



Congregational History from 1996 to 2023

Table of Contents

Ministers	ii
Moderators Since Move to Stenton Avenue Location	iii
Congregational History: 1996 to the Present	1
1996 to 1997: Rev. Walter Moulton (Interim)	1
1997 to 2003: Rev. Bonnie-Jeanne Casey	1
2003 to 2004: Rev. Liz McMaster (Interim)	2
2004 to 2008: Rev. W. Chester McCall III	4
How a Thief Restored Our Universalist History Window	6
2008 to 2010: Rev. Larry Smith (2-Year Consulting Minister)	7
2010 to 2016: Rev. Dr. Kathryn Ellis (Consulting: 2010-2012; Settled: 2012-2016)	7
2016 to 2017: (Rev.) Jo Ann Green (Part-Time Contract Minister) and (Rev.) Maria McCabe (Director of Social Justice & Community Ministries)	10
2017 to 2018: Lay Led	11
2018 to Present: Rev. McKinley Sims	12

Ministers

Stenton Avenue:

McKinley Sims
08-01-2018 to present

Lay Led
08-2017 to 07-2018

Jo Ann Green
09-01-2016 to 07-31-2017

Kathryn Ellis
09-01-2010 to 06-30-2016

Larry Smith (Interim)
10-26-2008 to 2010

William Chester McCall III
08-2004 to 04-2008

Elizabeth McMaster (Interim)
2003 to 2004

Bonnie-Jeanne Casey
1997 to 2003

Walter Moulton (Interim)
1996 to 1997

Harris Riordan (Interim)
09-01-1994 to 1996

Bob Throne
09-01-1987 to 08-31-1994

Laurel Sheridan (Interim)
09-09-1986 to 08-03-1987

Walter Wieder
03-12-1979 to 08-18-1986

Richard Perry
02-01-1970 to 06-25-1978

Rudolph Gelsey
02-01-1964 to 03-31-1969

Gilbert Phillips
10-20-1958 to 08-01-1963

Fenwick Leavitt
01-02-1957 to 07-01-1958

Harmon Gehr
03-04-1940 to 06-??-1956

Robert Tipton
10-16-1927 to 12-??-1939

Master Street:
Francis Alonzo Gray
12-16-1923 to 06-20-1927

Clinton Lee Scott
02-01-1920 to 10-15-1923

John Clarence Lee
11-01-1900 to 09-30-1919

Joseph K. Mason
09-01-1898 to 03-13-1899

F. A. Bisbee
05-06-1883 to 05-26-1898

H. R. Nye
06-01-1880 to 01-09-1883

George W. Bicknell
12-10-1878 to 12-07-1879

B. F. Bowles
02-02-1873 to 03-30-1878

Eighth Street:
Moses Ballou returned until
11-01-1872

B. M. Tillotson
Served 4 Years (not listed in
the official records)

J. T. Goodrich
Served 3 Years (not listed
in the official records)

Moses Ballou
05-01-1857 -

Richard Eddy
04-01-1855 to 11-01-1856

Callowhill Street:
Nelson Doolittle
04-01-1852 to 10-01-1853

A. B. Grosh
01-02-1850 to 08-01-1851

C. C. Burr
01-01-1845 to 01-01-1848

Theodor W. Cook
01-01-1841 to 01-01-1845

Savillion Fuller
10-01-1833 to 05-17-1840

L. F. W. Andrews
10-01-1832 to 10-01-1833

Zelotes Fuller
10-14-1828 to 05-01-1832

Stephien R. Smith
06-26-1825 to 10-05-1828

William Morse
10-16-1823 to 04-20-1824

Abner Kneeland
02-15-1820 to 10-16-1823

Moderators

2021 – Present Bruce Pollack-Johnson	1988 – 1990 Elizabeth Lutz	1964 – 1964 George Bartholomew	1927 – 1934 Columbus W. Gabell, Jr.
2019 – 2021 Fern Culhane	1986 – 1988 Marion Napper	1962 – 1964 William T. Dikeman	1908 – 1926 Edward S. Deemer
2013 – 2019 Timothy Styer	1985 – 1986 Willard Lutz	1960 – 1962 Richard Clegg	
2012 – 2013 Mark Piechota	1983 – 1985 Dorothy Feely	1958 – 1960 William H. Earle	
2010 – 2012 Hans-Harald Grote	1981 – 1983 Thomas Parker	1956 – 1958 William Golz	
2009 – 2010 Marilyn Dyson	1980 – 1981 George Ross	1954 – 1956 Dr. J. David Evans	
03/2008 – 06/2008 Marilyn Dyson & Gary Bamberger	1978 – 1980 Charlotte Newman	1952 – 1954 Brian Daly	
01/2007 – 03/2008 James Walters	1976 – 1978 Julia Bradburd	1950 – 1952 Adrian S. Marmor	
2004 – 01/2007 Barbara Bunkle	1974 – 1976 Hans-Harald Grote	1949 – 1950 Nicholas Greene	
2002 – 2004 Stephen Workman	1972 – 1974 LaForrest Russell	1946 – 1949 Richard J. Walker	
2001 – 2002 David & Nancy Poor	1970 – 1972 Marilyn Zhuraw	1944 – 1946 Perry S. McNeal	
1998 – 2001 Leona Howe	1969 – 1970 George Parrish	1942 – 1944 Freed Otto	
1995 – 1998 Larry Hain	1967 – 1969 Charles Oerkvitz	1941 – 1942 Gordon W. Gabell	
1993 – 1995 Adrienne Morrison	1965 – 1967 Haldor Reinholt	1940 – 1941 George Lichtfield	
1990 – 1993 Margaret Heineman	1964 – 1965 Earl Finbar Murphy	1934 – 1940 Dr. G. Wilmer Suplee	

Congregational History: 1996 to the Present

Written by the Members of the Congregation and
Compiled by the Board of Trustees

This story begins in 1996 after the seven-year tenure of Rev. Robert Throne and the two-year interim of Rev. Harris Riordan. Her tenure was followed by a failed ministerial search.

1996 to 1997: Rev. Walter Moulton (Interim)

Moderator: Larry Hain

Rev. Moulton knew we were multi-cultural but he was amazed by how many multi-racial couples were in our congregation.



1997 to 2003: Rev. Bonnie-Jeanne Casey

Moderators: Larry Hain (1998);
Leona Howe (1998-2001);
David & Nancy Poor (2001-02);
Stephen Workman (2002-2004)

Rev. Casey resigned in 2003 to leave parish ministry for an academic-based chaplaincy.



