have one for the Vespers Messiah. Music dept. may have some \$\$\$.
- UUA’s Leap of Faith. Mark reported we are paired with First Unitarian, Denver, another emerging congregation, and will have UUA staff support.
- Proposed Board resolution discussion. Premature to pursue. Possibly use content for refreshing our website. Molly to pursue.

- Postcard mailing. Cannot use current stock due to obsolete preprinted information. Cost/ mailing approx. \$400 for neighborhood mailing list. Best time either January or September. Possibly three mailings to have an effect. We don't have the money now and next year doubtful.
  
- New business
  - Old vinyl banners will be thrown away.
  - Ron, Pat and Molly will refresh the website home page photo album.
  - David reported that the KUHf announcements will cost \$7500 in total (down from \$8600). Northwoods may not be able to contribute. Thoreau also questionable.
  - Mark thanked Molly for the excellent presentation she created for presentation in New Orleans at the Leap of Faith conference. May be possible to use some of it for the website or the Gathering Place.
  - Molly asked if there was \$249 so she could attend a course on Social Media on Jan. 10. She was asked to look for something less expensive.

## **2010 Annual Report - Covenant Groups**

**Chair: Nancy Lipp**

### **Purpose**

Covenant Groups, (CG), started January 2007 with training sessions conducted by Claudia Frost and Mark Edmiston-Lange. Six groups were formed and started meeting in the fall of 2007.

Covenant Groups consist of six to twelve people and meet once or twice a month. The meetings follow a structured format: lighting the chalice, opening and closing readings, and a discussion of a spiritual topic. The members of each group share in leading meetings and host duties. Each group creates a covenant by which they agree how they are to be together, and is expected to do a two community service project each year, one for the greater community of Houston and one for Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church.

### **Accomplishments**

Today seven CG are in place and four are very strong and the other three are in the process of being established.

The four well established groups are Memorial area, Parents of small children, Dottie Price's group and Susan Raffle's group. The ones that are still in process are Jack Hardin's group that meets at Church on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, the coming of age parents group that meets at 10 am on selected Sundays, and the third Sunday after Church group lead by Nancy Lipp. Jack Hardin's group and the third Sunday group could use more participants. Cheryl Baucum has volunteered to be the coordinator for the coming of age parents group and after this year, this group will turn into the YRUU parents group.

Future groups that will be starting are another group for parents of small children, and a group of parents of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders of the OWL class on selected Sundays starting at 9:30.

Bi-Monthly CG coordinators meetings held so that the various coordinators' can share ideas and talk about what is going on with their groups.

### **Summary**

The future holds great promise as we reach out to Emersonians to "grow their soul" and form closer ties to each other and their church, community and the world. If you would like to join a Covenant Group please contact Nancy Lipp; we are always looking for people that want to enjoy this unique experience. Nancy Lipp – Chair, Coordinator

Susan Raffle – Coordinator

Dottie Price – Coordinator

Jack Hardin – Coordinator

Victor Koosh – Coordinator

Ale Koosh – Coordinator

Cheryl Baucum – Coordinator

Mark Edmiston-Lange - Advisor

**2010 Annual Report - Director of Religious Education (DRE) Search Committee**  
**Chair: Kimberly Coolidge**

Since the beginning of this year, the Director of Religious Education (DRE) Search Committee and the Interim DRE, Barbara Stoddard, have been hard at work preparing to attract and welcome a full-time professional religious educator to Emerson next fall. Using the 2004 publication by the UUA titled *The Search for Religious Education Leadership: Best Practices for Unitarian Universalist Congregations* and Barbara Stoddard's suggestions as our guide through this exciting process, we have been meeting once a month since January, 2010.

We began the year discussing strategies that will best promote the opening to potential candidates and keep the congregation informed about our search (e.g., through monthly newsletter articles). In the spring, we spent time discerning the information about the current and future state of the RE program gathered from the Religious Education Committee's survey and the two focus groups led by Barbara Stoddard. As a result, we created a DRE job description that we felt best reflected Emerson's current and future needs (see current job listing on the Emerson Website). In addition to advertising the position on UUA related websites, we sent over 500 recruiting letters out to members of the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) highlighting why Houston and Emerson UU Church would be a great place to work. This summer, Mark and Becky promoted the position by passing out our DRE Search pamphlet titled *Are you our next Director of Religious Education?* during General Assembly and then again at the LREDA Conference in New Orleans in October.

