

UNIVERSITY CHURCH HISTORY

YEARS 101-125

Introduction

This history is meant to be read as a sequel to “University Church: The First Hundred Years,” which started with the founding of the church in 1894 and ended with the celebration of the church’s hundredth anniversary in 1994. Most of the information recorded here was taken from the Board Minutes from 1995 to 2019.

1995

Following the celebration of University Church’s 100th anniversary in 1994, the church returned to its regular cycle of worship, work, and meetings. Don and Ann Marie Coleman, who had started their work as co-pastors in 1991, continued to lead the congregation. The Board minutes from January 1995 show that the congregation had increased in size by 7% from the previous year. Church growth was being tracked as one of the goals of the 1994 strategic plan.

The year 1995 saw changes in the church staff as the property manager Sam McAlyea resigned in January 1995. Yvonne Liddell was hired as his replacement in March 1995.

The Second Century Stewardship Campaign was launched on January 19, 1995. Lowell Livezey was the campaign chairman. One of the focuses of the campaign was to make University Church more accessible. A quarter of the funds raised were devoted to this task. Martha Younger-White and the Disability Awareness Committee commissioned drawings from the architect, Jim Oden, to design accessible restrooms, meeting rooms, and wheelchair seating in the sanctuary. Excavating the church basement and adding an elevator were discussed but determined to be too expensive. The Second Century Campaign also focused on reaching out to people associated with University Church to remember the church in wills and structured gifts. Ultimately, the Second Century Campaign brought in \$181,326 as well as \$41,683 in deferred giving.

The Blue Gargoyle continued to have programs in University Church space, and Jim Wagner was charged with negotiating a formal lease agreement with them. The Blue Gargoyle was noted to be behind on their space usage fees throughout the spring of 1995 because they were waiting on funding from the state. The Blue Gargoyle in 1995 was offering adult literacy classes as well as programming and tutoring for young people. It had grown from an organization started by Divinity School students in the 1960s to being a social service entity that employed over 50 people and that had a budget of over two million dollars.

In 1995, University Church's active committees were: Social Concerns, Stewardship, World Outreach, Worship, Membership/Welcoming, Attending to Black Culture, In-Care, Nominating, Staff Relations, Christian Development, Disability Awareness, and Open and Affirming. Board minutes reflect that the church was struggling with having committees without chairpersons and chairpersons without actual members in their committees. The church considered doing an inventory of member talents to try to rectify this situation and possibly establishing a board of deacons to help provide care to members. A computer system was under consideration to help keep track of the information on member talents.

The church was involved in a process of rewriting the by-laws that lasted over two years. The hope was that the new by-laws would better reflect the actual operations of the church. The new by-laws changed the committees into clusters to reduce the number of people that would be on the Board. It was decided that the clusters would be Worship, headed by Ina Houck and Margo Jonah; Christian Social Witness, headed by Lois Livezey and Jim Wagner; Christian Development, headed by Mary Stainton; Finance, headed by Lowell Livezey and Dan Hunter-Smith; and Grow the Church, which needed a chair. Some of the committees would continue and report directly to the Executive Committee instead of being in a cluster. These were: Oversight of the Strategic Plan, Staff Relations, Nominating, In-Care, and Blue Gargoyle Relations. Each cluster was to have a staff member working with it. The chair of each cluster would serve a two-year term and was expected to convene at least four meetings a year for the cluster and to formulate a statement of the goals for the cluster. These goals would be reported at the March Board meeting. Quarterly cluster reports were to be printed in the Messenger.

Money was raised to buy 200 UCC New Century Hymnals. It was decided to have people buy dedication slips to go inside the hymnals to help defray the costs. A special worship service was held with David Grainger as the guest minister to celebrate replacing the old hymnals with new ones.

Fall executive committee discussions reflected concerns that the youth programs no longer had a paid youth minister. This position had only been funded by a one-year contract. Don Coleman was serving as an interim youth minister as well as co-minister. However, he would be assuming more responsibility for the church as a whole because Anne Marie Coleman was going to be away for a period of time in the fall due to the death of her mother and being the executor of the estate in Michigan. Don Coleman was teaching the youth Sunday School class, which served as a preparation for confirmation. In addition, he was supervising youth activities, including a bake sale, bike-a-thon, and cleaning up and painting the youth room in the basement.

1996

1996 saw the passing of Bob Johnson and Al Pitcher, both significant members of University Church. Bob Johnson was the Executive Editor of JET Magazine. He had also been part of the White House Press Corps during the Nixon Administration. Bob Johnson's wife, Naomi (Mimi) Johnson, continued to be an active member of the church until her death in 2018. Al Pitcher had been University Church's Minister for Christian Community Development and a founder of the Covenantal Community. Al Pitcher was a professor at the Divinity School and spoke and wrote extensively on social justice, ethics, theology, politics, and the environment. He had also been very active in setting up the Woodlawn Development Associates (WDA), which ran an affordable housing apartment building at 62nd and Kimbark. It was noted that the Woodlawn Development Associates had received a grant to carry out a small school project along with managing the apartment building. The Woodlawn Development Associates was also given a \$15,000 loan from the Social Concern portion of Capital Funds to help get a mortgage for the acquisition of the building.

Members of University Church, including Pat Wilcoxon (facilitator), Shirley Watson, Nancy Reed, Don and Jean Ervin, Pamela Bilal, and Woodlawn residents participated in a Co-housing Committee. The Co-housing Committee coordinated with the Woodlawn Development Associates in the demolition and renovation of the 62nd Street and Kimbark Avenue apartments. The group was committed to helping to create more units of affordable housing in Woodlawn.

The March 1996 Executive Committee Agenda opened with the item "Status of the Blackfoots: actions that were taken by the pastors and moderator and others who had been attempting to deal with them over the past few weeks." Saigon and China Blackfoot, a couple who had been attending University Church and causing some disputes with other members of the congregation, had sent a letter on church letterhead to Ken Dunn and misrepresented themselves as official spokespeople for University Church. It was proposed that the Board deal with them in a "biblical" manner by appointing elders to talk to them and lay out boundaries. If these boundaries were crossed, a legal injunction would have to be taken out against them. The elders who were appointed to talk to the Blackfoots were the moderator and vice-moderator. In addition, the Board suggested either Rick Apeland or Bob Jackson be part of the conversation. The Board sent out a letter to the congregation on the actions that were taken. Ultimately the Blackfoots left the church without legal action having to be started.

The church decided to do a new pictorial directory. They used Looking@, which had experience in doing multiracial congregations.

For Lent, University Church held study groups on Wednesday nights and studied Jesus' I AM passages. Small groups gathered for dinner and studies.

During the May 19, 1996 worship service, University Church had the official installation of the Board Officers and the Cluster Chairs, as laid out in the new by-laws.

Notes from the May 19, 1996, Grow the Church Cluster reflected the work of that cluster. Grow the Church was in charge of social hour and found that the sign-up sheet to be working well. This cluster also supervised sending the Messenger and the Friends letter. Grow the Church helped to elect representatives to the UCC and Disciples of Christ annual meetings. They were in charge of recruiting ushers and greeters. It was noted that Bobby Fields was regularly serving as a greeter and that he needed more help. Grow the Church was in charge of the Memorial Plaques and writing short biographies for church members who died. They also helped to coordinate Care and Nurture and visiting the sick and they ran the Prayer Chain. They helped to follow up on visitors who signed the clipboard and wanted more information about the church. Grow the Church coordinated the Birthday Groups, which facilitated members of the church getting together with other members who had birthdays in the same quarter of the year. These groups were meant to help church members get to know each other better in smaller groups outside of worship. Almarie Wagner was named chair of the cluster in 1996.

The year 1996 saw the development of the Space Sharing Agreement with the Blue Gargoyle. The text of this agreement began with "University Church is one of the founders of the Blue Gargoyle and has for more than 26 years shared our space and supported the Blue Gargoyle's programs. We believe that our continuing support and

relationship with the Blue Gargoyle enhances our mission as a congregation which cares about the neighborhood and the community." The Space Sharing Agreement went on to outline that the space used by the Blue Gargoyle would cost \$35,700 a year starting January 1, 1997, with the possibility of a 6% yearly increase. It also described which rooms on the second and third floor the Blue Gargoyle would be using and allowed it to use the sanctuary, dining room, and library as long as the use did not conflict with church events. The space use agreement made the Blue Gargoyle responsible for hiring a security person for the evening hours that it was open. The Blue Gargoyle would be responsible for the repair of any damage to the building that it caused. The agreement requested that the Blue Gargoyle conserve energy by turning out the lights and made it responsible for a share of the telephone expenses. The Blue Gargoyle was required to obtain a \$300,000 liability policy, and a 2% late charge was instituted. It was hoped that this agreement would help to formalize the relationship between University Church and the Blue Gargoyle and avoid conflicts created by ambiguities.

University Church continued to struggle with meeting its budget. Charlie Havens's September 1996 finance report noted that the money in the "pass through" accounts was often the "financial cushion" for church bills that needed to be paid. The church needed to work on ways of budgeting so that this would not happen. By December of 1996, \$10,000 had been borrowed from Capital Funds to meet expenses. These loans from Capital Funds were codified by a motion at the March 1998 Board meeting and were to be repaid with 7.5% interest. For the 1997 budget, it was proposed that the church cut \$23,425 from the budget.

November 1996 saw the completion of the accessible restrooms and renovations to the church office. Karen Fields, the office manager, and Jean Ervin, the secretary, were commended for continuing to work despite the "total chaos" during construction.

Staff changes occurred as Rafael Rivera was hired as the church property manager. Dick Walsh resigned as the Choir Director and Organist, and Fred Bodem was hired as the interim.

1997

University Church continued to struggle with making a balanced budget in 1997. Because of the lack of funding, the church secretary position, held by Jean Ervin, had to be eliminated. The salaries for Church Administrator, Choir Director and Organist (position on leave in July and August), Volunteer Coordinator, and Christian Development (Jessie Gwynne, who was the Christian Development Minister, left at the end of May) were all reduced. Jean Ervin was moved to the Volunteer Coordinator role. There was a line item added to the budget to repay the loan made from Capital Funds in 1996.

Another change was the start of the Life Circle Fellowships. The Life Circle Fellowships would take the already functioning Birthday Groups and have them become Life Circle Fellowships that would arrange for fellowship and care and nurture of their members. These groups would also carry out assigned tasks that would rotate for three quarters of the year with one quarter off. Tasks would include preparing communion, doing coffee hour, organizing special events such as the rummage sale, celebration on the Point, fall visitor event, the Advent Festival, telephoning members of the group who were not in church for several weeks, and doing a phone tree for significant events in the life of the church or the Life Circle Fellowship. The Life Circle Fellowships were to meet at least once a quarter so that the members could get to know each other better and to explore each person's gifts and talents. The Life Circle Fellowships were to be managed through the Grow the Church Cluster.

Along with discussions on strengthening congregational life through the Life Circle Fellowships, the Board began to talk about lessons that were learned at the UCC Revitalization Conference. This conference suggested that substantial changes in the style of worship would be necessary for the church to attract new members. To this end, the job description for the music director was rewritten looking for a person with multiple instrumental and keyboard skills instead of a person able to play the organ.

The May Finance report noted that the church had \$8,900 in unpaid bills and no resources to pay them. The Blue Gargoyle continued to be behind in its rent payments despite the new agreement with the church. No payments were made on the loan from Capital Funds. Payments of denominational support, which were set at 10% of the operating budget, were also unpaid. Thus, the 1997 Stewardship Campaign, "with Gratitude to God," solicited increases in pledged amounts by 20% from members in hopes that a balanced budget for 1998 could be presented.

September 1997 saw several changes to University Church staff. Reverend John Selders, who had participated with Anne Marie Coleman at a Pre-Synod event entitled "It is Well with My Soul," was called as the new Music Director. Reverend John Selders had over twenty years of experience in leading churches and had been the pastor of six churches. Linda Noonan-Ngwane was called as Minister of Christian Development. She had spent time in ministry in South Africa as well as the United States. The property manager Rafael Rivera was let go, and Bobby Fields agreed to fill in as an interim property manager.

1998

At the January Board meeting, the Pastor's Report indicated that many people in the congregation were going through painful and difficult times and that staff were meeting every Monday at noon to go through the directory and pray for each member in turn. The theme for the Epiphany Clusters (50 families participated) was prayer, and the sermons through Lent focused on this too.

Don Coleman was preparing to go for a two-week stay in Chiapas, Mexico, with the Guatemalan Refugees Ministries.

Jennifer Ashby and Rick Apeland led a committee that developed a mentoring program for church youth. This program paired youth in fourth grade through junior high school with an adult in the congregation. One of the goals of the program was to introduce the youth of the congregation to a relationship with an adult that was "fun, caring, and helpful to youth in their decision-making about values, relationships, faith, and beliefs, and vocational choices." The program was to "help youth discover adults who will both respond to their needs and offer them a place where their gifts and abilities can be expressed." Adults who volunteered for the program were asked to commit to have monthly in-person contact with their mentee. Suggested activities included going for a walk or bike ride, going out for ice cream, watching a mentee's sports or music activity, going to a movie, and sharing expectations and feelings about life and the church, about faith and doubts. Along with the Mentor Program, a Buddy Program inspired by the book Reviving Ophelia was developed for younger children. Each child from age three to nine was to be assigned an adult that would pray for them, send a birthday and Christmas card, and "express general care and concern for their buddy in times of joy and in times of trouble."