In mid-2002, Stephen Workman took the helm as Moderator, just as the Nursery School that had operated in Restoration's Hale wing for three decades, was forced to close. By then it was financially unstable, unable to maintain its liability insurance, and had defaulted on its lease. Steve's first priority as moderator was to reclaim and refurbish the space for Restoration's RE program.

Steve's first year as moderator proved to be a time of transition for the congregation as Rev. Casey announced in October that she would be stepping down as settled minister in March of 2003. The timing of her departure left a void of six-months without a minister. During the transition, many talented members of the congregation energetically stepped forward to develop creative lay-led services and to provide pastoral support for one other. These initiatives became the impetus for a more formalized Worship Associate Program and a Caring Committee that flourished under the tutelage of subsequent settled ministers.



Events:

- 1997: Jane Hain improved communication by building a state-of-the-art website.
- 1997 & 98: at the urging of Rev Casey, the Board led congregational retreats.
- 1998: The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration (UUCR) adopted the memo: Strategic Planning for UUCR's Future.
- 1999: Board terminated the lease to Restoration Nursery School.
- 2000: Rev Casey submitted the "Shared Ministry" concept to Committee On Ministry (COM).
- 2001: Rev Casey shared the book: "Ways Churches Grow".
- 2002: Restoration Nursery School vacated.
- COM conducted the Congregational Feedback Survey.

Historical Context:

- *1998 Serbian attacks on Kosovo*
- *1998 Northern Ireland "Good Friday" Accord*
- *1998 Matthew Shepard hate-crime murder*
- *1998 President Clinton impeached*
- *2001 "9/11" Terrorist attack on NYC & DC, causes collapse of World Trade Center*
- *2002 North Korea joins nuclear armed countries*

2003 to 2004: Rev. Elizabeth McMaster (Interim)

Moderator: Stephen Workman (2002-2004)

Events:

- *Rev. McMaster refused to perform any marriages until full marriage equality was available to all couples in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*
- *At Rev. McMaster's urging, the board adopted a commitment to paying ethical wages and providing benefits for Restoration's staff members.*
- *With Steve Workman's impetus of a "50-50-50" capital campaign, as a celebration of his 50th birthday, progress began to make UUCR handicapped accessible, starting with a ramp to the sanctuary. Earlier efforts had created accessible restrooms on the first floor of Hale Hallway, but in 2004 several individuals, including longtime members, were excluded from Restoration. Both the sanctuary and the fellowship hall were inaccessible to wheelchairs. Steve offered to make a \$5,000 donation to specifically address accessibility with the stipulation that the congregation would be required to match this by collectively raising the same amount. The congregation more than matched this, creating a fund eventually totaling \$12,000. A portion was used to create a wheelchair ramp to the sanctuary, organized by the Folk Factory under the leadership of Bruce Pollack-Johnson, and the remainder funded a study that proposed a plan for installing an affordable lift to allow access between the sanctuary's vestibule and Fellowship Hall.*

Historical Context:

- *2003 Space shuttle Columbia explodes, killing all 7 astronauts*
- *2003 U.S. and Britain launch war against Iraq*
- *2003 Supreme Court decisively upholds the right of affirmative action in higher education*



During the summer of 2003 the board voted to invite Reverend Elizabeth (Liz) McMaster to be Interim Minister beginning in September. Liz had long admired Restoration from afar. She appreciated and championed our diversity and our commitment to justice for all.

In her single year as minister, Liz challenged the congregation's leaders, and ultimately the congregation, to live out our ideals in three arenas that have had a lasting influence on the principles we continue to uphold as we approach our 200th anniversary. They include:

Financially supporting local and national social justice efforts—

In 2003, Restoration's operating budget faced significant challenges—ceilings leaked, walls pealed, and there were multiple plumbing and electrical problems. Added to that, liability insurance rates and fuel prices had spiked significantly in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. These unanticipated expenses, coupled with the loss of income from the nursery school had caused Restoration to marshal its resources strictly for operating expenses, staffing, and building maintenance. In the face of these challenges Liz McMaster extolled the virtues of generosity, urging us to consider: "Why would any newcomer want to join a church that exists solely to support itself for its own benefit?" At her urging the board reinstated the practice of designating the Christmas Eve collection and an end-of-church-year collection to benefit the community. These days, the Christmas Eve collection consistently supports the Minister's Discretionary Fund, which is used to support neighbors in need, and since 2011, a weekly "Change for Change" program has supported social justice initiatives through each weekly offertory collection. Through this program, all paper money collected continues to support the ministries of the church, but all coins (and specifically designated contributions) are channeled to a monthly social justice initiative. Since 2011, contributions totaling more than \$21,500.00 have been forwarded to worthy social justice programs through our Change for Change initiative.

Paying ethical wages and providing benefits for Restoration's staff members—

At Liz’s urging, the board appointed a committee, chaired by Leigh Howe (now Leigh Peranteau) and consisting of members with HR expertise. The committee recommended an increase in wages for the Administrative Assistant, Director of Religious Education, Music Director, Sexton, and also recommended that the people in these roles be paid for specific holidays during the year. These recommendations were incorporated into the 2004-2005 budget and have continued in spirit since that time, although the sexton’s role is now filled by an independent contractor who is not officially an employee of Restoration. At present, those in the other roles receive at least \$15.00 per hour, which is the minimum wage standard currently advocated by fair pay activists.

Refusing to perform any marriages until full marriage equality was available to all couples in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—

In 2004 marriage was a privilege restricted exclusively to traditional couples (i.e., one male and one female). The concept of marriage equality—the ability of gay couples or non-gender-conforming people to marry seemed an impossible and highly unlikely dream. The handful of progressive European countries and single US state (the Commonwealth of Massachusetts) that recognized marriage equality were then distant outliers from the cultural mainstream. Liz McMaster considered this an affront and took what at the time was a revolutionary stance of refusing to officiate any marriage in a location that did not recognize the right of all to marry. In doing so Liz pulled a somewhat reluctant congregation (including Steve Workman, Restoration’s first openly LGBT moderator) in the direction of fairness and into the current of the historical mainstream. Just over 10 years later the US Supreme Court issued the decision granting the right to marry available nationwide. Today we can celebrate the fact that America has lived up to its promise of offering liberty, dignity, freedom, and equality for all, and acknowledge that, with Liz’s vision, we were at the vanguard of that movement.