This fall we started to fine tune the upcoming interview process by creating potential interview questions and brainstorming what will go into the recruiting packets we plan to send to the top candidates. Preliminary phone interviews are expected to occur in February of 2011. The committee will then discuss the next step in the interview process so that formal interviews of our top two or three candidates can occur in the spring.

Thank you to all of the members of our committee for their dedicated work during this exciting process including 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. More information is available about each committee member on the special DRE Search Committee page added to the Emerson website.

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

## 2010 Annual Report - Finance Committee

Chair: Tony Collins

The finance committee meets monthly with a liaison of the Board (usually the vice president) and a minister, currently Mark. Our first activity this year was to work with the Board to make a Financial Calendar that was consistent with the timing of the Canvass and the congregational budget meeting.

This was agreed in April, and everybody did their best to stay with it.

- We submitted a detailed goals budget to the board in time to pick a goal for the canvass,.
- We prepared draft budgets for various potential outcomes of the canvass, presented these to the board for review and discussion, and then used the outcome as a basis for the final proposal to the board.
- The canvass was much more thorough than in prior years as demonstrated by the fact that only 40 households did not pledge for 2011, compared to 100 households for 2010). As a result, the pledge income figures used in the budget proposed to the board contained much less extrapolation and guesswork than in previous years.
- The board finalized the budget in time to inform the congregation 2 weeks before the budget meeting as required in the Constitution. This budget included higher expenses and income estimates than those recommended by the Finance Committee.
- The congregation voted at the Dec. 5 Congregation Meeting to send the budget back to the Board for revision so as to pay the mortgage principal out of the operating budget, not out of the endowment. This budget item was unchanged from the Finance Committee draft. The Board presented a revised budget to the congregation in a January 11, 2011 mailing.

Other activities included advice to the board on long-range financial plans, and on policy for the use of the endowment. We have had extensive discussions how to clarify the use of the endowment more clearly in the monthly and annual financial reports. These activities are ongoing, but we have come to neither a final recommendation nor a final resolution.

The Finance Committee is also charged with review of Income and Expense for the church.

In 2010, we had budgeted for a deficit of \$46,000, with income of \$742,000 and expense of \$789,000.

Expenses were over the budget at \$798,500, driven mainly by Facilities. This was affected by three things:

- High Maintenance and Repair costs discussed in the report from Buildings & Grounds. (\$23,000 spent for a \$7,500 budget). It should be noted that roof repairs, paid for directly from the Endowment, are not included in this report. These amounted to \$60,000, partially offset by an insurance payment of \$17,172.
- Hiring a full-time Sexton, replacing a part-time position. This decision was taken in mid-year.
- A cold winter, which drove our utility bills much higher than expected

The good news is that Income was even further over the budget at \$779,000, mainly because of Pledges and Special Fundraising.

- Pledge income was increased by an unexpectedly large contribution from a member, and we are now separately identifying pledges paid late from preceding years, and pledges from those who have joined the church during the year, which were previously included in Planned Contributions. The total is \$20,000 over budget.
- The main element of Special Fundraising is the Services Auction, which exceeded all expectations, generating \$10,000 more than predicted.

After allowing for Special Collections that have not yet been disbursed, the current account deficit for the year was reduced to \$23,500. The revised budget proposal for 2011 offsets this with cash on hand from 2009 to show a small surplus.

Respectfully submitted, Tony Collins, Chair

**2010 Annual Report – Investment Committee**  
**Co-Chairs: Henry Groppe and Dick Mullineaux**

The Investment Committee objective of achieving an above average return on EUCC endowment funds with average or below average risk by focusing on investment in the energy sector of the economy continued in 2010. This is made possible by our access to pro-bono knowledge of the industry provided by Groppe Long and Littel and pro –bono knowledge of individual companies within the industry by The Mitchell Group.

Energy is unique in being the largest sector in world business, based on tangible assets, and a necessary component in a majority of economic activities. As such it must continue under even the worst economic conditions. It also is based on a depleting natural resource with no inexpensive alternative available. As such it is a business sector that is especially well positioned for producing the long term objectives stated above when the unique knowledge that we have available.