Peace accords had been signed in Guatemala in 1996. By 1997, Virgilio Vicente, who had been in sanctuary in University Church in the 1980s with his wife Isabel Canu, let the church leadership know about his dream of returning to Saq Ja', his village in Guatemala that had been decimated by the government in the 1980s. Dan Dale from University Church along with Virgilio Vicente traveled to Guatemala where they connected with Gary Sparks, who was living in Guatemala. Gary Sparks was able to help them arrange travel to Saq Ja', and Virgilio Vicente was able to return to his village for the first time in twenty years. He was able to reconnect with some of his remaining relatives and assess the state of the village. This journey was the start of yearly delegations from University Church to Saq Ja'. These delegations allowed the church to become a partner with the villagers in their rebuilding and allowed the church to accompany them as a witness to their recounting of some of the traumas they suffered during the Mayan genocide of the 1980s. Delegations would go from University Church to the village every year except for 2001.

In May 1998, the lease for United Protestant Campus Ministry at University Church was ended. The church had been subsidizing their rent as a support to their ministry on the University of Chicago campus. However, by 1998, it was felt that mission of the Campus Ministry was no longer closely related to the mission of University Church, and so the rental arrangement should come to an end.

In 1998, Capers Funnye became the new executive director of the Blue Gargoyle. Capers Funnye was the first African-American rabbi to serve on the Chicago Board of Rabbis after converting to Judaism in 1985. He was also Michelle Obama's first cousin once removed. Barack Obama helped the Blue Gargoyle obtain \$150,000 in grants during his time as an Illinois state legislator. In 1998, the Blue Gargoyle helped provide funds to expand the doors to the kitchen and put in a new sidewalk that was more handicap accessible. Financial records from 1998 show that the Blue Gargoyle was more current with their space usage payments of \$36,771 a year. Overall, the financial health of the church improved in 1998, and it was able to repay the first \$5,000 of the \$10,000 loan from Capital Funds.

In July of 1998, Anne Marie Coleman made plans for a six-week sabbatical to study multi-racial, multi-cultural congregations. Her goal was to enhance University Church's capacity to become more multi-racial and multi-cultural. She planned to be away for six weeks in October-November of 1998, six weeks in January-February 1999, and then in two weeks in April-May of 1999 to write about her observations. This sabbatical was partially inspired by the national video conference with the Riverside Church and was meant to refute the idea that churches need to have people that are similar in order to grow.

Also in July 1998, the Hazel Campbell Fund was inaugurated with a \$500 gift in honor of longtime member Hazel Campbell. A three-member committee (Shirley Watson, Rick Apeland, and Hazel Campbell) was authorized to make decisions about the use of the fund to continue the work Hazel Campbell was doing writing cards and sending flowers and supporting the needs of seniors at University Church. A senior group was also formed and met for about eighteen months. It had been long been a goal of Reverend Don Coleman to have a participatory group for seniors.

In October 1998, The Night Ministry began to hold Monday night services from 10:30-11:00 p.m. as a part of their outreach to homeless people on the South Side.

Another event in October of 1998 was a discussion about creating a staff position for Samuel Dansokho, who was applying for a visa in order to stay in the United States. Samuel Dansokho was the first ordained Protestant minister in Senegal, which was a primarily Muslim country. He had served the Protestant Church of Senegal for 9 years as moderator and as its pastor. He and his wife Selma, who was the daughter of Reverend Jose and Eva Chipenda of Angola, had come to Chicago so that he could pursue his doctoral degree at the Chicago Theological Seminary from 1991 to 1998. During the time that he was away from Senegal, a rift had occurred in the Protestant Church in Senegal with the election of a new board in 1994. Some of the church members felt the election was not legitimate because of interference from the interim French pastor who was accused of suppressing Senegalese voices in the election. Two boards were in operation for the Protestant Church in Senegal. Samuel Dansokho returned to Senegal in 1995 and 1996, but the divisions and strife proved too grave and he was relieved of his position. The police closed the Protestant Church in Senegal, and all activities were forbidden in church buildings. Samuel Dansokho returned to his studies in Chicago in 1997. When he graduated in 1998, the INS was threatening not to renew his visa for his sabbatical, which would make him and Selma subject to deportation. University Church called him as a minister so that he could apply for permanent residency status and a ministry position in the United States. Ann Marie Coleman stated that Samuel was a “gift from God to University Church and we should do all we can to help.”

The Woodlawn Development Associates, led by WDA Housing Chair Pat Wilcoxon, borrowed a third installment of \$15,000 from University Church to finance the further development of the apartments at 6224/6226 South Kimbark Avenue. They had already repaid the church for the first two installments of \$15,000, and they planned to repay the church for this loan in November of 1998 when they received the rest of their financing package of \$1,073,413 for the affordable housing apartments.

1999

At the May 1999 Board meeting, \$5,500 was authorized to buy three new computers that would be Y2K compliant and would be used by Don and Ann Marie Coleman and Karen Fields. Martha Younger White also discussed steps to make sure the congregation prepared for Y2K. The new computers had “email installed on them” by the end of 1999.

In summer 1999, Don Coleman and youth from University Church went on a youth work delegation to Chiapas, Mexico. The youth helped to paint La Biblia Escuela, a seminary for Roman Catholics and Protestants. They also went to visit Acteal in Chiapas where 45 people attending a Roman Catholic indigenous prayer service were massacred by paramilitaries on December 22, 1997. Mass was held there on the 22nd of every month to commemorate the massacre.

Average attendance at worship in 1999 was noted to be 94 people, up from 89 the previous year. Even though this bump in attendance was good news, it was noted at the Board retreat that attendance was generally declining over the decade despite efforts to boost it and despite “increasing church attendance” being a part of the Strategic Plan for 1994-2000.

In 1999, University Church stood in solidarity with Resurrection Church, a primarily LGBTQ church that used University Church space for services. The rainbow flag on the outside of University Church was stolen by vandals, and a new one was purchased and hung higher up.

In 1999, collections for the food pantry were changed to every Sunday and children were recruited to go around the Sanctuary and collect the food offerings in baskets. Money could also be given, though the congregation was encouraged to donate actual food items.

University Church ended 1999 with a \$20,000 shortfall in its income and \$5,000 in unpaid obligations at the end of the year and \$1,000 remaining of the loan from Capital Funds. The church was in receipt of a \$13,000 bequest from Isabelle Havens, which had helped with some operating expenses. By the end of 1999, all of the funds raised by the Second Century Capital Campaign had been spent.

2000

The first Board meeting for 2000 recognized that a new Strategic Plan had to be written because the previous Strategic Plan ended with the year 2000. Lowell Livezey and Betty James agreed to be co-chairs of the committee.

Linda Noonan-Ngwane, the Christian Education Minister, reported that the Mentoring Program was ongoing and was involving 13 pairs of Mentors/Mentees from fourth grade and up. The program was seeking mentors for new children.

Grow the Church, chaired by Sharon Hunter-Smith and Trish DeJean, reported that the Life Circles had been more intentional about meeting through the fall of 1999 and had been working on the care and nurture part of their mission. Food had been taken to the Sanchez family to help support them through a time of illness. The Prayer Chain was also functioning well. However, at the start of 2000 chairpersons for each circle were still being sought, along with an overall chair for the Life Circle Fellowship program.

The Board had a conversation about needing more effective means of communication. Some people in the church had expressed the complaint that they did not know what was going on. University Church had conducted a church-wide survey in the fall of 1999 that identified this as an issue. The Board discussed the means available, which included verbal announcements, the Bulletin, and the Messenger. It was suggested that the church have an "Email Sunday" in which all people who had such an address be asked to leave it on the clipboards. The clipboards were being used every Sunday for comments, and it was suggested that some of the comments made by the youth be published in the Messenger. Staff Relations was in the process of developing a standardized assessment tool with measures for assessing the senior ministers with a special emphasis on the effectiveness and timeliness of their communication with the ministries, committees, and individual members. The other major area to be evaluated was administration, with the subcategories of planning, follow-up, reporting, evaluating, and documenting. It was decided that once the evaluation tool was formalized, it would be administered quarterly starting in September 2000. Work was also started on an assessment tool that could be used for other staff positions.

Concerns were raised in the church about racism and classism around an incident that occurred between Pam Selders, the wife of Reverend John Selders, and another family living in the Covenantal Community. The church was asked to step in and mediate the dispute and to examine University Church's role in being more intentionally anti-racist and anti-classist. The Board of University Church also felt the need to examine its relationship with the Covenantal Community as a whole. One outcome of this examination was the recognition of the need for a safe venue in which people could voice their opinions and work through their differences. It was suggested that the church retreat, with the theme of Revival and an emphasis on storytelling, might be one place to start doing that. The adult Sunday school held a four-class series on the sin of racism. From this series the church launched an Anti-Racism Task Force. Reverend James Demus of Park Manor Christian Church was asked to facilitate the first meeting, which focused on conflict resolution. In addition, the church planned to complete a racial audit of the congregation to measure the church's progress as a multicultural, multiracial congregation and to help to answer Pamela Selders' question to the church, "Are we really who we say we are?"

In March 2000, Linda Noonan-Ngwane resigned as the Minister for Christian Development in order to go with her husband Zolani Ngwane to his new job in Pennsylvania. A search committee was formed to find a replacement and by July had hired Catherine Beaty after interviewing four candidates. Catherine Beaty was a woman of color and a Gospel singer and made the church staff more diverse.

Also in March 2000, Reverend John Selders unexpectedly resigned as the Minister of Music. The church had to call upon volunteers for music through the end of Lent and the Easter season. Carole Butler and Bill Hamblin prepared music. Sharon Hunter-Smith and Bill Hamblin recruited people to sing. Martha Younger-White organized the Gospel Choir, which had just started to rehearse. Ed Campbell filled in and played the organ. Reverend John Selders had been the only person who knew how to work with the sound system and left before instructing anyone else on how to operate it. Chuck Jonah came in and met with a representative from Bridgewater Sound Systems and was able to get the system functioning again much to the relief of the congregation. An urgent search was begun for a replacement Music Minister.

Mike Hammer was commissioned to paint the second-floor auditorium and to repair flaking walls in the sanctuary. Roof leaks had caused significant flaking and dust to fall from walls in the sanctuary, and Mike Hammer power scrubbed them with a baking soda solution to neutralize the acid being leached from the limestone.

Irving Bunton was interviewed to fill the position of Minister of Music. He had been working at Ebenezer Baptist Church (Martin Luther King, Jr.'s church) in Atlanta, Georgia and was needed in Atlanta at his current employment until January 2001. He was hired, and Fred Bodem became an interim musician to play the organ until he could arrive. Irving Bunton had been the Chicago Public Schools Citywide Coordinator of Choral Music and the Minister of Music at University Church until he left for Atlanta in 1993. The congregation was very glad to see him and his wife Ragina Bunton, a gifted soprano, return.

University Church was approached by Park Manor Christian Church about the possibility of a merger. Their building was deteriorating to such an extent that it was no longer felt to be sustainable. They were also

discussing a merger with Homewood Christian Church. Eventually, Park Manor decided a merger was not needed and continued to operate independently.

In September 2000, Harvey Lord presented the Reconciling Committee proposal to the Board. The new committee, consisting of five people nominated by the moderator, would deal with conflicts in the church that would be referred to it by the Board or by a church officer. The members of the committee would decide who would act as a counselor in any situation referred to them. They would conduct exit interviews for anyone who was leaving the church under unhappy circumstances.

Grow the Church conducted a walk-through of the church to pinpoint areas that could be made more welcoming. They noted the need for more bulletin board space, lighting in the hallways, decorating in the dining room and the library, and updating to the outside signs. They created a new tri-fold display that would highlight different activities going on in the church that people could join. The tri-fold would be moved around and would help to replace the Activity Fair that had not been well attended. Nancy Jones was also trying to recruit "section leaders" for the sanctuary who would make sure all the new people in their section were greeted, had left their addresses and phone numbers, and were shown to the dining room for Coffee Hour. Inquirers classes for new members were to be held every quarter.