We achieved accessibility:

The most enduring legacy of Steve’s tenure as moderator was his leadership in making Restoration accessible for all. Our facility in East Mt. Airy was constructed in the mid-20th Century, well before serious consideration was given to the needs of individuals with mobility issues. Earlier efforts had created accessible restrooms on the first floor of Hale Hallway, but by 2004 several individuals, including longtime members, were excluded from Restoration because the sanctuary and

Our Partnership with Family Promise (PIHN)

For 30 years, we have lived out our commitment to social justice by partnering with Family Promise, Philadelphia (formerly known as the Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network—NPIHN). Following several years of inactivity, we renewed and expanded our relationship with them during Kathy Ellis’s tenure as minister.

Family Promise of Philadelphia provides education, training, social support, and housing for carefully selected unhoused families. Their mission begins with meeting immediate housing needs and extends beyond that to alleviate the root causes and help families achieve lasting independence. Their approach is highly effective; fully 92% of families receiving assistance from Family Promise in Philadelphia have succeeded in permanently overcoming homelessness. Congregations from many faith traditions share this work.

UUs of Mt. Airy’s primary responsibility with Family Promise has been to provide a safe and secure place for families seeking permanent housing. For many years, our classrooms have been converted into bedrooms twice-yearly, and our congregants have shared responsibility for preparing and hosting meals for our guests.

Along with so many other traditions, this model of hosting was interrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic. We were one of only three congregations able to provide hospitality during the lockdown, and we look forward to resuming this work according to a routine schedule very soon.

Events:

- 2004 UUCR welcomes Rev Chester McCall with enthusiasm its first minister who is both a person of color and gay.
- 2004 Rev McCall's installation service was very well attended by church members, as well as friends from far and wide and dignitaries from the UUA. In fact, UUA President William Sinkford gave the keynote address.
- 2004 Rev McCall preaches his sermon "UUism Rooted in Mysticism"
- 2004 The congregation commits to growth and hires April Bennett, as administrative assistant to support that goal.
- 2004 UUA "growth consultant" Robert Johnson conducts UUCR Growth workshop
- 2004 Challenge Design Group issues UUCR Accessibility Study
- 2004 Folk Factory organizes a Phil Ochs Night, held at Mishkan Shalom
- 2005 UUCR holds a successful Future Search event, which crystallized the goals and aspirations for next five to ten years
- 2005 Glass outer doors planned for sanctuary
- 2006 Barbara Bunkle resigns as moderator due to illness. James Walters succeeds her in January 2007 at the request of the board of trustees and with congregational approval
- 2007 First draft of UUCR HR Manual
- 2007 Board approves UUCR adopting the UUA "Bridge Builders" process rather than a traditional assessment of ministry; District Exec Rev Speck facilitates a startup event in November
- 2007 UUCR officially becomes a UUA "Welcoming Congregation", following a series of 12 workshops organized by Bruce Pollack-Johnson and other members
- 2007 UUCR adopts official HR Personnel Policy manual
- 2007 Board approves a new HVAC system thanks to a generous initial donation from an anonymous donor
- 2007 UUCR accepts proposal for the lift from the entrance to the Sanctuary down to Fellowship Hall, to make our main spaces wheelchair accessible
- 2007 Board approves engaging professional management of UUCR's

the fellowship hall were inaccessible to wheelchairs. Addressing accessibility seemed impossible until Steve challenged the congregation to consider potential remedies in a 50-50-50 fund drive.

In celebration of his 50th birthday, Steve offered to make a \$5,000 donation specifically to address accessibility with the stipulation that the congregation would be required to match this by collectively raising the same amount. The congregation more than matched this, creating a fund eventually totaling \$12,000. A portion was used to create a wheelchair ramp to the sanctuary, and the remainder funded a study that proposed a plan for installing an affordable lift to allow access between the sanctuary's vestibule and the fellowship hall.



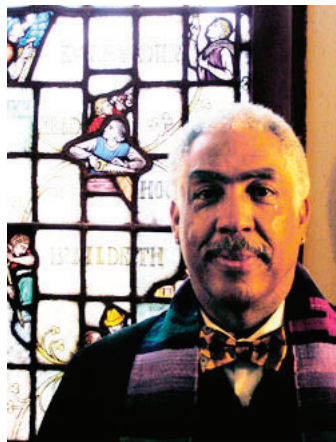
This initiative had two lasting benefits: accessibility was achieved, and its success generated a sense that financial challenges are not insurmountable. Several subsequent initiatives have benefitted by 50/50 matching contributions from anonymous and named donors. The congregation launched a successful pledge campaign that for the first time exceeds \$100,000.00.

2004 to 2008: Rev. W. Chester McCall III.
Moderators: Barbara Bunkle (2004-07); James Walters (2007-2008); Marilyn Dyson (2008-10)
Rev. McCall's ministry was a turbulent one and came to a negotiated end in 2008.



Rev. McCall was the first African American gay minister from a working class and UCC (United Church of Christ, a progressive Christian denomination) background at Restoration. He was passionate about social justice in all areas of oppression, especially race, sexual orientation and social class. During his time at UUCR the congregation underwent a Future Search visioning process that led to a re-organization of our structure, from Committees to Ministries, including the Multicultural Anti-Oppression/Accessibility Ministry, the Social Justice and Community Involvement Ministry, the Theological Diversity Ministry, and the Religious Exploration

Ministry. Rev. McCall was a social advocate for people in the community with mental health challenges and people who were experiencing poverty. His personality was lively and engaging. Under his leadership there was a significant increase in members of color joining the church. He also led the church to examine its beliefs about racial injustice in the community and was a masterful facilitator of workshops on racial justice, such as the Building the World We Dream About program, which he facilitated with member Bruce Pollack-Johnson for over 50 UUs from all over the Delaware Valley. Rev. McCall was a leader of DRUUMM (Diverse and Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries, a UU support group for people of color), and served as a mentor for many UUs of color across the country. Rev. McCall valued religious diversity and was able to reclaim our heritage in Christianity, Judaism and Humanist traditions.



More than a year after Rev. McCall started at UUCR, our talented Office Administrator April Bennett passed away. Rev. McCall offered to perform the duties that April had done for financial reasons, but this was challenging. Barbara Bunkle resigned in 2006 as moderator due to illness. Dr. James Walters succeeded her in January 2007 at the request of the board of trustees and with congregational approval.