The results for the first eleven months of 2010 were consistent with expectations. The value of the investment portion of the Endowment Fund which is managed by The Mitchell Group rose 11.46% compared with increases of 6.54% for the Dow Jones Industrial average, 10.09% for the NASDAQ and 6.83% for the SP500. The November 30 value for the Mitchell portfolio was \$1,614,140, which, combined with \$79,937 in the Schwab cash account which is maintained to provide funds that the Board considers might be needed to meet church needs for a reasonable future period, gives a current total Endowment Fund value of \$1,690,654.

The committee continued its policy of maintaining breadth and depth of both financial skills and congregational participation by recommending new members to, and receiving approval from, the Board for membership in the Investment Committee. Current members are Henry Groppe and Dick Mullineaux, co-chairs, Brian Emerson, Otto Glaser, John Homier, Will Irwin, Bub Joyce, Jill Rose and Zena Taylor. The co-ministers, Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange and the current Board chair, Janet Meininger, are ex-officio members and they, or a representative attend all meetings.

**2010 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.

**In 2010 the LPMT has**

- 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;
- Delivered holiday poinsettias to a number of Emersonians with limited ability to travel; and
- Planned and created several new interactive sessions in preparation for the LPM training program scheduled for the February and March of 2011.

The members of the team this year are

|                |               |              |               |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Kay Bergen     | Dick Cheney   | Joe Dowlen   | Edna Kelly    |
| Pam Lewis      | Mina McDuffie | Tom McDuffie | Linda Orr     |
| Sally Phillips | Jim Porter    | Judy Taylor  | Barbara Thorn |

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**2010 Annual Report - Landscape Committee**  
**Chair: Mary Pedersen**

During 2010 the Landscape Committee was greatly enhanced by new Emerson member Margie Elliott, a Master Gardner. She has been working to clean up the Memorial Garden area and we hope to make some improvements there in the future. Zena Taylor has continued her work on the garden beds around the sign in front and on two of the south parking lot islands. Others who have offered to keep track of specific areas include Anita Butt, Sally Bercu and Francine Heller. One work party was held in the spring of 2010 with the organizing assistance of Nancy Lipp and Sarah Boyd. There was a good turnout of 30 workers and much was accomplished, but injuries to Eric Watson dampened what was otherwise a highly successful effort. In October the Board of Trustees authorized the use of some Memorial funds along with the Grounds budget (a total of just over \$3000) for a fall clean up of the church grounds generally. At this time a dead tree on the northwest corner of the parking area was also removed.

My thanks to all who helped out,  
Mary Pedersen



## **2010 Annual Report - Library Committee**

**Chair: Arthur Pedersen**

In addition to maintaining the Frank Schulman Library, the Library Committee, consisting of Carolyn Craig, Jo Irwin, and Arthur Pedersen, participated in "The 50th Anniversary Green Bazaar" by holding a book sale. The book sale grossed \$767.85 which was donated to the 50th Anniversary Fund. Many Thanks to all those who donated books, bought books, transported books, helped set up the book sale, and helped staff the book sale. Unsold books were donated the Rice University Book Sale. Thanks to deForest Ralph for making this happen.

Submitted by Arthur Pedersen, Chair, [amped162@earthlink.net](mailto:amped162@earthlink.net)

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## **2010 Annual Report - Membership Committee**

**Chair: Karen Tidholm**

Committee Members: Barbara Adams, Claudia Cain, Betsy Gelb, Anne Goodman, Joann Hendrick, John Homier, Nancy Lipp, Ann May, Max Nelson, Kris Taylor, Barbara Thorn

### Committee Activities

- Our greeters are present all 52 Sundays of the year. Our effort on Sunday morning is to welcome Newcomers, help them get a name tag, and engage in conversation. We try to be responsive to their questions and concerns about Emerson and Unitarian Universalism.
- Newcomer Discussion Group - On the first Sunday of the month, Betsy Gelb currently facilitates this. We try to have a more in-depth conversation with Newcomers during the 10 o'clock hour over in the smaller part of Westwood Hall.
- We participated in recognition ceremonies on June 6th and December 5th. We arranged for a reception following the service on June 6th. December 5th was a "First Sunday Lunch", so we encouraged all to stay for lunch in Westwood Hall.
- Currently, church office staff maintains the church data base of Members and Newcomers. However, we work with the staff to update procedures for following up with New Members and Newcomers.
- New Member packets are prepared and mailed. Newcomer Information packets are prepared to have at the information area. Packet materials are ordered, as needed.
- Assists office staff in maintaining name tag rack.