By November 2000, the Strategic Plan for 2001-2005 was ready for a vote by the Congregation. To prepare the Strategic Plan, the committee led by Lowell Livezey reviewed the previous plan, which had been in effect from 1994-2000, and assessed the progress toward the goals it had laid out. This progress was discussed during an all-church retreat held in the fall of 2000. The new Strategic Plan recognized four priorities that were not explicitly stated in the previous plan: "1) being a richly multi-racial and multi-cultural church, especially in our worship life and education programs; 2) being an anti-racist church both in our self-conduct and in our public witness; 3) effectively ministering to racially and ethnically diverse youth populations; 4) having a physical space, including an elevator, that will accommodate all our programs and be accessible to persons with disabilities." Goals in this new strategic Plan included: "1) We will significantly increase the number and diversity of people who participate in and contribute to worship, Christian development, care and nurture, social witness, stewardship, and other church activities, and will attempt to make that participation more effective and rewarding. 2) We will improve and expand how we welcome and care for people in our faith community. 3) We will continue to develop and enhance the worship experience, seeking to foster multiracial participation and multicultural experience as a source of spiritual enrichment. 4) We will continue to strengthen our Christian development effort with particular focus on children, youth, and young adults. 5) We will empower and strengthen University Church's commitment to social ministry as a multicultural, anti-racist congregation. 6) Be an anti-racist church. 7) We will maintain and improve the quality of the physical space for church activities, making it accessible for persons with disabilities and adequate to facilitate the program priorities of the church. 8) We will increase the resources of the church sufficiently to support the other goals of this Plan, both now and for the foreseeable future." Part of the Strategic Plan was to raise \$500,000-\$750,000 with a Capital Campaign between 2003-2005. These funds would help fund the expansions (including the elevator).

Hee An Choi became a pastoral intern with University Church as she pursued her PhD at the Chicago Theological Seminary. She initiated a young adult group called Three or More that attracted many participants for Bible study and outings.

University Church sponsored a resolution on Reparations for Slavery that was passed at the Annual Meeting of the Disciples of Christ and was presented at the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. The resolution called upon the churches to "join in active study and education on issues dealing with reparations for slavery." An ad about reparations was placed in the Maroon, The Chicago Weekly News, and The Free Press and generated significant commentary. The ad was placed in response to David Horowitz and the Center for the Study of Popular Culture's ad "10 Reasons Why Reparations Won't Work" and "Ten Reasons why Reparations for Slavery Is a Bad Idea- and Racist Too." David Horowitz came to lecture on the University of Chicago campus after being invited by the Young Republicans. Eight people from University Church showed up at the lecture and distributed the ad to over 250 people waiting to attend it.

2001

The year opened with a winter storm that caused new leaks in the roof in three places. The deep snow had to be continually shoveled off the roof to prevent it from blocking the run-off passages. The congregation had difficulty getting to church for services.

On a brighter note, Irving and Ragina Bunton arrived from Atlanta and were greeted with a welcoming party.

Catherine Beaty resigned her position as director of Christian Development in March 2001. Since she left in less than a year, there were significant concerns that University Church's hiring practices needed to be reviewed. There were also requests that she remain in her position long enough to say good-bye to the youth and children. Samuel Dansokho was called to take over for Catherine Beaty, thus allowing him to continue to have a paid ministry position and a visa to remain in the United States.

Someone broke the glass on the sign at the corner of 57th and University in reaction to the sermon titled "Relative Borders: Growing Gay and Lesbian Families." The Chicago police investigated it as a hate crime and increased their patrols in the area of the church.

March 2001 saw the adoption by the Social Witness Ministry of an update on the guidelines for spending the Social Witness Ministry Endowment Fund. This update described how the Social Witness Endowment Fund was started in the mid-1980s when University Church was providing sanctuary to undocumented people and the church leadership was subject to arrest and imprisonment, forfeiture of property, or fines for this stand of conscience. With the update in policy, the Social Witness Endowment Fund could be used to address social change, both through political witness and through the exposure of members of the congregation to situations which would sensitize them to present injustices and teach them how to be advocates. More specifically, the Social Witness Ministry Endowment Fund could fund the organization of and participation in public demonstrations, bail money for civil disobedience, timely issue campaigns, and "exposure events" for members of the congregation to spend time in troubled cultures or attend justice issue workshops. The Social Witness Ministry had to be consulted in advance for the use of the funds.

By March 2001, the Racial Audit was ready for presentation. The Racial Audit was prefaced with an introduction that read: "This audit is an instrument to be used by a representative group of church participants sanctioned by the Board of University church to measure our progress, or lack thereof, toward becoming an anti-racist reconciliation community. We recognize that the struggle against the sin of racism will be a long journey. Racism is both a personal individual matter that poisons our souls and a structural phenomenon that corrupts our congregational life. University Church is a Christian community which affirms the transcending power of God's love, calling us individually and collectively to act for justice and respond to creation...We celebrate our rich racial and cultural diversity and are committed to weaving a common life together. This audit is one tool in our process to build bridges across barriers and work for reconciliation." The audit noted that there were 400 people on the mailing list and about 100 active participants. The church's racial composition was 27% African American, 1% Asian, 1% Hispanic, 67% Euro-American, 1% African, and 3% Bi-racial. Age distribution showed children (0-10) 11%, teens (11-20) 10%, adults (21-55) 43%, and seniors (55+) 36%. The audit found that worship and education classes needed to be more intentionally and explicitly anti-racist and directly communicate more about the issue. It was felt that the music program featured too much traditional music and needed to be more diverse and contemporary. Another need identified was having anti-racism training for the ministers, staff, and committees.

The Anti-Racism Committee was added as a standing committee of University Church, and if it was deemed effective in its work, the by-laws would be amended to permanently add it in 2002. The Anti-Racism Committee would be a nine-person maximum committee, and members would serve three-year terms. The Nominating Committee was charged with finding members. The church had its first Anti-Racism workshop on May 19, 2001, attended by 35 people. It was conducted by the Anti-Racism Team of the Illinois-Wisconsin Region of the Christian Church.

By September 2001, Mike Hammer had done extensive repairs to the roof to prevent leaks and gave University Church a 7-10 year warrantee on the work.

Resurrection Church, which primarily had a congregation of LGBTQ people, had been meeting at the Disciples Divinity House's Chapel of the Holy Grail. This church of about thirty people was invited to share social hour at University Church. The Board also noted that University Church needed a welcome sign outside the church as well as a sign that directed people to the University Church entrance. The two signs that the Resurrection had placed in the courtyard had been confusing for some visitors who were trying to attend services at University Church.

Samuel Dansokho, who had been serving as the Minister of Christian Education for University Church, was hired by Hood College in North Carolina for a year as a lecturer. University Church decided to continue to employ him as the Minister of Christian Education so that he could maintain his visa for immigration despite his not being present at the church except for two weekends a month. This left much of the work for Christian Education and the youth ministry to lay leader volunteers coordinated by the chairs of the Christian Education Committee, Nancy Reed and Martha Younger-White.

In October 2001, Jose and Eva Chipenda came to visit University Church from Angola. University Church had decided to form an Angolan Partnership to help support the couple's work in Angola, which was emerging from

a devastating civil war after suffering from Portuguese colonial rule for 500 years. University Church's connections to Angola included roots through three generations of Nancy Reed's family, who had been missionaries there, and Selma Dansokho, who was Jose and Eva Chipenda's daughter. Jose Chipenda was the Executive Director of the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola. The Chipendas would eventually go on to found a school and training center in Lobito.

Funds were raised to hire Hee An Choi as a Young Adult Minister in recognition for her work in this area. Three or More continued to be very popular. The group attracted up to twenty people in attendance at its regular weekly meetings. Their first meeting in September welcomed twelve students who stayed after church for a luncheon.

University Church hosted a table at the Children's Book Fair on 57th Street in September for the first time. Stephanie Weaver taught how to make God's Eyes, and Sharon Hunter-Smith taught origami. They handed out information to parents and children about University Church and planned to make it an annual event.

On September 11, 2001, the University Church community was stunned by the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. Ann Marie Coleman noted in her Pastor's Report that she was driving back from her course on being a spiritual director in Grand Rapids, Michigan, when she heard the initial reports of the planes crashing into the Twin Towers. She arrived at home in time to turn on the news and see the towers fall. From there she went to the Campus Ministers monthly meeting and planned a service at University Church that day. Fifty people came, wanting to be together and seek comfort after the tragedy.

Don Coleman attended the Hyde Park Committee Against War and Racism, which had formed to oppose the start of the war in Afghanistan. A public teach-in against the war was held at University Church on October 4, 2001. At the teach-in, a movie was shown about the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, and the group started to make plans to go to the national demonstration against the School in November. May and Harvey Lord, Cliff and Ann Joseph, Sheila Hori, and Don Coleman were a part of the discussion.

A Core Group from University Church was working with the Community Renewal Society, a 136-year-old faith-based organization that worked with communities to address issues of racism and poverty. The Community Renewal Society was also helping congregations who were addressing these issues focus on church growth and revitalization. In 2002, the church Core Group included Chuck Selner, Zuberi Badili, Judith Arleen Mitchell, Elaine Dockens, Sharon Hunter-Smith, and Don and Ann Marie Coleman. They were focusing on learning techniques to interview people who were new to University Church. Eventually the interviewing techniques were meant to be used with people in the community who had not been to University Church, possibly helping to interest them in coming to church.

The Ministry Intern, Jennifer Rund, was working on revitalizing University Church's relationship with campus ministry and undergraduate students. One idea that she had was to hold a breakfast at the church for undergraduates. Since the University of Chicago's food service did not open until 10:30am, the undergraduates did not have a chance to have breakfast if they wanted to attend church services. Jennifer Rund also started a group for undergraduates called Salt and Light, which was analogous to the young adult group Three or More run by Hee An Choi.

The Staff Relations Committee completed a congregational survey for Ann Marie and Don Coleman as part of the process of "continuous improvement." The survey, completed in 2001, found that worship was perceived to be going well, that more people felt that their spiritual needs were being met than in 1999, and that social justice activities and accomplishments were perceived to be very strong. Of those surveyed 54% felt that the overall health of the church was strong. In addition to general issues related to church life, specific areas were reviewed for the senior ministers. Areas of satisfaction for the ministers included their preaching, administrative follow-up, personal interest in congregants, and visiting ill congregants. The goals for 2002 included, for Ann Marie, implementation of the strategic plan and leading the congregation in being a multiracial, multicultural church; continued leadership in the area of campus ministry; preparing a report for the congregation on her sabbatical; continued work on her communication skills; and beginning the process of becoming a spiritual director. Don Coleman's goals included implementing the strategic plan of growing the church, continued leadership in the Reparations Project, and seeking ways to communicate with the general public about the work and life of University Church.

At the end of 2001, treasurer Dan Hunter-Smith proposed a change to the use of the General Endowment funds of the Capital Funds in order to increase the amount of money available to the church's Operating Funds. The General Endowment funds of Capital Funds were invested in stocks, bonds, and money market funds that were designed to have an annual rate of return of about 6%. It was proposed that 5% of the General Endowment fund could be transferred to the operating budget every year while still preserving the principal of the Capital Funds. In 2001, the General Endowment had a balance of \$99,040, so \$4,952 was available for the 2002 operating budget. This type of transfer has been made every year since then.

At the Annual Congregational meeting there was a celebration for Ann Marie and Don Coleman to recognize their tenth anniversary of ministry to University Church.

2002

The year opened with discussions about church school, which was being held after church. Attendance for children had been decreasing, and discussion centered around changing the time and the format. It was proposed to move church school to before church. Ann Marie suggested "hiding the Hallelujah" at the start of Lent as a way to involve children in the season of Lent. Meanwhile Jay Wilcoxon was teaching an adult class on the Quran.

Cheryl Roberts was ordained at University Church on January 27, 2002 and called to the Marseilles Church in the Western Association.

Christal Williams, Associate Regional Minister for the Urban Metro Area (Plus) Congregations in the Illinois-Wisconsin Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), became affiliated with University Church so that she could participate in a preaching program at McCormick Theological Seminary. She felt that University Church's strengths (multi-cultural, multi-racial, open and affirming, social justice oriented, focused on pastoral care) fit with her goals, and that she could help with the church's needs to grow the congregation and to involve more people in leadership roles.

In April 2002, University Church received a bill for \$16,000 from the IRS for back payroll taxes from 1999. The IRS claimed that the church had paid \$48,936 more in salaries for that year than had been on the submitted tax forms. This resulted in \$6,068 owed to Social Security, \$1,419 owed to Medicare, and \$3,798 owed in tax withholding. The IRS added \$2,831 in penalties and \$2,418 in interest because the additional taxes were not paid on time. University Church, with the advice of a tax accountant, sent a letter to the IRS contesting the tax bill and the penalties and interest. The church argued that it had not received any notice of the underpayment until the bill arrived on March 23, 2002, and according to the church's accounting, there was not an additional \$48,936 paid in salaries in 1999. University Church also decided to start using the payroll service ADP, which automatically takes out and pays all payroll taxes, to avoid any problems going forward. When the IRS did not respond after the appeal was filed, the matter was felt to be settled and the church community breathed a sigh of relief.

Hee An Choi, who had been running the very successful young adult ministry Three or More, finished her PhD, which meant her student visa would end as soon as she graduated. University Church was able to help pay her the salary of \$15,000 required by the INS for her to stay in the United States and get her a Religious Worker visa. As a part of her job she continued to be in charge of Three or More, took over the campus ministry group, and taught English as a Second Language classes while continuing her requirements for ordination. She continued in this role until she was ordained and left for a fulltime ministry position.