After a period of time, some members expressed concerns about whether Rev. McCall was serving our needs as pastor. The Board approved the adoption of the UUA's Bridge Builders process to identify what may be causing the unease and anxiety in the midst of changes at Restoration. Following several meetings between district executive Richard Speck, the Bridge Builders Action Team was formed – a group of congregants who, under the direction/facilitation of Rev. Speck and Paula Cole-Jones, would study the consultant report and bring to the Board and the congregation their recommendation regarding Restoration's way forward.

In 2008 the Board adopted a clear policy on boundaries of authority to speak on behalf of the congregation. After the

- *investment portfolio*
- 2007 Board reiterates its stand against "altar calls" for new members.
- 2007 People's Music Network 30th Annual Winter Gathering organized largely by the UUCR's Folk Factory
- 2008 Board adopts a clear policy on boundaries of authority to speak on behalf of the congregation
- 2008 After the regular monthly board meeting, in executive session J Walters announces his resignation as moderator. Marilyn Dyson is chosen by the board to succeed. Marilyn's first responsibility will be to lead the congregational meeting on whether to adopt the Bridge Builders report, and whether to continue or terminate the ministry of Rev McCall
- 2009 UUCR launches "2nd Sunday Potlucks" (which continue)
- 2009 Social Justice Ministry launches "Split The Plate" Sunday collection (evolved into "Change For Change)
- 2010 UUCR has "off-site" visioning retreat to launch capital improvement campaign resulting (in subsequent years): handicapped lift, kitchen renovation, and renewal of historic "Universalist History" stained glass window



Historical Context:

- 2004 Gay marriages begin in Massachusetts, the first state in the country to legalize such unions
- 2004 Enormous tsunami devastates Asia; 200,000 killed
- 2005 Hurricane Katrina wreaks catastrophic damage on the Gulf coast; more than 1,000 die and millions are left homeless.
- 2005 The Irish Republican Army announces it is officially ending its violent campaign for a united Ireland
- 2006 The Supreme Court rules that military tribunals cannot be set up to try prisoners in the absence of Congressional authorization

- 2006 *Saddam Hussein is convicted of crimes against humanity by an Iraqi court (Nov. 5), and hanged in Baghdad.*
- 2007 *The minimum wage increases to \$5.85, up from \$5.15. It's the first increase in 10 years. The wage will increase 70 cents each year through 2009, when it will be \$7.25 an hour*
- 2007 *Nancy Pelosi becomes the first woman speaker of the House*
- 2008 *Connecticut's Supreme Court rules that a state law that limits marriage to heterosexual couples and a civil union law that protects gay couples violate equal protection rights guaranteed by the constitution.*
- 2008 *California's Supreme Court rules, 4 to 3, that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry.*
- 2008 *The Great Recession hits. The government begins to intervene in the U.S. financial system to avoid collapse.*
- 2008 *Barack Obama is elected President, the first African American so elected.*

Events:

- 2008 *Garth is rejuvenated into a meditation space*
- 2008 *Pat DeBrady honored by Northwest Interfaith Movement*
- 2008 *Committee on Ministry with UUA assistance launches "authentic reconciliation" process*
- 2009 *Covenant groups relaunch*
- 2009 *6 members go to New Orleans to assist with cleanup*
- 2009 *Buddhist meditation group formed (and continues)*
- 2009 *Board approves a policy for dealing with disruptive behavior*
- 2009 *Caring Committee is rejuvenated*
- 2009 *Music director, Jane Hulting, is honored for 25 years of service to UUCR*

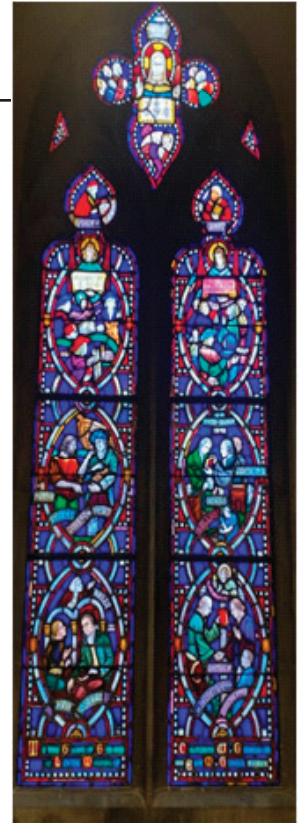
How a Thief Restored Our Universalist History Window

Our sanctuary is graced by a beautiful stained glass window depicting luminaries of Universalist history. It was installed in 1938 when our (then) Universalist church was built. By 2009 the window was showing its age. The glass was warping and the lead disintegrating, causing glass components to fall off. A representative from Willet Hauser Architectural Glass, which had created the window more than 70 years earlier, determined that the entire window was at risk of collapsing into the sanctuary.

The \$17,000 required to restore the window was funded by a generous (anonymous) donor from the congregation. In late June 2010 Willet Hauser employees removed the large window, boxed the pieces, and loaded it onto a trailer for the trip to their studio in Minnesota.

During an overnight stop in during its transit, the trailer and its contents, were stolen in Nashville TN and never recovered. Because the window was in the custody of Willet Hauser at the time of the theft, Willet, along with their insurance company, were responsible for the loss. Remarkably, Willet had retained the original 72-year-old specs (drawings, designs, and photos) from the time of the window's original construction.

Rather than repair the original window, they were able to create an entirely new replica at no cost to us.



regular monthly board meeting, in executive session Dr. Walters announced his resignation as moderator. Marilyn Dyson was chosen by the board to succeed. Marilyn's first responsibility would be to lead the congregational meeting on whether to adopt the Bridge Builders report, and whether to continue or terminate the ministry of Rev. McCall. Rev. McCall chose to resign. The immediate impact of his resignation was traumatic. Many, especially newer members, had found Rev. McCall charming and of good humor. Many, too, were inspired by his commitment to issues of anti-racism and anti-oppression.

**2008 to 2010: Rev. Larry Smith
(2-Year Consulting Minister)**

Co-Moderators: Marilyn Dyson and Gary Bamberger (03/2008-06/2008),
Marilyn Dyson (2009-2010)



The Board engaged Rev. Larry Smith as a part-time consulting minister. Rev. Smith supported the congregation's search for its next full-time minister and provided some pulpit filling. The board of trustees also contracted with Dr. James Walters to provide worship leading and preaching once a month from September 2008 through June 2009.

**2010 to 2016: Rev. Dr. Kathryn Ellis
(Consulting: 2010-2012; Settled: 2012-2016)**

Moderators: Harald Grote (2010-2012),
Mark Piechota (2012-2013),
Timothy Styer (2013-2019).