### New in 2010

- We continue to work on better "structure" for our committee. Recruiting and training Greeters is an on-going job. Many folks choose to help us for a few months and then move on to something else within the church. Betsy Gelb continues as our Facilitator for Newcomer Discussion Groups. Anne Goodman has become a regular office volunteer, preparing packets, etc. We are still trying to make some personal phone calls to encourage attendance at events and just touch base with members.
- Since it has been two years since we created the Photo-directory, we decided to take "update" photos for families with changes and also New Members. We distributed the new directories this fall, beginning on Homecoming Sunday. Once again, our photographer, Sarah Hays, and Directory Coordinator, Nancy Lipp made this directory possible.

End of Year Totals

New Members: 45

Newcomers: 107

## **2010 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. Since 1992, Emerson has had a Partner Church in Transylvania, St. Nicholas. It is located in the northeastern part of Transylvania, which is part of Romania. The people in the area are ethnic Hungarians. Transylvania was part of Hungary until 1920, when it was given to Romania following World War I. In Hungarian, the town is called Gyergyoszentmiklos: in Romanian, it is Gheorgheni. The St. Nicholas congregation has about 125 members.

Until November of 2008, St. Nicholas was a "daughter" church to the Unitarian church in the nearby larger city of Csikszereda. The minister in Csikszereda, Bela Krisbai, served both congregations until September of 2005. At that time, Endre Nagy, Jr. was installed as their new minister. In November 2008, the Synod awarded St. Nicholas the status of Independent Church.

In 2003-04, Emerson Church raised over \$25,000 to help St. Nicholas buy and remodel a house, which became their Prayer House. In October of 2004, the church was dedicated, with the Bishop presiding. DeForest Ralph represented Emerson Church. In 2007, Eleanor Schorre and Carolyn Ralph were Young Ambassadors for Emerson on their Youth Pilgrimage to Transylvania and they spent a weekend at St. Nicholas. In 2008-2009, Endre Nagy and his wife, Eva Patko were in Houston and at Emerson during Endre's Winter Break from Starr King, our UU seminary in Berkeley, California, where he was the Balazs Scholar for 2008-2009.

In March 2010, Co-Chair deForest Ralph, in his capacity as a Board Member of the UU Partner Church Council, attended the Board's Winter meeting in Concord, MA and provided a worship service, based upon his earlier sermon "Not All Pretty Words and Noble Thoughts", given at Emerson Church relative to our 6<sup>th</sup> Principle. At the UUA General Assembly in Minneapolis in June 2010, Co-Chair Martha Ralph was one of 20 to receive one of the first Annual Stewardship of Partnership Awards from the UUPCC. There was a separate table for her at the award luncheon, with her picture on it. Laura Nagel of First Church represented Martha at the award ceremony.

In July, there was meeting in Kolozsvar, Transylvania, to mark the 20th Anniversary of the reestablishment of contact between North American and Transylvanian Unitarians. Co-Chair deForest Ralph was scheduled to attend, but surgery interfered. For the occasion, the Transylvanians prepared a book, in both languages, with a page for each partner church. A copy of the book is in the library. Our page is page 86. In September, upon the death of the recently retired Bishop, Dr. Arpad Szabo, a condolence letter from Emerson was written and sent by Co-Chair deForest Ralph and an informative poster was prepared and displayed in The Gathering Place.

Co-Chairs Martha and deForest Ralph continued this year their program of providing discretionary funds for the spouse of the Balazs Scholar. Also, they are making it possible for the wife of this year's Scholar, Erika Demeter, who is also a Unitarian minister, to attend a Winter Session at Meadville Lombard, our UU seminary in Chicago.

Co-Chairs, Martha and deForest Ralph

January 2011

**2010 Annual Report – Performing Arts Council**  
**Chair: Mary Ann Rusk**

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  
UniTunes  
Waldo  
BOT liaison – Beth Hill

Topics on 2010 monthly agendas included:

The Sanctuary lighting and sound problems were discussed. Some of the lighting problems were resolved. The new wireless microphones bandwidths requirements as required by the FCC in June, 2010. It was agreed that the Sanctuary microphones were in compliance as of now.

Sunday Morning Schedule Change Proposal and how the music entities would be affected.

Emerson Players Performances in February 13, 2010 and September, 2010.