University Church installed a sign board on the University Avenue side of the church that was large enough to read from across the street. Special programs and events were to be displayed on it. It was meant to be part of the outreach to University of Chicago students. It was noted that the first sign placed on it was for the Rummage Sale and that sales increased appreciably.

A financial update at the end of August 2002 noted that University Church had a \$12,500 loan from Capital Funds to cover expenses in the operating budget and that the church was \$1,600 behind in denominational support. The church also held \$17,400 earmarked for outside groups like the Food Pantry but had only \$4,138 in its checking account. It was stated that if the church continued to draw down Capital Funds to cover operating expenses at the rate it had been that the Capital Funds would be gone in 3-5 years. One solution to this problem that was proposed was having a Capital Funds drive since the last one had been in 1992-1995. However, it was pointed out that Capital Funds were meant to be used on Capital Projects like the roof or an elevator and not on the operating budget. Other solutions that were discussed included trying to supplement the operating budget with fund-raising, selling an asset like the organ, or trying to cut the budget by reducing staffing. Because of increased costs for gas and electricity for 2003 and a drop in pledges (73 pledges with a total of \$165,000 to 67 pledges for 2003 with a total of \$157,000), it was decided that the church would have the Congregational Meeting in December as usual but not vote on a final plan for the 2003 budget until the January 26, 2003, Board Meeting. This would let the congregation have a chance to discuss what approach should be taken to deal with the deficit: increasing their pledges, cutting salaries and staff, borrowing more from Capital Funds, committing to doing fundraising or a combination of all of these approaches.

Kara Mooneyham from McCormick Theological Seminary was the University Church intern for fall of 2002. Gary Sparks also became an intern at University church in the fall of 2002 while he was doing his Masters in Divinity and PhD at the University of Chicago in Religious Studies.

James Hicks, who had previously been a University Church intern and was in-care at University Church and the new coordinator of the Life Circles, and his partner Tom Genley did a walk-through of the church with the

chair of the Grow the Church Committee Sharon Hunter-Smith to decide what types of renovations could be done to make the church more welcoming. They decided to remove the portrait of Reverend Edward Scribner Ames and the painting of the outside of the church from the dining room because they made the church seem dated. The library walls were painted "Rice Paddy Green" with a "Sassy Green" accent wall. A rotating gallery of artwork was hung in the library that made the space seem warmer and more up-to-date. Purple velvet curtains were hung on ringed rods over the library windows, and new matching light fixtures were hung. An attempt was made to remove the magazine racks on the east side of the library, but it was found that the air return vents were in the bases, so wooden benches were placed on top of them for additional seating. Members of the congregation were recruited to sew cushions for them. The ceiling tiles in the dining room were replaced and the walls were painted "Enjoyable Yellow." New chairs paid for through a special collection were purchased for the library and dining room.

Christian Development continued to struggle with finding teachers for church school. Martha Younger-White was the primary teacher in 2002. The Board Minutes reflect that Trish DeJean and Kathy Goepel were taking over the mentoring program to revitalize it, starting with the junior high students.

2003

In 2003, University Church continued to wrestle with its budget problems. It was decided that there could be no raises for the staff in 2003 and that either \$7,000 would have to be raised through fundraising or \$7,000 would have to be cut from staff salaries. It was decided by a vote of 7 to 6 to try to do fundraising and reassess the budget in July to see what progress had been made. If the fundraising efforts were not adequate, cuts to staff salaries would be discussed again. Some of the ideas generated for fundraising included: renting the Sanctuary and Social Hall to other churches when they were not being used; holding concerts and semi-annual dinners; soliciting ads from local merchants to include in the Messenger; showing films (maybe a collaboration with Doc Films); having political candidate fundraising dinners in the Social Hall with a percentage coming to the church; asking everyone pledging to add \$100 to their pledge; asking church members to open their homes to families of University of Chicago graduates during graduation weekend and charging them money that was donated to the church; inviting friends to celebrate member birthdays by gifting money to the church in an increment reflecting their age; asking Off-Off Campus to dedicate the proceeds from their first show from each term; holding a coffeehouse with poetry readings; and having art exhibits. One of the first fundraisers held as a part of this effort was a Family Concert featuring musician John O'Connor singing selections from his album "A Roomful of Chairs." Also in the spring, a book sale was held. Unfortunately, gas prices had continued to increase in the winter of 2003, and the budgeted cost of gas had gone from \$10,000 a year in 2002 to \$14,000. The Blue Gargoyle was asked to help share some of the increased cost since they were using most of the building Monday to Friday. Beverly Blackwood had made the suggestion of asking people to add \$100 to their 2003 pledge, and by February 2003, the Executive Committee minutes reflected that she had already received several checks.

In March 2003, the Social Witness Ministry drafted a statement for the church against the War in Iraq that was approved by the Board. It included a statement against the Patriot Act, describing the act as having created a "turn in your neighbor mindset." The statement laid out that the Gulf War, United Nations sanctions, and bombing had already resulted in the deaths of over 500,000 people in Iraq with a cost to the United States of over \$1.9 trillion dollars. The cost of the War in Iraq would cause a reduction in spending on important domestic programs. The statement also pointed out that there was no demonstrable tie between the government of Iraq and the events of September 11th. The statement called upon the congregation to voice their opposition to the war, pray for peace, advocate with Congress and the President against war, and participate in demonstrations and other activities against the war.

In 2003, Martha Younger-White was still the only consistent church school teacher. The church school program included 3-5 children in the nursery, 5-7 in the elementary class, and 1-7 youth. The broad age range required the recruitment of a second teacher.

The Worship Ministry was described as being "defunct" in March of 2003. Linda Larson, Linda Clum, and Garry Sparks were working to prepare communion, but the other functions of the ministry were not being done. The Pewbooks still had not been updated, despite this being a goal since 1995, and work needed to be done on liturgical flow, banners, bulletin inserts, music, dance, and how to make worship services relevant to more people. Judith Arleen Mitchell and Kathy Goepel were willing to be on the ministry but not willing to chair. The Ministry continued to try to find more members willing to work on the Ministry and to chair it.

Spring 2003 saw an annual delegation from University Church departing for a visit to Saq Ja', Guatemala. This delegation was co-led by Reverend Dan Dale and University Church intern Garry Sparks, who had a special

interest in Christian thought and religion as it applied to indigenous people. Other members of the delegation included Dan and Sharon Hunter-Smith, along with their daughters Sarah and May, Barb and Charlie Havens, Linda Clum, Virgilio and Daniel Vicente, Bob Naftzger, Diana Steele, and Pablo Pitcher.

In April 2003, the Campaign to End the Death Penalty led by Greta Holmes was drafting a Statement on Capital Punishment to be taken to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Assembly in North Carolina. The statement would contain facts about the racist aspect of capital punishment and how it is not a deterrent to future crime.

Don Coleman was elected president of the Hyde Park Transitional Housing Project, a newly formed group that worked to help homeless families move into new homes. The group realized that families who had been homeless often needed counseling for emotional problems, skill building around budgeting and spending money, training for fixing up and maintaining a home, and social skills. The group was preparing to sponsor its first family in 2003.

In April 2003, the church had to borrow additional money from Capital Funds to meet payroll. However, the church was \$300 over its goal for fundraising (having raised \$5,174). Fundraising activities in the first half of the year included a book sale, family concert, bake sale, and an Attending to Black Culture Night. In addition, Beverly Blackwood continued to have some success with asking people to add a \$100 to their annual pledge.

The church retreat in 2003 focused on peacemaking and what the church's response should be to the impending war in Iraq. After the retreat Nancy Jones and Charlie Havens led a Sunday School class entitled "Where Do We Go From Here?" which focused on the congregation taking on the study and reflection to gain the UCC designation of being a Just Peace Church.

In September 2003, Romney Payne, a student at McCormick Theological Seminary and a human rights activist, came to University Church as a student intern.

Because Hee Ann Choi had left, Sharon Hunter-Smith took over leadership for the young adult group Three or More. Rebecca Willis took over the student group Salt and Light.

Samuel Dansokho, who had been living in North Carolina, resigned as the Minister of Christian Development. His visa process had reached the point where he no longer needed to be employed by the church to stay in the United States. However, because University Church was still his official sponsor in the visa process, he was named as the Minister of Global Concerns. Nancy Reed took over as interim director of Christian Development.

The stove in the kitchen stopped working, and when it was discovered that a commercial model would cost \$5,000, it was decided to purchase two home models for \$500 each instead. Other problems in the kitchen included a continuing problem with mice and roaches. Because of budget constraints the line item for an exterminator had been dropped, and University Church had been trying to control the problem with steel wool and other measures. It was voted to take money from the "supplies" line in the budget and hire an actual exterminator as the problem was expected to get worse in autumn.

May Hunter-Smith was baptized on Water Sunday in 2003. Water Sunday was celebrated on the first Sunday in September. Members of the congregation were asked to bring water from their summer travels or places that were special to them and put it into the baptismal font while telling the congregation a little bit about where it had come from. It was a way of reuniting the congregation in the fall after summer travels.

Property manager Jesse Grandberry stepped down in October of 2003, and Bobby Fields filled in for him while a search was done.

Virgilio Vicente, who had been in sanctuary in University Church, was working as a spiritual leader in his home village of Saq Ja' and for the Guatemalan community in Chicago as well. University Church decided to give him a formal, though unpaid, position as a second Minister of Global Concerns and asked him to work with a group that was developing a sanctuary program for Colombia.

Even with the fundraising efforts exceeding their goal of \$8,000 by actually raising \$13,000 and the Blue Gargoyle agreeing to pay an extra portion of the gas bill, University Church was not able to budget raises for the staff for a second year in a row and had to cut the salaries of the Christian Development Minister, the Secretary, and the Property Manager. It was decided to add \$10,000 of fundraising to the 2004 budget and then to distribute any funds raised above this as bonuses to the staff. The stewardship theme for 2003 focused on Jesus miracle of multiplying the loaves and fishes to feed the multitude, and it was hoped that University Church's financial situation would improve in 2004.

2004

Sarah Oaks took over as moderator of the Board and implemented a plan to assess each Board meeting to make sure the Board was succeeding in helping to identify and address the most important issues facing the congregation in the months and years ahead. Each Board meeting was to end with an assessment of whether the Board had worked effectively to meet those priorities.

The first annual Drum Major for Justice Award was presented by the Social Justice Committee to Helen Sutton on Martin Luther King Sunday.

Penny Willis was called as the Minister of Christian Development in February 2004, and Nancy Reed stepped down as interim in March 2004. Since her ordination by the United Church of Christ in 2000, Penny Willis had been working with Planned Parenthood and in schools teaching about reproductive health.

Barb Havens was appointed as head of a task force formed as a response to a letter received by the Board which questioned whether University Church was “dying.” The letter cited “attendance dropping, late arrival to services, and lack of volunteers.” The task force was to discuss these issues with the congregation and report back to the Board with the information gathered and ideas about addressing the problems. It was also suggested that the task force interview both people who had stop attending University Church to find out their reasons for doing so and new people who might bring a new perspective. The task force included Don Burk, Zuberi Badili, Patricia DeJean, Barb Havens, Lala Rodgers, and Madeline Hamblin.

In March 2004, longtime church member Judith Arlene Mitchell died after being admitted to the hospital for heart surgery and not regaining consciousness. She had been a faithful member of the choir and had always been willing to help the Stewardship Campaign by calling members who had not turned in their pledge cards.

Don and Ann Marie Coleman got cell phones and shared the phone numbers with the congregation so that they could be more accessible for pastoral care and other issues.

In March 2004, Dan Hunter-Smith drafted a proposal that changed how University Church held funds that had been designated for specific purposes, including the funds held for UNICEF and Neighbors in Need. These funds had been held in the church checking account and recorded with their designation on the balance sheet. Because the money was held in the church checking account, it had been used to help with cash flow needs. The amount being held had grown to over \$20,000. If all the funds needed to be disbursed to their designated uses at the same time it would have required a large loan from Capital Funds. Dan Hunter-Smith proposed having the funds held in a separate interest-bearing bank account so that they would be available for disbursing and able to accrue interest. Any funds more than \$1,000 that were to be held for more than a year would be transferred to the Capital Fund account and held as a sub-account.

In April 2004, the University Church Board reviewed progress that had been made towards meeting the goals of the 2001-2005 Strategic Plan. Some frustration was expressed at the meeting that not much progress had been made in key areas. One goal had been to grow church attendance by 50% in the five years, but church attendance had dropped from a high of 100 in 2001 to 80 in 2003. Also, not much progress had been made in the area of being an Anti-Racist Congregation. In fact, the Anti-Racist Committee had not had a meeting in the two previous years. It was suggested that each Board meeting for the rest of the year have committee reports related to the progress of each committee on the goals laid out in the Strategic Plan.

James Wilder was hired as a property manager in May 2004 to supplement the cleaning that Don Coleman had been doing since the last property manager left.