Rev. Ellis coined the purpose or mission to be "Embracing All Souls and Restoring Wholeness." That isn't a concrete statement of goals but it is a theological expression of aspirations.



Kathryn "Kathy" Ellis came to us as a part-time contract minister following Larry Smith's departure. One of her immediate objectives was to help heal the traumas which were still raw from Chester McCall's ministry. To that end, she talked with many members, pieced together the stories and feelings, and addressed these in her sermons. She delved into the interpersonal dynamics of the community and set upon helping us heal.

Historical Context:

- 2009 *US Airways Flight 1549, enroute from La Guardia Airport, New York City, to Charlotte, N.C., emergency landing in Hudson River*
- 2009 *March Unemployment in the U.S., which has been steadily growing for several months, reaches 8.1% in February 2009. This is the highest rate since 1983*
- 2009 *US Senate approves the nomination of Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court, the first Hispanic Supreme Court justice*
- 2009 *President Barack Obama announces that the U.S., China, India, Brazil, and South Africa agreement to combat global warming*

Events:

- 2010 *UUCR member Cynthia Bradley receives an award from Northwest Interfaith Ministries*
- 2010 *the historic Universalist History stained glass window removed by Willet for restoration. During transit, the truck and window was stolen but insurance paid for full reconstruction.*
- 2010 *The Justice Council is formed (and continues to the present) as a merger of the Multicultural Anti-Oppression/Accessibility and Social Justice and Community Involvement Ministries*
- 2011 *Rev Ellis is contracted as ¾ time minister*
- 2011 *Rev Ellis facilitates a "Ministry Workshop" to flesh out how UUCR will further develop "shared ministry" to promote our mission and vision*
- 2011 *UUCR makes the switch to "green energy"*
- 2011 *Rev Ellis and interning UU Seminarian, David Dubbeldam, launch study group on "immigration as a moral issue"*
- 2011 *UUCR adopts a Covenant of behavior*
- 2011 *UUCR launches its "hospitality teams," to foster an experience of community among its members and especially for visitors*



- 2011 Anonymous donor makes a \$50K gift for furnace/boiler replacement; other improvements that year included new storm windows in Hale Hall, a new alarm system, and a new outside sign designed by member Gary Sobolow



- 2012 Rev Ellis contracted as full time minister
- 2012 Rev Ellis launches UUCR's "Worship Associates" team – members who volunteer to be trained in worship arts and preaching, and who join with the minister co-leading, or sometimes solo-leading, worship. This very successful program continues to the present day
- Major renovation of the kitchen.
- AV system was installed that allows services to be viewed on-line.
- 2012 Rev Ellis and other UUs participate in the "UU Living Legacy Civil Rights Pilgrimage" to historic sites in the still-living history of the US civil rights movement
- 2013 UUCR sponsors a student minister (advanced UU seminarian), Maria McCabe as Director of Community and Social Justice Ministries
- A new, 8th Principle, was written by Paula Cole Jones and longtime Restoration member Bruce Pollack-Johnson in 2013, in response to many UUs not recognizing that the other 7 Principles imply the importance of working to dismantle systemic racism and other oppressions. Restoration added the wording to its Congregational Covenant in 2014.

One way she helped us heal was to guide us in developing and adopting a covenant to guide our behavior towards each other in our community. This is now an important guiding document which we refer to often, especially when conflict arises.

Another way she helped us heal was to get agreement as to the focus of her ministry: Embracing Souls and Restoring Wholeness. It was a great play on the concept of restoration, and a constant reminder of what she was about. Embracing souls also meant embracing our faith as a deeply spiritual faith, without fear of prayer or talk of God by her or others.

So we saw this mantra on the AV screen every Sunday. Oh, and she insisted on having that, in spite of the objections of some congregants who swore they would never attend a church with a rock band and a projection system. The rock band was up there for awhile, it is gone now, but the AV projector remains and we have adjusted to it. She particularly wanted the words of the hymns to be projected so that folks could sing with more joy and abandon. One other major change she insisted upon was that all Sunday services be held in the sanctuary, not downstairs as was our habit. Around this time we had installed air conditioning in the sanctuary, so that made this transition easy. And it was Kathy who suggested changing our "share the plate" offerings to our current "Change for Change" model of picking a nonprofit organization each month and having spare change and designated contributions every Sunday funnel to that group. The organization model we now use for Hospitality teams, service support, was started during Kathy's tenure as well. Mark Piechota and Pat Evans brought this model to us, and Pat Evans and Leigh Peranteau did the initial detailed organizing, with Annabel Grote also helping to implement.

At the beginning of her ministry, Kathy called for volunteers to be trained as Worship Associates. She had served as a worship associate at Wellspring, in Chester County, and she was familiar with the model. One of her goals was to ensure a high quality of service, even if she was not present. Another was to encourage spiritual growth. So began this very nourishing experience for those who volunteered.

Worship Associates set about standardizing a script for the parts of the service that are repeated each week, making sure the Order of Service, while flexible, had continuity and flow. Thematic worship and reflections written and created by the worship associates has become standard now. Congregants

have a deeper sense of appreciation for each other as so many have shared their stories, their differing beliefs and experiences. All planning sessions had a spiritual growth focus for all involved, writing was shared, presentation skills were honed. Kathy encouraged those involved to see this service to the church as a way to expand one's spirituality and share this journey with others.

Kathy was well connected with the UUA and professional colleagues. She reached out and supported her colleagues, mentored young professionals, and thereby we were blessed to support both David Dubbeldam and Maria McCabe through their internships (both were subsequently ordained by our congregation). These internships involved committee work by members who gladly volunteered to support them, although Kathy was responsible for the bulk of their supervision.

Rev. Ellis coined "*Embracing All Souls and Restoring Wholeness.*" as a theological expression of our aspirations.

Most memorable about Kathy Ellis's ministry was her love. She really loved us and wanted to serve us. She loved our flaws as well as our strengths. Just as she was forgiving to us, she modeled forgiveness to self. How easily she acknowledged and laughed at "mistakes" made in our presence, giving us permission not to have to show up as perfect.

It was with mutual sadness that a long-term illness caused her to resign from ministry. Her lasting legacy is helping us heal and become a more compassionate, loving and functional community.

The year 2016 was groundbreaking for the social justice ministry at UUCR. For the first time in its long history, this community voted to support a half-time staff position and hired Maria McCabe to advance its work of justice and community outreach. We instituted a weekly Justice Newsletter that went out electronically to our church membership and to all who requested it. The Justice Newsletter was a weekly compendium of news media articles and event announcements relating to justice issues that were most meaningful to the community. And it allowed the entire UUCR community to remain informed about the work of the Justice Council while affording opportunities for individuals to engage in a broader conversation about this ministry.