Choir Faure Requiem performed in April, 2010

John Branch's resignation notification given in March, 2010 to become effective on May 31, 2010

New job descriptions for a new Artistic Director as replacement for John Branch and Choir Head Section Leader – Job descriptions were sent to the Personnel Committee for presentation to BOT's April Meeting. The two positions were approved with Bonnie Wellington as Artistic Director and Adrian Rodriguez as Head Section Leader. This did not have an affect on the music budget line.

Loan of Equipment Policy drafted and will be completed in 2011 after a new inventory of equipment has been made.

The need for a replacement for a director for the Emerson Players due to the sudden death of Don Whittaker. Several Candidates are in consideration for this position.

The September, 2010 production was performed by the Emerson Players in memory of Don.

A review of the Emerson's Board's Draft of the Strategic Plan for the next Five Years continues to be under discussion by PAC. PAC is concerned that Music is not mentioned in the long range planning. This concern is to be brought to the attention of the BOT's January, 2011 by PAC liaison, Beth Hill.

PAC requested that a contract for the EIO Director be added to the 2011 Budget that would include contract compensation. At the December, 2010 budget meeting the budget was not approved. A revised budget is to be presented at the annual meeting on January 23, 2011. PAC is again requesting that compensation be provided to the EIO Director in the form of a contract position.

Submitted by  
Mary Ann Rusk, PAC Chairperson

## **Personnel Committee - Annual Report 2010**

**Chair: Jim Porter**

The Personnel Committee advises the Board of Trustees and the staff on matters related to: 1) UUA recommendations for salaries and benefits, 2) Employment Policies and 3) General Employment Practices. In 2010, the Personnel Committee supported Emerson in searches for full-time sexton and Director RE.

In 2010, the members of the Personnel Committee were: Pam Bass, Dick Cheney, Karen George, David Bates, Pam Lewis, Jim Porter and Brad Gammell. Dick Cheney, Karen George and Pam Lewis will be leaving the committee at the end of 2010 after long and significant service to Emerson. Successors to these individuals have not been selected as of this date and that recruitment is a top priority for early 2011

In 2010, the Personnel Committee supported the search for a full-time Sexton and Director of Religious Education. In addition, the committee made recommendations regarding salaries and benefits for staff and Co-Ministers for use in the 2011 budget planning.

Submitted, 22 December 2010

Jim Porter, Chair

**Religious Education Committee 2010 Annual Report**  
**Submitted by: Jay Jackson, Committee Chair**

With the arrival of our interim Director of Religious Education, Barbara Stoddard, the Religious Education (RE) Committee was able to focus more of its energy in 2010 on strategic issues than in previous years. We benefitted greatly from Barbara's wisdom over the past year, and took full advantage of the new viewpoints she offered to our committee.

The committee completed work on a statement of the vision, mission and goals for the RE program at Emerson, building on the excellent work of Ann Wood previous RE Committee member who coordinated the last update of the vision in 1998. We also surveyed the congregation in May to better understand your views of the program and the directions you would like to see it take in the future. We continue to use these results to help improve the programming we offer our children and youth. Please take some time to review our statement of vision, mission and strategies and the results of our survey. Both can be found on the internet at this link, and we welcome your feedback: <http://www.emersonhouston.org/about/reMission.html>.

In the first half of 2010, the committee focused on curriculum for 2010-11 and volunteer recruitment. After completing the 2009-10 curricula in May 2010, we held a summer program using the "*Culture Camp, Summer Sundays, World Tour*" curriculum that attracted an average of 10 students each Sunday. As we moved into fall, Emerson hosted a city-wide teacher training event that attracted 60 volunteer teachers from across Houston's UU churches. We also hosted a national OWL training session this fall that created 23 new OWL teachers – 5 of those Emerson members. 4 new adult trainers and 1 new elementary leader. In addition 2 of our members completed the elementary training at other locations this past year.

This fall brought some major changes to the RE program. With the new start time for the worship service at 11:00, we moved our core RE classes to meet from 11:15 to 12:30. All children and youth now attend the first 15 minutes of the worship service on most Sundays before leaving for their program. We use 10:00 to 11:00 as the 'Community in Action' hour with activities build around a diverse set of topics including social action, arts and crafts, movement, music, drama. Once a month this hour hosts a multi-generational program planned jointly with the Adult Religious Education Committee on the broad topic of water.