Chuck Selner wrote a letter to the Board resigning from the Grow the Church Ministry and the Task Force that was investigating if University Church was dying. His letter expressed discomfort with the survey of the members that the Task Force was doing because he felt the survey was not scientifically designed, and its free form response required too much interpretation from the Task Force to produce any useful information. He also felt the survey questions were causing University Church to turn inward and be too “self-critical.” Despite Chuck Selner’s resignation, the task force did generate results that were reported. Out of the 200 surveys distributed, 61 were returned and used to create a report. The results of the report were shared with the ministries and committees so that they could work on making improvements.

In July 2004, Irving Bunton left as Minister of Music and Glenn Klipp was hired to fill this role. Glenn Klipp had been an administrator at several schools in the past and most recently had been the musician at Our Lady of Fatima in Oak Park, Michigan. Glenn Klipp’s letter accepting the position began with: “The string of adjectives University Church uses to describe itself in the opening sentences on your website- ‘progressive, open and affirming, multi-racial and multi-cultural’- enticed me down the path of this application much like the crumbs that

led Hansel and Gretel into the forest. The whole-hearted stretch for inclusivity, the celebratory embrace of diversity, is, to me, the bread of life.”

By August 2004, fundraising had finally gotten underway with plans to show the Marlon Brandon movie “Burn” and to have Derek Nichols do a CD.

In September 2004, Penny Willis resigned her position as Director of Christian Development, and a search was started to find a replacement.

In December 2004, the United Church of Christ started its “God Is Still Speaking” campaign. The campaign included television ads encouraging church attendance. One ad featured a bouncer standing outside a church determining who could come in and then ended with the tag line: “Jesus didn’t turn people away. Neither do we.” Another ad showed a diverse group gathering for a church family portrait and a voice over that said: “The United Church of Christ: No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey- you’re welcome here.” It was estimated that 70% of the United States population would see one of the commercials at least once. University Church purchased the campaign banner to hang on University Avenue and added the campaign logo to its website.

Diane Herrmann and a task force including Ann Marie Coleman, Karen Fields, Greta Holmes, and Sara Pitcher began to work on an Inventory of University Church tasks, events, and activities to help in doing an audit of congregational gifts, interests, and talents for filling the roles needed by the church. They broke the categories down into Christian Development, which needed 7 committee members, 8 teachers, and 20 volunteers for its events; Grow the Church, which needed 7 committee members, 18 people to run the Life Circles, Retreat, do the sign board, Messenger, and coffee hour purchases, and 52 people to help with Coffee Hour; the Church Board, which needed 38 people for the various positions; Finance, which needed 8 regular members and 80 to help with the Rummage Sale, fundraising, the Holiday Fair, and book sales; Social Witness, which needed 7 committee members and members for the Angola Group, Saq Ja’, the Philippines, Anti-Racism, Disability, Open and Affirming, Campaign Against the Death Penalty, Anti-War and Anti-Racism, and Mary Herrick; Worship, which needed 7 committee members, 4 people for Communion, 10 ushers, 2 greeters, 12 acolytes, 3 sound system operators, 2 people for the clip boards, 20 people in choir, 10 people for the Gospel choir, 5 people for the Sanctuary Band, and 10 people for Dance Choir. Listing all of the tasks made it very clear that every church member needed to be more involved than just attending services on Sunday morning and that the church needed to attract new members and volunteers in order to function.

At the end of 2004, University Church was able to pay its staff a bonus to help compensate for its not being able to put raises into the budget. This was made possible even though only about half of the yearly fundraising was completed that had been budgeted because the Blue Gargoyle paid \$7,000 of the gas bill at the end of the year. The church ended the year with a small surplus (and a \$10,000 loan from Capital Funds). For 2005, the fundraising expectation was reduced to a more realistic \$5,000.

2005

The year opened with the shocking news that the Blue Gargoyle was planning to leave University Church and rent space in Fenn House, which would give them their own building and more space. The contract that University Church had with them required that they give a six-month notice before leaving. The income from the Blue Gargoyle space usage made up 20% of the University Church budget. Because of their long tenure in the building, they had deep associations within the church. With the Blue Gargoyle leaving, it opened up many questions about how the space in the church should be used outside of Sunday services. The Blue Gargoyle had been using the whole building throughout the rest of the week. A special committee was formed to consider the question of future space usage.

January 2005 also brought a huge snowfall on what was to have been Laity Sunday. Ann Marie Coleman’s Pastor’s Report reflects that despite the snow “more than 20 people made it to church, and it was a wonderful service. Because it was to have been Laity Sunday, Don and I had not prepared in the usual way so the service was an exciting adventure of Many Gifts One Spirit. People kept on volunteering their gifts. Bill Hamblin, Sharon Hunter-Smith, and Jean Newcomer all provided music and accompaniment. Nancy Reed read The Runaway Bunny, the book that she gives to new babies as their first theological book. Otto Zingg led us in a dance to For the Beauty of the Earth. Angela Arnold sang for us. We used the Lectionary Reading, and Don asked people why they had decided to follow Jesus and what that meant for their lives. The comments were thoughtful and deep. It was an amazing Sunday!”

Jay Wilcoxon, the Board moderator, proposed sending out the Board minutes via email before each meeting, and it was decided that this would be a more effective way to distribute the minutes than putting them into Board members’ folders.

University Church mourned the passing of Milton Davis, the husband of current member Trudy Davis. Milton Davis had been influential in the history of the south side of Chicago when he and his associates bought the South Shore Bank in 1973 to prevent it from moving out of the south side and into the Loop. The South Shore Bank continued to be a source of economic development for the south side of Chicago for many decades.

University Church received a letter from the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns asking University Church to sign on to a resolution to the General Synod from the Southern California-Nevada Conference to support marriage equality. The letter pointed out that when two people marry, they are given over 1,100 State and Federal rights, privileges, and responsibilities that people who cannot marry are denied. These rights included Social Security, property, and pension inheritance; prison and hospital visitation; and many more. At the March 2005 meeting the University Church Board voted to add University Church's name as a sponsor.

In May 2005, University Church had a special dinner to Honor Our Elders. The flier announcing the dinner noted that University Church was blessed to have more than 30 members who were over age 70. They were invited to bring mementos and stories to the well-attended potluck dinner.

In June 2005, several work parties were held to clean up and repaint areas in the church to prepare for new renters. Dan and Sharon Hunter-Smith spent time working on the gardens in the courtyard. A visiting high school group painted two of the upstairs rooms. Joe Brown repaired the fire escape. A thorough kitchen cleaning and painting were done in June and finished before Matthew Reed and Angela Arnold's wedding, which was held at the church.

The board of the Woodlawn Development Associates voted to turn over their assets and liabilities, which included a 10-unit apartment building at 62nd Street and Kimbark Avenue and the adjacent lot, to University Church. With changes in pastoral leadership at University Church, the process took many years to complete. Pat Wilcoxon worked with a lawyer to help with the process from the Woodlawn Development Associates perspective. Eventually in 2007 a new Woodlawn Development board was formed that had two-thirds of its members named by University Church. In this way, Woodlawn Development Associates could become part of the church's efforts to preserve low income housing in Woodlawn.

In October 2005, Janice Spraggins was hired as the new Director of Christian Development. She made a plea for more volunteers to teach Sunday school and work with the youth.

The Committee for the Transition after the Blue Gargoyle produced materials to show to potential renters. Danna Gobel, Sarah Oaks, and Charlie Havens put together a folder that outlined the space available and costs. The University of Chicago considered renting space briefly but decided not enough space was available. Meanwhile the church used space heaters and turned the thermostat down during the week to help conserve gas. They also encourage people to call if they were coming to the church during the week because the doors were kept locked, and they would need to be let in.

In October 2005, Jay Wilcoxon and Karen Fields met with a representative from the Internal Revenue Service about the tax reports and payroll tax payments that the Internal Revenue Service still claimed were missing from 1999. It seemed likely that the church would have to pay penalties for late payments and reports despite having sent a letter contesting these charges in 2002. By February 2006, over \$7,000 in penalties had been paid, and University Church believed the matter had finally been settled. However, the church did not receive a final settlement letter from the IRS.

2006

Because no renters had been found to take over the Blue Gargoyle's space by December 2005, it was decided to present a budget for 2006 that had deep cuts to the Denominational Giving lines and a salary cut for the newly hired Christian Development position. The 2006 budget was also unbalanced and had a built-in deficit even with these cuts. It was hoped that this deficit would resolve when new renters for the building were found. It was also decided to keep the 2005 books open until the Festival of Church Life, which would take place on January 20th in the evening with a potluck dinner. Keeping the books open longer was a chance for people to catch up on their 2005 pledges so that the year would not end with as deep a deficit.

The Festival of Church Life would also allow the congregation to have a discussion about volunteering for church activities like the Life Circles and hosting social hour because there was an increasing problem with finding people to be in charge of these functions. There were also four unfilled positions on the church Board that needed to be recruited. Part of the Festival of Church Life was an asset-mapping project where people attending would list their gifts and then be matched to the Ministry where their particular gifts could best be used. The Festival was very successful, and it was decided to make it an annual event. It was followed by a Mardi Gras dinner in February featuring mask making, music, and red beans and rice.

By March, turning down the heat during the week had saved the church over \$4,000. The church budget was also assisted by a \$20,000 gift from the Covenantal Community, which the Covenantal Community had taken out of their reserves.

It was decided to dissolve the Life Circles because it was too difficult to find people to lead them. Grow the Church, led by Diane Herrmann and Stephanie Weaver, took over the Life Circles' task of finding people to host Coffee Hour.

In May, after the success of the dinner in 2005 honoring the church elders, University Church had an evening dinner program honoring children and youth at their request. At the dinner questions were asked as a part of the program and people had to guess which child or youth was described in the question. People felt like it helped them get to know the children and youth in the church better.

In April, a delegation from University Church made an annual trip to Saq Ja', Guatemala. Linda Clum, Sarah Oaks, Paul Dickerson, Becky Gilles, Sharon Hunter-Smith, and Paul Pitcher traveled to the village in support of the church's partnership with the people there. Meanwhile the Angola Partnership was working on raising funds to send Donna Dudley, who was In-Care with University Church, back to Angola for three weeks.

In May, Madeline Hamblin secured a grant from the University of Chicago for a drop-in center for graduate students and faculty who had small children. They used the church nursery and Sunday school rooms during the week and were called the Resource Center. In addition, Metro Squash, an organization that taught squash to youth and provided tutoring services, began to rent church space for its tutoring activities. The Bronzeville Training and Professional Academy arranged to use two rooms for teaching computer skills to young women. With these renters in place, most of the space in the church that the Blue Gargoyle had been using was rented. However, the Bronzeville Training and Professional Academy was waiting on government grants to fund the services that they were offering. These grants did not materialize so they were unable to pay their rent.

Grow the Church sponsored a t-shirt design contest which was won by Jackie Cannon for the front of the shirt and Cliff Joseph for the back. The shirt featured a bold black and white design that highlighted University Church's involvement in the arts and social justice. Shirts were printed and sold as a fundraiser.

In June 2006, Janice Spraggins resigned as Minister of Christian Development.

The summer of 2006 saw the deaths of two longtime members: Virginia Turner and Callie Hall.

In October 2006, Felisha Carter was hired as the Minister of Christian Development.

Shirley Fleming was the new student intern. Shirley Fleming had worked as a nurse and for the City of Chicago before becoming a seminarian. She had a special interest in healthcare issues.

It was decided to have Communion every Sunday. On the first and third Sundays, Communion would be a part of the regular service, and on the other Sundays it would be in the library after the service.

On November 19, 2006, Don Coleman along with several other protestors trespassed on the grounds of the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, during the annual protest to close the school that had trained insurgents who had murdered people in Latin America including in Saq Ja', Guatemala. At his trial in 2007, Don Coleman stated, "I have been a law-abiding citizen all my life and have never had any convictions for actions like this before. But the comparison of climbing through a fence with no damage to physical property or harm to another human being cannot be compared to the injustice and brutality that is the consequence of the training that takes place at this base. And I believe the focus on the petty misdemeanor that we are accused of makes this court complicit in the brutal acts of the Western Hemisphere Institute of Internal Security/School of the Americas. I plead guilty of thinking long and hard about my decision to participate in this action. I could find no other way of putting WHINSEC/ SOA on trial for the crimes committed because of their training than this action. I consider what the sixteen of us have done as a way of holding the military in this country accountable for the injustice created by their actions. This act of civil disobedience on my part is really an act of holy obedience to the God who called me to respond." At his trial on January 29, 2007, he was sentenced to sixty days at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago where he reported in April 2007. Ann Marie Coleman continued to serve as pastor during his imprisonment. The University Church Board fully supported his act of civil disobedience.

With more of the space being rented, University Church was finally able to give raises to the staff of 4.1% in 2007. It also made plans to re-instate denominational support that had been cut.

University Church hosted a well-attended Blue Christmas Service. This service was focused on people for whom the holiday season was not necessarily a happy one. The Blue Christmas Service allowed people a space to be together and acknowledge the loss that can be felt during the holidays. University Church also took up a special Christmas offering that was sent to men in prison by Greta Holmes, who was working with the Campaign to End the Death Penalty. The Campaign to End the Death Penalty was celebrating the exoneration of Darby Tillis, who was the first man in Illinois to be released from death row.