"We affirm and promote the following 8th Principle: Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by building a diverse, multicultural Beloved Community that by our actions accountably dismantles racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

- 2014 Black Lives Matter Vigils, a weekly hour of witness with signs along Stenton Avenue in front of the church followed by a period of sharing while lighting candles, is launched by Maria McCabe and other UUCR members. These continue to the present.
- 2014-15 UUCR runs 3 rounds of Beloved Conversations (small group conversations about race, including a round of training)
- In 2015, wheelchair lift built to give access to Fellowship Hall and a handicapped bathroom created on that level.

Social Events: 1996-2023

Our congregation has a history of having fun together. From multicultural themed Auctions with flamboyant costumes, to Pledge Drives with elaborate decorations and parody songs by Sandy Fulton, to dance parties and Easter egg hunts, we know how to have an enjoyable time together. For years, member Dot Feeley spearheaded successful and enjoyable Flea Markets that brought our local community to our grounds and fostered camaraderie among congregation members. We have also continued our tradition of social Dinners for Eight (organized for years by member Julie Bradburd), as well as more serious "Dinners for 8th" to discuss race and the 8th Principle.

Historical Context:

- 2010 Haiti earthquake
- 2010 US Supreme Court upholds “Citizens United”
- 2010 “Affordable Care Act” passed
- 2011 US Special Forces find and kill Osama Bin Laden
- 2011 US military officially ends “don’t ask; don’t tell”
- 2011 US military leaves Iraq, ending that war
- 2012 Trayvon Martin, a Black 17yr old, is shot dead by George Zimmerman
- 2012 Hurricane Sandy devastates the Northeast coast
- 2012 Sandy Hook elementary school massacre
- 2012 Obama is reelected to a 2nd term
- 2013 Boston Marathon bombing
- 2013 US Supreme Courts invalidates a key section of the Voting Rights Act
- 2014 Flint River lead contaminated environmental racism water crisis begins
- 2014 Michael Brown, a Black man of Ferguson MO, is killed by police
- 2104 Stranglehold death of Eric Garner by NYPD officers
- 2015 Walter Scott, an unarmed Black man is shot dead by police in South Carolina
- 2015 Freddie Gray dies suspiciously in police custody in Baltimore
- 2015 White supremacist Dylann Roof kills 9 worshippers at the Emmanuel AME church
- 2015 US Supreme Court rules a constitutional right to same sex marriage
- 2016 Justice Scalia dies. Obama nominates Merrick Garland. GOP refuses to hold appointment/confirmation hearings
- 2016 Donald J Trump elected president

In August 2014, we initiated our Black Lives Matter Vigils every week without exceptions. We begin outside on Stenton Avenue from 6-6:30 pm. We hold signs in support of Black Lives Matter and to dismantle white supremacy. We wave to motorists and engage passersby in conversation. It is not unusual for folks in the community to stop and talk with us in depth about their lives, their experiences and the pain of living in a racialized society. At 6:30 we go into the sanctuary for prayer, reflection and further conversation. We share news and African American history, light candles and say the names of the victims of police violence. This activity continues weekly to this day.

2016 to 2017: (Rev.) Jo Ann Green (Part-Time Contract Minister) and (Rev.) Maria McCabe (Director of Social Justice & Community Ministries)

Moderator: Timothy Styer (2013-2019)

After we said good-bye to Rev. Ellis who had served for 6 years and had left due to illness, our ministry was in the hands of two pre-ordination UU seminarians: the now - Rev Maria McCabe, who had interned under Kathy Ellis and was subsequently hired as Restoration’s part-time Director of Social Justice and Community Ministries, and the now - Rev Jo Green, who was hired as part-time contract minister.



A graduate of Lancaster Theological Seminary in May 2014, Maria Uitti McCabe initiated our weekly Justice Newsletter, our weekly Black Lives Matter Vigils in 2014 (in response



to the Ferguson uprising, which continue to this day), and our involvement with POWER (Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild, a multiracial interfaith progressive activist coalition), which she co-led her last year with UUCR. Maria also was a leader of our work to adopt the 8th Principle in 2017. Maria was ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister on June 4, 2017 at First Unitarian Church of Wilmington.

Ms Green entered as a part time minister, which greatly limited the work and time for ministering to a congregation grieving the absence of their previous minister. In the short time with this congregation, she was able to get to know the members, minister to them and offer them what gifts and talents she could. Her services were well received each time she preached. She felt privileged to participate and attend the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention hosted by UUCR that year. The culmination of her tenure at UUCR was her Ordination on April 23, 2017. The Ordination Committee was co-sponsored by Restoration and her internship church, the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill. With so many members attending, the ceremony was held at the Unitarian Society of Germantown.



At the beginning of this congregational year, Restoration also lost the presence of its Music Director, who took an extended leave due to illness. The congregation rallied, supporting those who had musical ability in the congregation and hired a temporary part-time choir director, so that music was never lacking in Sunday worship.

2017 to 2018: Lay Led

Moderator: Timothy Styer (2013-2019)

Tim Styer closed the 2017 Annual Congregational meeting with these words:

“We have the creativity and energy to thrive as we move through to our 200th anniversary!”

Worship was superbly handled by our team of Worship Associates with pastoral care support by other area UU ministers. And, Music Director, Jane Hulting returned as part-time Music Director in the fall of 2017.

Events:

- *UUCR hosted homeless Interfaith Hospitality Network (PIHN) families. Our congregation stepped up, cooking and serving meals, and providing overnight hospitality to provide a safe and welcoming stay for the guests.*
- *Opened Hale Hall as a polling place, offered volunteers from this congregation, registered people to vote, and staffed our church on election day.*
- *Created a Safety Committee, which produced an extensively detailed manual on safety at UUCR. The committee worked tirelessly over the course of four months to compile a Security and Emergency Manual detailing measures to be taken in the cases of fire, medical emergency, hostile intruders, active shooters, and child protection.*
- *Ms Green began the creation of a Pastoral Care Committee to aid in ministering to our members and friends.*

Events:

- *The Board approved a Name Change Committee to move forward with their work. The Board agreed to work with the Name Change Committee in developing a process to determine whether the congregation would favor changing the name of the congregation.*
- *A task force organized to consider changing the name of the congregation.*
- *UUCR adopted the 8th Principle in May of 2017, the first UU congregation in the country to do so. Bruce and Paula introduced it as a Responsive Resolution during the 2017 General Assembly. It passed overwhelmingly, and spurred the creation of the Article II Commission in 2020.*

In November of 2017, the board of trustees of the UU Church of the Restoration commissioned a committee to study the issue of changing the congregation's name. The impetus for a name change, initiated by member Linda Hansell, was to draw our circle wider, to "build a bigger tent", and to be recognized as welcoming and appealing to a wider range of people. It was thought that removing words such as "church" and "Restoration" might appeal to those who share our values and come from non-Christian backgrounds or who may have had traumatic relationships with religion, and people who are agnostic or atheist. And while such goals were worthy, we were keenly aware of potential difficulties in settling upon a name that would attract prospective members while appealing to those already included within the congregation.