Attendance this fall has been strong, with about 68 children in the core classes each week. In addition, we have 15 8<sup>th</sup> graders participating in Coming of Age (vs. 6 in 2009), and 23 students registered in our Youth Program for high school students (vs.14 in 2009). The committee helped support the annual UNICEF carnival in October which benefitted from Karen Benson's, Susan Green's and Karen Nazir's leadership. The Committee hosted the Hanging of the Greens in December. And the holiday pageant, *Festivals of Love, Hope, Peace and Light*, directed by Barbara Stoddard, attracted many student participants thanks to the efforts of Jennifer Norton, Susan Green and many other volunteers.

We currently have seven members on the RE committee. Jay Jackson, Jennifer Norton and Zena Taylor each completed their second year of service. David Bergt and Faisal Nazir have been with us about a year after filling vacancies. Linda Daichman and Kay Kamas joined us in August replacing Deborah Landis and Vanessa Morales-Knight who completed three years on committee. Brad Gammell is our board liaison; he and Barbara Stoddard participate in our monthly committee meetings. Our committee has also adopted more of a council structure this year, with each member responsible for a portfolio of topics. We're still in trial mode, but so far this has made our committee meetings more effective and efficient.

Looking forward, the Committee hopes to welcome a new Director of Religious Education (DRE) later this year. Jay serves as our liaison to the DRE Search Committee so that we stay well connected with those

activities. We recognize the impact of the new service start time on the Adult Education program and continue working to find solutions to ensure that both programs remain vibrant and well attended. And we hope to find ways to involve more of the congregation in the work of our programs. If you have an interest, please contact one of our members.

January 5, 2011

**2010 Annual Report – Social Action Council**  
**Co Chairs: Christel Erickson-Collins & Phil Richardson**

In 2006 the Board of Trustees formed the Social Action Council to assume the functions and responsibilities of both the Outreach Board and the Community Services Committee, including those responsibilities under the Active and Passive Witness Policies. It is an umbrella organization providing support and coordination for independently operating social action groups, and is committed to bringing social action to an equal footing with religious education and worship. (Emerson policy manual, January 2010). Early in the year the following goals were set for this year:

**Goal 1: Expand the breadth of involvement of Emerson Members in social action**

Activities:

- Collaboration with RE in January and February on the SouperBowl of Caring project.
- Closer collaboration with Ministers to enhance the presence of Social Action in worship and for a special sermon on mental health issues.
- Collaboration with Adult Education to present the goals and direction of Social Action at Emerson and to elicit feedback from the Congregation.
- Collaboration with Adult Education and RE for the Mental Health Stigma Awareness including “In Our Own Voice” Adult Ed Presentation and a Diversity Sensitivity Program.
- Church wide projects in the summer and fall; book drive for Jones High School and Mental Health Stigma Awareness; Giving Tree for The Gathering Place.
- Provided to the Coordinating Council and Board feedback for strengthening Social Action in Emerson’s long-range plan drafts.

**Goal 2: Increase Emerson participation in Social Action giving**

Activity:

- Provided opportunities for volunteering and giving through education and special projects. Special Collections giving of \$30,444 in 2010 increased by 4.2 % from 2009. This excludes about \$5,600 separately pledged to CROP Walk.
- Frequent communication to Congregation via Emersonian, eblast and order of service and updates on the Social Action page on the website.

**Goal 3: Continue Social Action projects and Special Collections from 2009**

Activity:

Special Collections were carried out each month according to the schedule set by the committee in December with the exception of January when relief for Haiti replaced Texans Together. Food Sunday collections for Interfaith Ministries were held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday and Special Collections were held every third Sunday. Repeated SouperBowl of Caring project and supported UNICEF.

**Goal 4: Increase and acknowledge volunteerism in the Emerson Congregation**

Activity:

- Regular acknowledgement of volunteers in the gratitude section of the Emersonian.
- Acknowledgment of the Hopkins Social Action contributions in the May Worship Service.

**Goal 5: Codify process by which special collection organizations are chosen.**

Activity:

- A SAC subcommittee was formed to determine policies and procedures for the Social Action Committee, including the criteria for choosing special collections. SAC adopted the policies in October.