2007

The second Festival of Church Life took place on January 18, 2007, with a dinner and reports from the Ministers and Ministries. Each Ministry was to do a presentation about their needs for the coming year, and then all members in attendance would be asked to pledge to join in the work of a Ministry. The Nominating Committee had not been able to fill several key roles for 2007, including first or second vice moderator, one trustee, one staff relations person, and one nominating committee member. There was a hope that people could be recruited for those positions.

In January, the Board voted to sponsor a resolution to be presented by the Disciples Justice Action Network on a Call for a More Humane United States Immigration Policy, which called for the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ to advocate for changes to United States immigration policy through study and reflection; grass-roots organization; and delegations that would develop issue awareness for local, state, and national legislators and representatives. The resolution discussed border policies that helped to cause the deaths of migrants and that led to 10-12 million undocumented workers living in the United States, and it called for policies that would provide a path for residency status and citizenship for these people and an employment-focused immigration system.

University Church received a bid of \$1,400 for the Hammond B3 organ purchased by Reverend John Selders. The organ was not being used, and the church arranged for its sale and removal. The funds were placed in the Organ Fund for the maintenance and repair of the Skinner organ.

The City of Chicago had put a bus stop on the University Avenue side of University Church that took up most of the parking on that side of the building. The church had to petition the city to move the bus stop to the south side of 57th Street, and the parking was restored.

A proposal was presented to the Board in 2007 encouraging the restoration of the Skinner organ, which had been installed in the church in 1928 by famed organ designer E.M. Skinner. The organ had multiple components including a great organ, a swell organ, a choir organ, a pedal organ, and an echo organ. When the organ was fully operational, the sound it produced was described as "heavenly." By 2007, only the great organ was playable. The Berghaus Organ Company had made a proposal to fully restore the organ for \$200,000. The Worship Committee floated the idea of trying to raise the funds needed through asking the congregation, holding organ benefit concerts, and trying to write grants. Unfortunately, this sum was beyond the ability of the congregation to raise.

The Power of Oneness group began renting the sanctuary on Sunday afternoons, and by April the income from rental groups was exceeding what had been budgeted.

Karen Fields, the church office manager, began treatments for breast cancer. The church office hours were reduced so that it was open 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on weekdays and closed on Tuesdays.

Because the Bronzeville Training and Professional Academy had never been able to secure the government grants that it had sought, it had not been able to pay its rent. By June 2007, it was many months in arrears. The Board voted to ask them to leave.

In June 2007, University Church welcomed Don Coleman home from prison. He spent time during the rest of the summer in Washington, D.C., lobbying for the closing of the School of the Americas.

Marilyn Pagan-Banks from McCormick Theological Seminary was an intern at University Church. She had a special interest in working with the youth. She was later ordained at University Church.

On September 9, 2007, Don and Ann Marie Coleman wrote a letter to the congregation stating that they were planning on retiring on Easter Sunday 2008. Their letter outlined the process of appointing a committee to find an interim pastor (it was decided to use the current Staff Relations Committee) and a committee to begin the search for a long-term pastor. They pointed out that usually eighteen months should pass before the long-term search would start. Don and Ann Marie Coleman would not plan on returning to University Church while the interim pastor was there and not until the new pastor had been there for at least six months to allow the new pastor to get established. Their letter ended by saying "Like all pastors, we have come to love this wonderful, exciting, outrageous congregation called University Church. We want to make our leaving a satisfying ending to the sixteen years we have been here."

By October 2007, several additional groups were renting space in University Church. These groups included the Active Bible Church of God, the Dongfang Chinese Educational Institute, and Darby Tillis' Church Group.

2008

On January 17, 2008, the search committee for the interim pastor had their first meeting. John Fish chaired the meeting and was joined by Greta Holmes, Trudy Davis, Don Burke, and Jay Wilcoxon. By February the committee had met five times and added Lala Rodgers and Jackie Cannon as members. They wrote a statement

about University Church to help guide the search, noting that University Church is “an inner-city, multi-racial, multi-cultural congregation; a university centered church, in the middle of the campus of the University of Chicago, with neighboring seminaries; a church with a strong progressive and prophetic heritage; a strongly active Open and Affirming church, also involved in sanctuary movements past and present; a church with multiple partnerships for world-wide witness and service (Guatemala, Angola, protest against the School of the Americas); a church of 100 families and individuals, with balanced budgets and no long-term debt; a church with a great facility, Norman gothic structure containing: a vaulted sanctuary seating up to 250, arranged partly ‘in the round’ to permit close-contact preaching, liturgical dancing, and centered communion table, first floor dining room and kitchen seating around 100 and a library and meeting room, a 2nd floor auditorium, located across a courtyard from Disciples Divinity House.” John Fish led a class on the interim search on February 17. Plans were also made to divide up all the tasks that Don and Ann Marie Coleman were doing so that they could be done by staff (Karen Fields as Office Manager, Joe Brown as general building caretaker, Gabby as cleaner), lay leaders, and the interim during the transition.

Cassandra Patikas was hired as the Minister for Christian Development. She had been working with the Christian Development Ministry for several years and was hired for the position so that there would not be a need to bring in someone who was not familiar with the church when the senior ministers were leaving. One of the first activities she coordinated was a Martin Luther King, Jr program with the youth.

The Finance Committee launched the Rainy Day Capital Fund in January 2008. The main focus of the Capital Campaign was to generate funds for a new roof and tuckpointing. There had been more than three major leaks, which had caused significant damage to the ceiling. The goal of the campaign was to get \$250,000 in pledges by Easter when the Colemans were retiring. By September 2008, the church had received \$86,966 in pledges. The tuckpointing was to be done mainly on the upper 6-8 feet of the walls of the church. The tuck pointing on the rest of the walls that had previously been done in 1987 was felt to be holding up well. A roofing contractor who went to church with Joe Brown examined the roof and decided that a coating of reflective sealant would extend the life of the roof for another 7-10 years along with replacement of worn sections, including the organ tower, the section over the East aisle, sections on the perimeter of the sanctuary roof, the University Avenue bays, and the area around the education wing skylights and central chimney.

By April 2008, the Interim Search Committee had identified Dr. Eugene Winkler as the candidate of choice for interim minister. Dr. Eugene Winkler previously had a long career as a Methodist minister and was originally from Arkansas. He had been one of the founding members of Protestants for the Common Good and was also a member of the Illinois Gaming Board. Dr. Eugene Winkler was the minister at Chicago Temple but wanted to return to a role with more pastoring work. He was described as a gifted pastor with a good sense of humor. He agreed to serve a two-year term, and the Interim Search Committee was unanimous that he was their preferred candidate. He accepted the call to University Church and agreed to start on June 1, 2008.

It was decided to have church services start at 10:45 a.m. instead of 10:30 a.m. Church school would be before the service at 9:30 a.m. for adults and children. Jay Wilcoxon was teaching series of classes on the Early Church. Church services were to end no later than noon. Congregants were encouraged to still come at 10:30 a.m. so that they would actually be present at the start of the service because there was a general tendency for people to arrive 5-10 minutes late.

Danna Gobel, who had been a church member and was working as the program coordinator for the ecumenical doctoral program at the Association of Chicago Theological Schools, was sponsored by University Church in June 2008 to attend the University of Cairo in pursuit of a Master’s Degree at the American University of Cairo. The degree was intended to help her grow in her ministry and as an “instrument in healing, presence, and peace to those in Africa and the Middle East.” She had previously worked at a refugee camp in Cairo teaching English and art projects to Sudanese refugees.

In September, a church school census revealed that there were one high school student, 5 middle school students, 3 primary school students, and one child in the nursery.

In November 2008, Barack Obama was elected as the first African-American President of the United States. University Church participated in Camp Hope, which called upon the newly elected President to end the war in Iraq and bring about peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan; to take all nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; to close Guantanamo; to suspend deportation of immigrants and stop raids at workplaces; to submit the Kyoto Climate Protocols to Congress for ratification; to establish a commission to develop policies for full employment; to issue a 90-day moratorium on mortgage foreclosures; to start a commission on Universal Healthcare; and to close the current iteration of the School of the Americas.

2009

The congregation started the process of self-study needed before calling a new permanent minister. The self-study was to be completed by April 2009 and the information given to the search committee; however, there were difficulties in recruiting members for the self-study groups, and the start of the process had to be pushed back to September 2009. The retreat theme reflecting the start of the self-study was “Who We Are and Where We Are Going.”

In January 2009, University Church mourned the passing of longtime church member James Wagner from lung cancer. James Wagner had been a moderator for University Church and had been instrumental in founding the Attending to Black Culture Committee and in instituting the Soul Food Potluck. He had also been a founding member of the Hyde Park Jazz Society, which brought jazz back to Hyde Park and started the annual Jazz Festival.

Renters for the building at the start of 2009 included Metro Squash, the Family Resource Center for the University of Chicago, Active Bible Church, Do Not Be Afraid Counseling, and a seamstress.

In May 2009, Pat Wilcoxon did a presentation to the Board about the Woodlawn Development Associates (WDA). She discussed how the apartments at 6224/6226 S. Kimbark were designated as affordable housing units and had included a small school. The board for the WDA had decreased in size. Pat Wilcoxon was hoping legal arrangements could be made so that the WDA would be turned over to University Church and its board reconstituted with church members. The board, as controlled by the church, would take over administration of the building and the payment of the mortgages.

Michele Edwards became an intern serving with Reverend Eugene Winkler.

By November 2009, the search committee for the new permanent pastor was approved by the congregation and ready to begin meetings. Reverend Christal Williams, the regional minister for Illinois and Wisconsin for the Disciples of Christ, met with the Board to help with the details of choosing a committee. She suggested getting candidates from the denominations because they would be pre-screened. The search committee included Almarie Wagner (chair), Christy Belue, Sammie Dortch, Dan Hunter-Smith, Phil Miller, John Modschiedler, Stephanie Weaver, April Lewton, and Curtis Berry. Since the search committee was starting to meet at the end of 2009, Reverend Eugene Winkler was asked to extend his interim ministry to June 2010 and agreed to do so.

2010

It was decided for 2010 to move the time of the church service back to 10:30 a.m. Coffee hour would be at 11:45 a.m., and Sunday school for children and youth would be at 12:15 p.m. All committees would meet on the first Sunday at 12:15 p.m. and the Board would meet on the second Sunday. Adult education classes would meet at 12:15 p.m. on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays.

In January 2010, the Family Resource Center stopped renting space in the building because the University of Chicago had built a building for them. Metro Squash expanded their space usage, and another church began to rent space on Sunday afternoons. The rooms on the second floor where the Family Resource Center had been meeting were spruced up with items from a “shower” led by Shannon Bennett, and University Church began to use them as nursery and preschool rooms. Because of the reductions in rent payments by June 2010, University Church had to dip into its Capital Funds for payroll.

In August 2010, the Christian Development Committee, which included Christy Belue, Michele Edwards, Nancy Reed, Cassandra Patikas, and Icy Cade-Bell, developed a new format for Christian education. They decided to have a picnic to start the Sunday school year at which children and adults would be asked to share their favorite church school memories. The unit of study for September was to be on Native American Spirituality and Hispanic/Latino spiritual experiences with a tie-in to Native American week and Hispanic History Month. October would focus on “Honoring our Heritage” with heritage stories from the Bible. Children would also be paired with an adult to learn through and interview activity about that adult’s experiences as a child or their religious journey. November and December would focus on Advent and Christmas. January would include activities around Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday. February would focus on African-American Heritage month, self-love, self-esteem, and health. March would have studies on Lent, and April would center around Easter. Finally, May would be on the power of prayer. Another goal was to take the youth on one field trip every month. The children and youth would also work on memorizing key Bible verses like the 23rd Psalm and the Beatitudes.

The search committee continued its work of receiving and reading resumes from over twenty candidates and then calling references and doing telephone interviews to narrow the pool of candidates from nine to three. Once a short list of candidates was developed, the remaining candidates were invited to do guest preaching at other local

churches that the search committee could attend. They would be able to get a better sense of the candidates' style of preaching and personalities. The search committee wanted to find a minister who would fit University Church's dual missions of filling spiritual needs and working on social justice issues. They were also looking for a minister who could help to grow the church, especially reaching more families and young people. The search committee was impressed by Julian DeShazier's sermon in which he referenced Hebrews 12:1 relating how we can "run with perseverance the race that is set before us." He spoke of how we can "run" into winds of opposition, but sometimes that we feel so tired that we want to stop and drop out of the race. We all carry weights with us as we run the race—"sins that cling so closely" including fears, prejudices, and addictions. The most important thing about running is to know that you have the strength within to finish the race. Jesus endured all of the winds of opposition, even the cross, and would not be stopped. He was the best runner of all.

In September 2010, the search committee by unanimous vote presented Julian DeShazier's resume to the Board as its nominee for the next pastor of University Church.