Events:

- *Those of us who are white are having long over-due conversations about systemic racism, and our 8th Principle work is clearer than ever: we live by our covenantal principles with one another, even when it was not always easy, or straightforward, and dismantling white supremacy starts here and now.*
- *The Board saw the first spreading of ashes in the newly renovated garth for church members who had recently passed away. The members were Bob and Doris Holtzman, and Adrienne Morrison.*
- *We moved our investments from the UUA to the Trustees of the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention (TPUC). The return on investments managed by the UUA and TPUC has been the same over the past 10 years. However, there will be cost savings recognized by moving to the TPUC as the TPUC has lower fees.*
- *2022 Our Congregation celebrates the Installation of Rev. McKinley Sims, who has received Final Fellowship from the UUA*

Indeed, the notion of a name change initially was uncomfortable for a significant proportion of members and friends. Dropping the name Restoration, a vestige of the Universalist heritage that had been intrinsic to our identity for well over 100 years, was a hurdle for many and was the first of numerous challenges encountered throughout the name change delineation process. The committee members initiated a meticulous and thoughtful process of listening, adapting, explaining, processing, and compromising to ensure that all constituencies participated in a meaningful way. The methodology included two congregational surveys (yielding over 40 suggested names and many comments); eight town hall meetings/listening sessions/congregational meetings—one of which was offered exclusively for people of color (many of whom were concerned about dropping the word "church" from our name). There were numerous focused conversations during worship services, informal conversations with individual congregants, and multiple written reports and updates to congregation.

A search committee was formed to seek ministers in search of a church to serve. Pat Infante, our Central East Regional Group (CERG) contact, identified several candidates. The Committee on Ministry collected exit interviews from two candidates and shared the information with the Search Committee.

2018 to Present: Rev. McKinley Sims

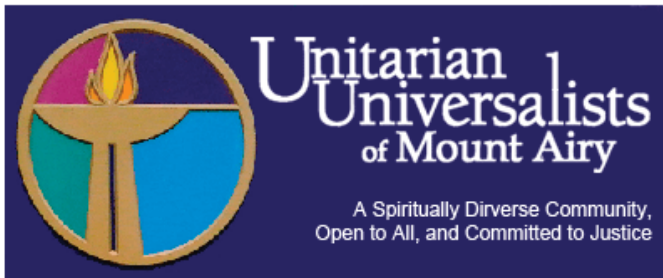
Moderators: Timothy Styer (2013-2019),
Fern Culhane (2019-2021),
Bruce Pollack-Johnson (2021-Present)

Reverend Sims came to us shortly after his ordination. The Search Committee along with the Board felt that the relationship between Reverend Sims and the congregation would be mutually beneficial and that he and the congregation could learn from each other. The board contracted with him for a period of two years with the hopes that the congregation could engage with him as a called minister before his contract was up for renewal. Rev. Sims was unanimously called to be our settled full-time minister in 2020.



Since Rev. Sims' arrival, our congregation has had a budget surplus. This has allowed us to start off our church years in a comfortable financial position.

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic caused us to close up the building midway through March, and we learned about Zoom, Facebook Live, and digital meetings. We were extremely proud of the work our Worship team did, upgrading technology in the sanctuary (thanks largely to the skills of Rev. Sims and incredibly hard-working member Mike Foy), experimenting with new worship styles and cultures. We crafted and celebrated worship services from diverse traditions and with diverse theological language to name the Holy, all while being physically distant and spiritually together. This virtual-only version of worship extended until the fall of 2022 when congregants were again welcomed into the building, albeit masked and socially distanced at six feet as an initial move toward normality.



Following a four-and-a-half-year discernment process, on February 28, 2021, the congregation voted to change its name from the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration to Unitarian Universalists of Mt. Airy. The new name appealed

Maintenance, Repairs, and New Initiatives

The congregation has seen many improvements since the frustrating days of the early 21st Century when we struggled to maintain our facilities and were challenged by Reverend Liz McMaster's question "Why would any newcomer want to join a church that exists solely to support itself for its own benefit?"

In addition to our thriving social justice programs, we have improved our infrastructure and facilities with generous donations from congregants (many of them anonymous), project-specific fund drives, along with non-profit, denominational, and governmental grants. Our roof still leaks from time-to-time, but these days repairs are addressed immediately. With diligent oversight (and a great deal of heavy lifting) by Building and Grounds Committee members Harald Grote, Larry and Jane Hain, and Michael Foy, we now enjoy:

- A renovated kitchen in our fellowship hall
- Glass door entrance to the sanctuary
- A ramp to giving accessibility to the sanctuary
- An A/V projection system enabling livestreaming of worship services
- A chair lift, making the fellowship hall accessible
- Storm windows (secured through a "Windows of Opportunity" initiative)
- New signage unveiled, graced with a beautiful new church logo designed by member Gary Sobolow
- New heating and air conditioning systems,

to a two-thirds majority of the congregation, as it reflects our location in the Mt. Airy neighborhood of Philadelphia. Mt. Airy is recognized regionally and nationally for its diversity, commitment to racial justice, and progressive values.

Tagline: The new name was intentionally simple — so simple that we were concerned it failed to make clear that we were a religious organization. Therefore, it was proposed that we develop a tagline to provide a bit more information about us. The search for an appropriate tagline was quicker and slightly easier than the process for identifying our new name and was adopted in October 2021.

“A spiritually diverse community open to all and committed to justice.”

The tagline conveyed that we are a spiritual community rather than a civic organization. By specifying that we are spiritually diverse it reflected that within our congregation are people of Christian backgrounds, Jewish backgrounds, Buddhists, and non-religious background, atheists, agnostics, secular humanists, and people who follow earth-centered spiritual practices.