A SAC subcommittee was formed to award funds made available from the 10% solution for Endowment Grants. Criteria were set, and the subcommittee's recommendation was approved by SAC and the Board in December. Members submitted a total of 8 outstanding proposals and so final selection was difficult. SAC will recommend in the January 23 congregation meeting that the \$2,598 total award be split between The Drug Court Foundation (Gabe Gelb) for a fundraising breakfast and Northwest Community Unitarian Universalist Church (Barbara Hopkins) for moving to a more suitable church building to escape a chronic mold infestation. Runner-up proposals were Maud Gordon Elementary School Hands-on Science Program (Bob Hopkins), Trees for Houston Tree Planting (Megan Evans), Houston Zoo Summer Scholarships (Megan Evans), Kingwood Chorale Musical Concerts (Mim Freiter), Taping for the Blind Visually Impaired Computer Workstation (Mary and Art Pedersen) and Houston Elementary City Schools UN Conferences (Anna Louise Brunner).

### 2010 Special Collections Schedule

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1-17  | Emergency Collection for Haiti Earthquake           |
| 2-21  | Partner Church Balazes Scholarship                  |
| 2-28  | SEARCH Sandwiches                                   |
| 3-21  | Partner Church                                      |
| 4-18  | Earth Day UUMFE                                     |
| 5-16  | Children at Risk                                    |
| 6-20  | Micro Loans   |
| 7-18  | International (Partner Church & India) Scholarships |
| 8-15  | School Supplies                                     |
| 9-19  | Local College Scholarships                          |
| 10-17 | UNICEF  |
| 11-21 | The Gathering Place                                 |
| 12-19 | Hospitality Apartments                              |

Respectfully submitted,

Christel Erickson-Collins & Phil Richardson  
Co-Chairs Social Action Council



**Annual Report 2010 - Spring Gala and Auction Report**  
**Co Chairs: Barbara Adams and Anne Goodman**

The 2010 Service Auction, Carnival de Emerson, was held Saturday, April 24. Chaired by Barb Adams and Anne Goodman, total proceeds of the Brazilian-flavored event were \$37,527. More than 120 people attended and there were 133 donors of items and services. The evening featured a silent auction with hors d'oeuvres and wine bar, live entertainment for adults and children, and live auction with dessert service. Underwriting sponsors included: Sarah & Charles Boyd, Linda and Mike Condit, Carolyn Truesdell & Dick Cheney, Becky & Mark Edmiston-Lange, Karen & Faisal Nazir, Rachel & Jack Shada, Mary Ann Stanley and Pippa Wiley. Committee members were: Sarah Boyd, John Branch, Phyllis Burchfiel, Laura Emerson, Nicole Engstrom, Sarah Hager, Laurie & Bill Hammons, Ale Koosh, Nancy Lipp, Karen Nazir, Sally Phillips, Mary Ann Rusk, Ken Salzman, Rachel Shada, Mary Ann Stanley and Judy Taylor.

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**Annual Report 2010 - Worship Committee**  
**Co Chairs: Carolyn Truesdell and Rachel Shada**

The Worship Committee provides twelve services a year when the ministers are away from the pulpit. As with prior years, in 2010 this included individual services in March, May and June, six consecutive services in July and August, and individual services in October, November and the final Sunday of the year in December. The committee members work diligently to find free pulpit guests, including members of the committee and the larger congregation. However, to insure the quality of the services, sometimes it is necessary to find paid speakers or it is appropriate to award an honorarium. In 2010, nine of the Worship Committee services were comprised of Emersonians as pulpit guests. The other three services featured visiting pulpit guests. The congregation was exceptionally positive about the seven summer services, each of which was inspired by our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The Committee appreciates that this year's budgetary planning is even more difficult than most for the Board of Directors. However, we are concerned by the significant cut to the Worship Committee budget. While we did not spend the full amount allotted this year, we would be remiss if we did not point out that our expenses this year were lower than usual due to the nature of the summer series. Because we were celebrating our church history, we were able to rely heavily on church members, thus significantly saving the cost of our summer services (we had very few honoraria to pay this past summer). While we do our best to invite and include members in the services we plan, this is not always possible so it is imperative that our budget not be further cut if we are to continue providing the quality of services that draw our members to this church in the summer months and other Sundays when the ministers are away.

The Committee is comprised of a small number of dedicated members: David Bates, Susan Raffle, Anne Goodman (our Board representative), and deForest Ralph, with Carolyn Truesdell and Rachel Shada serving as co-chairs. We hope to increase the number of people on the Committee in 2010 – perhaps with information gleaned from the “Time and Talent” Campaign.

Yours in service,

The Worship Committee