Julian DeShazier was a Chicago native and a graduate of Morehouse College and then the University of Chicago Divinity School in 2010. He had been serving as Teen Pastor at Covenant United Church of Christ and had previously been an intern working with children and youth at Trinity United Church of Christ. He had also worked extensively with the Coca-Cola Leadership Program in Atlanta, Georgia. A fellowship with the Fund for Theological Education had allowed him to travel the globe, developing ways to reach out to un-churched young people. During all of this time Julian DeShazier had been performing and recording rap as J.Kwest and exploring the intersection of rap music and faith. He was a 2007 Holy Hip Hop Award winner and had been celebrated as "Living Black History" by Urban Ministries International. He had shared stages with other artists at major gospel music festivals. His song, "So Blessed," was featured on the Grammy-nominated compilation "Holy Hip Hop: Taking the Gospel to the Streets."

The Board approved calling Julian DeShazier as pastor, and the Congregation ratified it on October 17, 2010. The Board began to work on the details surrounding his call and ordination. Julian DeShazier's in-care papers, verifying the two years he had spent in-care, had been submitted to the Chicago Metropolitan Association but had been lost and then re-submitted. The ordination committee had a new chair, who had not been made aware of the prior submission of the papers. The church was told that the ordination process would probably take 1-2 years to complete, and in the meantime, Julian DeShazier would need someone to co-officiate for communion and baptisms. The Board determined that none of these problems were insurmountable and that Julian DeShazier would start on November 16, 2010, after Reverend Eugene Winkler's last sermon on November 14, 2010.

University Church mourned the loss of longtime member and church secretary Jean Ervin in October 2010. Jean Ervin was an efficient stalwart in the church office through many years, even when the church did not have the funds to pay her. Don Ervin, who had been married to Jean for more than sixty years, died in 2012. Don Ervin had been active in University Church's affordable housing communities including the Covenantal Community and Woodlawn Development Associates. Don Ervin was the social witness chair. Another of Don Ervin's passions was working on having University Church's historic organ restored.

2011

At the January 2011 meeting, the Board voted to charter Boy Scout Troop 599 led by Craig Truitt and Jim Sowerby. At the meeting Craig Truitt talked about the history of the Boy Scouts and how it helps boys to become good citizens and leaders and to have fun in the outdoors.

Also, at this meeting the Board voted to have an In-Care Committee to help with ordination for seminary students who need support. These students could work on ordination while serving in the church.

University Church had a day of cleaning out the church, including the kitchens and the sanctuary, to prepare for Julian DeShazier's Installation Service on April 10, 2011. On the day of the installation the sanctuary was filled, and extra chairs had to be brought in. Reverend Ozzie Smith, Jr. from Covenant UCC preached, and the Covenant UCC youth performed. Afterwards there was a reception.

In May 2011, University Church celebrated a victory with Greta Holmes and the Coalition to End the Death Penalty when the death penalty was abolished in Illinois.

Another victory in 2011 was the Dream Act being signed into law. This act mandated that immigrants who were brought to the United States as children would have a legal way to attend college and work without fear of deportation. University Church signed a new Immigrant Welcoming Covenant with the Chicago New Sanctuary Coalition, recommitting to working for just and humane immigration policies. Plans were made to have an Immigrant Welcoming Sunday.

It was decided to have Joe Brown, who was doing maintenance work on the building, do written invoices on repair work before commencing repairs. He had done several large projects after hearing Julian DeShazier “think out loud” about possible repairs needed for the building. The Board also discussed hiring a property manager to take over managing the building.

By June 2011, the church had received over 40 cards from church visitors, and plans were made to follow up with them.

McKinna Daugherty joined the church staff as an intern in fall 2011. She began to hold a Thursday night Bible study that was well attended by church members and students.

In November 2011, Michele Ellis was hired as youth minister to help continue University Church’s programs for youth and children.

Julian DeShazier applied for a LEEAP (Local Evangelism, Envisioning and Planting) church revitalization UCC grant and received \$13,500 in funds. These funds were to be spent on large-scale projects to benefit youth, social justice, property improvements, and community outreach. LEEAP funds for the grants came from the sale of UCC church properties that could no longer be used. The grants were renewable for three years. One of the projects Julian DeShazier was working on was to outfit a recording studio in the church basement that could be used by the youth.

It was decided to start using the first offering in the service that the children collected for people who approached the church with financial needs or for other causes. The offering had previously been going to the Hyde Park Food Pantry, but it was discovered that the Hyde Park Food Pantry had surplus funds.

2012

January 2012 saw changes in the junior church program led by Christian Education Minister Michele Ellis. She proposed moving the junior church time to immediately after the first offering. She was writing a new junior church curriculum that would include joys and concerns, a scripture passage, a lesson, and a hands-on project about the lesson. All of these activities would reflect what was going on in the sanctuary. She was also planning a confirmation class for seventh graders that would begin in February with confirmation/baptism in June. Seven youth eventually enrolled in the confirmation class.

The Social Justice Committee encouraged all of its members to attend Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington, DC. This was a chance for church members to meet with legislators and discuss issues of concern to University Church. The Social Justice Committee proposed using a portion of the Social Justice Fund that was held in Capital Funds to help send congregational members to Washington, DC. It was decided that the Social Justice Committee could use up to 4% of the Social Justice Fund every year for this type of event.

It was decided to shorten several of the pews in the sanctuary for wheelchair spaces. Shortening the pews in several places around the sanctuary would give people in wheelchairs more options about where to sit.

John Modschiedler and Pamela Purnell were nominated by the Board to form a committee to rewrite the church by-laws.

The theme for Lent in 2012 was “In the Wilderness.” The communion table was moved out of the center of the sanctuary, and a display designed by Sergio Centeno with rocks symbolizing the wilderness was placed there. The message was that not only does God accompany us through the wilderness, but we accompany each other as well. The Lenten study book was Barbara Brown Taylor’s An Altar in the World. Barbara Brown Taylor had been a minister but changed careers to become a professor. In An Altar in the World, she shared how she learned to encounter God beyond the walls of any church. From simple practices such as walking, working, and getting lost to deep meditations on topics like prayer and pronouncing blessings, she explored concrete ways to discover the sacred in the small things we do and see. Something as ordinary as hanging clothes on a clothesline could become an act of devotion if we pay attention to what we are doing and take time to attend to the sights, smells, and sounds. This book was felt to be a way to explore ways in which God can be present in the “wilderness” of our lives.

In March 2012, University Church’s weekly attendance was up 30 people from the previous year, and 21 people had expressed an interest in joining the church, with about 15 actually joining. When people expressed an interest in joining University Church, Julian DeShazier would visit them in their homes and answer questions about the church. Then he would invite them to a small-group dinner where they would meet long-term members and learn about various ways to get involved in church life. April Lewton was the coordinator for the small-group dinners, which were scheduled monthly.

In March 2012, Michele Edwards was approved by the Board to be an unpaid associate pastor. She had a special interest in ministry to the elderly. She would be working at McCormick Theological Seminary and living in

the Covenantal Community. However, her ministry was cut short by her diagnosis with cancer and death in 2013. University Church mourned her loss.

Also in March 2012, University Church hosted a regional youth event to create momentum for the national youth conference in July at Purdue University. Local UCC and Disciples of Christ churches had been invited. People from University Church helped out as greeters for the event, and several University Church youth were involved in the talent show.

In May 2012, Julian DeShazier met with the leaders of Disciples Divinity House to discuss the church's ongoing relationship with them. The Board voted to contribute \$200 to Disciples Divinity House as a symbol of the church's ongoing support for them.

In June 2012, John Modschiedler presented the changes to the church by-laws to the Board, including changing the word "by-laws" to "bylaws." The rewrite included other updates to wording, including changing "General Manifestation of the Christian Church" to "General Assembly of the Christian Church." The new bylaws helped to define who should be counted as a member of University Church and whether the minister could vote as a member of the Board. The rewrite changed the word Ministry to Committee throughout the document. The description of each Committee was removed from the bylaws themselves and placed in a binder in the church office. It took until January 2014 to finish the bylaws revision and have the Board vote on them so that they could be approved by the congregation.

In June 2012, it was decided to stop placing clipboards for general comments on all the pews for services. Monitoring the clipboards was proving to be administratively difficult for the office manager Karen Fields, and it was decided that there needed to be a more effective means of communication implemented. Instead, green visitor cards were placed in the pews for visitors to record their contact information.

Music Minister Charles Hayes joined the University Church staff in 2012. He replaced Glenn Klipp who had left to become a Buddhist monk. Charles Hayes had been on the staff of the Chicago Children's Choir for over a decade and was a founding member of the Chatham Choral Ensemble.

In September 2012, Johnny Kline, a student at Chicago Theological Seminary, began his internship at University Church. Sergio Centeno, a student at McCormick Theological Seminary from Puerto Rico, also started his internship in September. He had a special interest in visual art and faith.

The fall Stewardship Campaign for 2012 focused on trying to get 100% of the congregation to submit pledges. The previous year 65% of the families had pledged.

In October 2012, University Church tried to make its social media outreach more visible by adding its Facebook and Twitter information, its website, and a current staff list to the yellow pages in the Bulletin. Photos and more information were added to the website to facilitate rental of the church for weddings.

In December 2012, when the budget for 2013 was written, enough new pledges and rental income were received that the \$6,500 line for fundraising was dropped from the budget. There were funds available for a 10% raise for Julian DeShazier and a 5% raise for Karen Fields. University Church was also able to finally pay back all of the loans from Capital Funds.

In December 2012, Reverend Michele Ellis resigned as youth minister, and it was decided to have a six-month interval before hiring a new youth minister. Intern Sergio Centeno volunteered to start doing some work with the youth in the interim.

2013

At the January 2013 Board meeting, Bonnie Osei-Frimpong, who was co-chair of the Outreach Committee with Thora Nurse, announced the intention to start a new group for people who were between the ages of 20 and 30. The group would plan events and help this cohort form a community in the church and beyond.

University Church began to work on writing a Safe Church Policy that would be implemented for all staff and volunteers working with children. It would include background checks for staff and volunteers and rules like having at least two adults present during all activities with youth and children.

Elijah Zehyoue became an intern at University Church in March 2013. He had graduated from Morehouse College and was working on his Master of Divinity from the University of Chicago. He had a special interest in working with the youth.

Julian DeShazier took a paternity leave in spring 2013 to welcome his and Mallorie's first child Dania.

The Social Justice Committee, with the leadership of intern Johnny Kline, joined the movement to convince the University of Chicago to open a level-1 adult trauma center. This movement was being spearheaded by groups like FLY (Fearless Leading by the Youth) after FLY founder Damian Turner died in 2010. He was shot at the

intersection of 61st Street and Cottage Grove Avenue and was pronounced dead an hour after being transported to Northwestern Memorial Hospital for care because there was no trauma center at the University of Chicago which was just four blocks away. Other groups involved in advocating for the trauma center included University of Chicago students in SHE (Students for Healthcare Equity), KOCO (Kenwood Oakland Community Organization), PAC (Prayer and Action Collective- formerly Trauma Center Prayers), the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, and STOP (Southside Together Organizing for Power). The University of Chicago was resisting opening a trauma center. The hospital administration said that when they had run one in 1988 for two years, they had lost money and had to close it. University Church agreed to be a liaison between the groups calling for the trauma center and the University of Chicago and to provide meeting space for the groups to help organize their campaign.

Seth Patterson became an intern at University Church in fall 2013. He was working on his degree at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Seth Patterson had a special interest in the intersection of theater and ministry.

Tangie Purvis also became an intern of University Church in fall 2013 while she was a student at McCormick Theological Seminary. She went on to lead several ministries for those suffering from addictions.

On October 13, 2013, Julian DeShazier was ordained. He was then able to give communion and preside over all the sacraments of church life.

2014

Patricia Novak was sent by the UCC to become an associate pastor for University Church for two years. She had an interest in Christian Education and the Burnham Corridor. Her interest in Christian Education was especially timely as the Nominating Committee had not been able to find co-chairs for the Christian Education Committee. Patricia Novak began teaching a Tuesday evening class entitled “Bad Girls of the Bible.”

Heavy snows caused a leak into the ceiling of the library despite the roof repairs completed as part of the Rainy Day Campaign. It turned out that the leaks were being caused by ice jams that were in turn causing water to come through the walls as the ice melted. Joe Brown eventually installed a heating system on the gutters that would prevent ice from forming.

Sergio Centeno, who had been a University Church intern, became the University Church Artist in Residence. He was responsible for a redesign of the church logo, new t-shirts, and banners. The banners included a large colorful banner hung on the outside of the church that read “Equal rights & Equal Access for All God’s Children.” He has continued to create the seasonal displays on the communion table and coordinate the decoration of the sanctuary for worship services.

New member Martin McKinney and Irami Osei-Frimpong started filming the sermons, taking pictures, and recording church services so that they could be shared on-line by February 2014. It was decided that the church would have an “opt out” policy that would be published on the church website along with a notice in the Bulletin. The policy stated that University Church published photos on its social media sites, and if anyone saw a photo they would like removed, they should notify the church office. These activities formed the seeds of the Multimedia Committee of which Martin McKinney was the first chair.