The word “diverse” also brings to mind our treasured racial and cultural diversity, and “open to all” makes clear that no one is excluded because of color, religious background, disability, class, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Finally, “committed to justice” gives a feel for our work for racial and social justice for decades in our area and nationally.”

UUs of Mt. Airy hosted both the TPUC convention in October of 2022 and the Annual Universalist convocation in May of 2023.

The 8th Principle: The Article II Commission made its proposal for wording to replace the existing Principles, Purposes, Sources, etc. in the UUA bylaws (incorporating the 8th Principle language), and it was to be voted upon at the GA in 2023. As of early 2023, over 250 congregations and UU groups (out of about 1000) had adopted the 8th Principle. Since 2020, hundreds of UUs from

across the country have participated in monthly Zoom gatherings of the 8th Principle Learning Community, hosted by Paula and Bruce.

In November 2021, our Board adopted the Mission Statement: **“Building Beloved Community by embracing all souls and nurturing wholeness”** as well as a revised Vision Statement.

In June of 2022 our congregation adopted a revised Congregational Covenant.

Rev. Sims has been active in Social Justice work, taking leadership in POWER and working with UU Justice PA (one of the first UU state legislative action networks, which was founded here by Pat DeBrady and Brad Bradburd as UUPLAN), and has also served a leadership role in the local chapter of the UU Minister’s Association. He has also been an active member of our 8th Principle Team.



Jane Hulting, Minister of Music 1986-2021

In December of 2021, we celebrated the remarkable 35-year tenure of Jane Hulting when she officially retired. Jane was hired as music director in the mid-1980s and served our congregation for twice as long as any minister in our 200-year history. Her music enlivened our sanctuary and refreshed our souls.



The repertoire she chose over the years took us from Bach to Beatles, from Broadway to Folk and Pop, always with an eye on evoking social justice issues. In addition to this eclectic repertoire, Jane nurtured the talents of each and every singer and musician and gave those who sought it opportunities for ensemble and solo work all while working with the worship planners to match the music with the theme of the service.

Highlights of her twice-yearly Music Sundays included the performance of selections from Rachmaninoff's Vespers, with the Unitarian Society of Germantown and First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, and also a performance at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, Missa Gaia by Paul Winter Consort in collaboration with First Church, Hymnody of Earth by Malcolm Dalglish with an appearance on hammer dulcimer by the composer himself.

When the congregation was presented with handbells as a gift, in 1997, Jane recruited bell ringers, young and old, and delighted listeners with two concerts a year featuring this intergenerational ensemble.

Combining her love of yoga with her love of music, Jane often added to the group's vocal warm-ups by including physical stretches, rhythmic walking, deep breathing and even free-style dancing. Lively performances (such as the Motown concert) included upbeat choreography.

With her leadership, our music program became its own ministry and provided camaraderie, community support, and spiritual nourishment that served as the glue holding us together through the stresses of changing ministers.

Jane helped start Voices Rising Philly, a community activist choir inspired by the need to respond to the election of Donald Trump, which has sung at protests and the International Peace Walk. She also chose our wonderful piano, which other musicians have praised.

She was dearly beloved by the singers and the congregation. Happily, Jane did not abandon us following her retirement. She remains an integral part of UUs of Mt. Airy and has generously continued to share her musical talents while awaiting the appointment of a new Director of Music.

Justice Council and the 8th Principle Team

Highlights of our Justice Council work for more than a decade have been choosing recipients of our Change for Change each month, spearheading voter registration drives, a monthly book discussion group, and recent learning about reparations and looking at our own history from that perspective. One highlight was a bus trip to the Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. Another was organizing a dozen or so of our members to take the Trans Inclusion Workshop by the Transforming Hearts Collective.

Our 8th Principle Team first did a survey of our congregation to get a sense of our familiarity with systemic racism and to share resources in the area of racial justice with each other. They then organized and facilitated a number of Dinners for 8th to lead discussions of race and share our experiences. They facilitated conversations based on the UUA Commission on Institutional Change "Widening the Circle" report to start thinking of ways to dismantle racism within our congregational structures. To help in that work, they organized 16 members to participate in the Beloved Conversation Virtual program, stage 1 (called "Within", focusing on the individual level), to enable us to continue our Widening the circle work using the stage 2 (called "Among", focusing at the congregational level) starting in the Fall of 2023.

The Mt. Airy Community Fridge and Pantry

In late 2022, member Courtney Heinerici and her friend Nicole Williams had the idea to start a community food pantry and got the enthusiastic support of our Board and a host of volunteers. We see this work as an example of Radical Hospitality and, in a sense, an action we can take in sympathy with the Indigenous Land Back movement, since we are opening part of our space to be freely available to our community, very much in the spirit of the way that Native people view land and community.

Our Covenant

Because we have expressed that:

Love is the guiding force of this faith community,
The quest for truth informs our sacred journeys,
And service is our prayer,
And because we aspire
To journey toward spiritual wholeness,
To dwell together in peace,
To seek knowledge in freedom, and
To share our strength in fellowship,

Thus do we covenant:

To abide in friendship, by:

Appreciating our differences and celebrating our diversity;
Enjoying each other's company in fellowship and fun;
Encouraging each other;
Supporting each other's spiritual growth;
Giving and receiving help in times of need;
Participating in the activities of our community, both formal and unstructured;
Embracing radical hospitality toward newcomers and each other;
To resolve our misunderstandings in a spirit of love and accountability by:

Assuming that others behave with good intentions;
Listening with an open heart to each other's opinions, ideas, life experiences and concerns;
Working honestly through conflicts directly with those involved in a spirit of kindness and understanding;
Offering and accepting apologies and forgiveness;
Respecting differing voices and honoring dissent;
Cooperating in a spirit of compromise and consensus toward the well-being of the community as a whole; and
To build a strong, diverse, and multicultural

Beloved Community by:

Supporting one another in our efforts to help our congregation thrive;
Honoring and respecting the work of our leadership, ministries, committees and dedicated individuals;
Building on our congregation's legacy of working with community partners in solidarity and with accountability to challenge and dismantle systemic racism and to nurture and sustain an inclusive community;
Working to recognize and undo other oppressions as well within ourselves and our congregational culture;
Contributing generously of our time, talents, and financial resources;

Accepting the call to leadership with openness, warmth, and humor;
Being realistic about our commitments, choosing to do what brings us fulfillment and what we are able to complete; and
Expressing gratitude for one another's contributions.