The University Church Dance Choir had been preparing a dance to the song “Witness” at the request of former minister Harvey Lord. He wanted to have this dance performed at his memorial service. Dancer Allison Harris had choreographed the dance, and the Dance Choir had spent many months rehearsing and fine tuning it. The dance was nearing completion in 2014.

In February 2014, the Social Justice Committee discussed offering sanctuary to Anibal, an undocumented Guatemalan immigrant whose legal stay in the country would be ending at the end of February. Wellington Avenue would be offering him sanctuary during March, and University Church would offer him sanctuary in April. The church retreat would have sanctuary as its theme and would be discussing what it means to be a welcoming congregation. University Church would have to organize shifts of volunteers to be in the church at all times in case of a raid by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The Board voted for the resolution that “University Church hereby reaffirms its commitment to being a sanctuary church, this time for undocumented immigrants who pose no danger for communities in the United States and who would face family separation, violence, and/or extreme poverty if they were deported.” In doing this University Church reiterated the principles found in its original “Declaration of Sanctuary” as set out in its statement of February 1985. Anibal did not come to University Church for sanctuary, but the church decided to be prepared in case other immigrants needed to be granted sanctuary.

In February 2014, the tax issue last dealt with in 2006 resurfaced when the IRS demanded \$27,000 in interest and fees on the payroll taxes that the IRS claimed had not been properly paid from 1995 to 2001. Curtis

Megyesi, the IRS settlement officer, offered the church a settlement amount of \$15,000 to wipe the slate clean of this ongoing debt. University Church contested that it had already settled the matter in 2005 and 2006 with the payment of \$7,000. The church turned the file of documentation that the IRS provided over to the Law Project, a group that provided pro-bono legal help to nonprofits, and did not make any further payments.

In April 2014, the University Church Board decided to get “No guns allowed” signs for the church doors. The City of Chicago ban on handguns had been judged to be unconstitutional, and the church did not want guns being brought into the church.

In June 2014, University Church mourned the loss of longtime member John Fish. The church had already experienced the loss of his wife Sally Fish in 2010. They had both been very active members of University Church for many years. John Fish, who had a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary, was a part of the Chicago Metropolitan Sanctuary Project, a board member for the Woodlawn Development Associates, and a board member for the Woodlawn Community School.

In the summer 2014, Maggie Brown ran the first annual theater summer camp at University Church. Turnout for the camp was low, but the church hoped with better advertising the next summer would have more participants.

On September 6, 2014, University Church hosted its first Family Play Day Block Party. University Avenue was blocked up and a stage was set up with music by J.Kwest, Willie Pickens, and Maggie Brown. Food was provided and there were activities for children. Church Committees were encouraged to have tables and hand out information. The event was well attended, and plans were made to have future similar events.

In September 2014, Reverend Julian DeShazier’s review of the Illinois requirements for nonprofit bylaws found that the University Church bylaws, despite having taken over two years to revise and having been approved in January 2014, were not in accordance with these statutes and would need to be redone. Ultimately, the Jones Day Law Firm helped with the bylaws by changing the word “Committee” to “Task Force” and making it official that Task Force Chairs had to be members or associate members of the church (people like clergy who had to maintain their membership at a different congregation). Part of the impetus for University Church to rewrite its bylaws in accordance with Illinois statutes was for the church to be able to assume the assets of the Woodlawn Development Associates. However, it was decided that it would be better for University Church to name representatives to the Woodlawn Development Associates Board and have it continue as a separate entity.

In fall 2014, Jason Carson Wilson resigned from being the chair of Christian Education and became a University Church intern. He was joined by D’Angelo Smith and Judith Guy who also became interns. D’Angelo Smith began to work with Maggie Brown on a theater workshop. Judith Guy started to work on a Safe Church Policy that would govern how the church would handle people volunteering and working with children and youth. This policy was adopted in January 2015.

On October 3, 2014, the IRS froze all of University Church’s accounts because of the dispute over the payroll taxes and the penalties that might be due. University Church was not able to pay any bills or write paychecks. Then on October 28, 2014, the IRS seized \$65,000 from the University Church accounts and the accounts were unfrozen. How the \$65,000 figure was arrived at remained unclear to the Board and the Finance Ministry. Ultimately the IRS returned \$14,400. The \$49,600 was paid out of the church’s Capital Funds. The church continued to contest the seizure, but the rest of the money has never been returned.

In December 2014, Reverend Julian DeShazier proposed starting a Youth Arts Education Program to be housed in University Church. The church had learned that Metro Squash, which had grown to be the church’s largest renter, had received the donation of a newly constructed building with squash courts at 61st Street and Cottage Grove Avenue. Metro Squash would move there in April 2015. Thus, the church would be needing a new renter to use the space of the church and help share the cost of running the building. This change in renters would give the church the chance to offer unique services to youth in the community. Reverend Julian DeShazier proposed partnering with the Chicago Academy of Music, which offered music lessons from master musicians; the International Beethoven Project, which was formed to promote the music of Beethoven; the Chicago Metamorphosis Orchestra Project, which promoted youth orchestra programs; and the Chicago Wisdom Project, which promoted youth creativity and expression in education. The components of programming that would be offered at University Church with these organizations would include music lessons on a sliding-scale basis, the formation of a community youth orchestra, and arts education for youth that would include theater and media and would utilize the recording studio. It was expected that the four outside groups would pay nominal rent to University Church but that University Church would also apply for grants from organizations such as the Chicago Community Trust, which had already given grants to the music studio project, to fund the arts education component. Michael Carter, the chief executive of the Chicago Academy of Music, also proposed opening a café in the University Church kitchen and dining room. This café would be run by his wife Fabiana and would allow her space to run her cake-baking business. Ultimately the

Chicago Academy of Music signed a lease with University Church saying that they would pay \$30,000 per year in rent starting June 1, 2015. However, full payments were delayed, as they needed to spend some of the money on renovations to the kitchen before moving in.

2015

Reverend Julian DeShazier participated in a Next Generation Leadership Initiative, which had ten classes over ten years for pastors under age 35. The first class was held in Carefree, Arizona.

Harvey Lord, former minister of University Church, passed away on April 3, 2015. University Church held a memorial service for him, which included the dance choir dancing the completed dance “Witness” that he had commissioned. Ragina Buntun sang “Witness” to accompany the dance.

The spring and fall rummage sales, which had been longstanding University Church events, were converted to monthly “Resale Shops,” which would still sell donated items but would involve less set up and clean up. This change would allow them to be run with fewer volunteers since the work of the rummage sales had been done by smaller and smaller groups of volunteers.

In April 2015, Reverend Julian DeShazier accompanied the Guatemalan delegation to Saq Ja’ on their annual delegation.

Summer 2015 saw University Church ready to hire a youth minister to start coordinating youth programming. It was decided to make an internal hire of D’Angelo Smith, who had been a church intern.

In June 2015, Reverend Julian DeShazier met with representatives from the University of Chicago to help facilitate a conversation between them and the community groups advocating for a trauma center at the University of Chicago Medical Center. The protests had been escalating and had included disrupting alumni events at the University of Chicago and protestors locking themselves to the doors of the University of Chicago Administration Building. Reverend Julian DeShazier hoped to bring the groups together for a more productive dialogue. These efforts came to fruition with the University of Chicago announcing in January of 2016 that it would open a level 1 Adult Trauma Center. Reverend Julian DeShazier was asked to chair the Community Advisory Council for the new Trauma Center.

In June 2015, Reverend Julian DeShazier announced that a short film in which he was featured had won a regional Emmy. The film entitled “Strange Fruit” was produced by the Salt Project, a not-for-profit production company dedicated to the craft of visual storytelling. “Strange Fruit” was about the Billie Holliday 1939 protest song of the same title that was about the lynching of two African-American teenagers. Reverend Julian DeShazier also continued to work on his first full album “Lemonade,” which was released in November 2015.

In August 2015, University Church held its second annual Family Festival. This festival featured a silent auction that raised \$550 for its Social Justice Ministry. It also had arts and crafts tables and other activities for families.

The Chicago Academy of Music donated a video display that was placed outside the church office and was used to show church photos and announcements along with Chicago Academy of Music events. The bulletin boards were removed from the entrance ways for a cleaner look.

Martin McKinney and the Multimedia Committee developed an online system for scheduling space usage at University Church that would help streamline the use of the space by the many groups using the building. University Church renters in 2015 included the Chicago Academy of Music, the Wisdom Project, the Active Bible Church, Off-Off Campus, and other groups using the church for weddings, other events, and meetings.

In September 2015, Christopher (Williams) Flowers joined the University Church staff as an intern. He was a student at McCormick Theological Seminary and a Community Engagement Fellow there. He had a special interest in community engagement around faith-based initiatives.

2016

Reverend Julian DeShazier met with some of the leaders of the Black Lives Matters movement who had been meeting at University Church to discuss how churches could better support the movement and how University Church could work as their ally. Black Lives Matter had started in 2013 and had been especially active in Chicago in 2015 after the dashcam video of the police shooting teenager Laquan McDonald was released. University Church had started its own Black Lives Matter Committee after a Chicago Community Trust “On the Table” discussion and potluck in May of 2015. Since its founding the Black Lives Matter Committee of University Church has sponsored

several community forums, film screenings, and open houses related to police accountability. They have worked on Justice for Laquan McDonald and given the affirmation of faith during Black History Month. They have also had a Racial Justice Weekend featuring Reverend Velda Love, Minister of Racial Justice for the United Church of Christ.

In February 2016, the Board discussed setting standards for reviewing art installations in the church because art displayed in the church and especially in the sanctuary would be viewed by visitors as an expression of the church's identity. There had been some questions about recent art exhibits that were arranged by outside groups. Sergio Centeno and the Multimedia and Worship Committees were to collaborate on the standards and then would ensure the standards were upheld for all future exhibits.

Rick Durance, a second-year student at the Divinity School, became a new intern from February 2016 through the summer of 2016.

Also in February 2016, the Board voted to have room 331 set aside as a Social Justice Incubator that would be prepared to house people requiring sanctuary. In April 2016, a request came in to shelter Jose Juan, a working father of five who had been in the United States for more than 15 years and had been ordered by Immigration and Customs Enforcement to self-deport on April 15, 2016.

In March 2016, the Covenantal Community of University Church paid off its 30-year mortgage for the apartment building at 61st Street and University Avenue. Starting in March, rental payments for the affordable housing apartments began to accumulate in an escrow account with the plan that funds from the account could be used to hire a property manager for University Church, the Covenantal Community Building, and the apartment building that was a part of the Woodlawn Development Associates. In February 2017, Vincent Cole, who had a background in real estate and had been a Deacon at Covenant UCC in South Holland, was hired to fill this role.

For Lent 2016, the theme was "Accompaniment," and the Social Justice Committee organized a series of dinners that were well attended. The last dinner in March invited representatives from Black Lives Matter to hold a "teach-in" to discuss what accompaniment meant to them.

In June 2016, the Board minutes noted that the Sunday attendance had increased to 150-160 people, a doubling of what attendance had been ten years previously.

Also in June 2016, the new Blue Gargoyle was formed and sought 501(c)(3) status. The original Blue Gargoyle that had moved out of University Church to Fenn House in 2005 had closed in 2008 when state funding had dried up during the financial crisis. Church members on the new Blue Gargoyle board included Reverend Julian DeShazier, Almarie Wagner, Julie Less, Maggie Brown, and Vivian Loseth. Its goals were to develop programs for youth including performance events on several Friday evenings over the summer of 2016.

In July 2016, Karen Fields, the long-time church office manager, reduced her hours to part time. Jean Newcomer started to take over the role by working 12 hours a week but decided to forgo any salary until after January 1, 2017, so the funds could be used for church improvements. On December 16, 2016, University Church had a potluck celebration to honor Karen Fields for her many years of work.

D'Angelo Smith left his position as Christian Development Minister, and Ramona Gant was hired as the new Christian Development Minister and started work with University Church youth in September 2016.

In September 2016, Jonathan Cahill and David Goodwin became church interns.

On October 3, 2016, Reverend Julian DeShazier and his wife Mallorie welcomed their second daughter, Genevieve.

In October 2016, Martin McKinney brought to the Board the information that Fabiana's Bakery, which had become a popular gathering place for University of Chicago students and other members of the community, was incorporated as a for-profit enterprise. Martin McKinney had been negotiating a new lease with the Chicago Academy of Music, which had come into conflict with groups in the church over space usage, sharing the church kitchen, and rent payment. The for-profit status of the bakery came to light during these negotiations. Because a for-profit entity cannot operate in a nonprofit space without incurring property tax liabilities, the church Board voted to immediately terminate the lease with the Chicago Academy of Music. However, it took several months of legal proceedings and negotiations before they and the bakery finally left the building.

With the election of Republican Donald Trump in November 2016, University Church members were encouraged to wear a safety pin to show support for groups including immigrants, minorities, and Muslims fearing persecution from the incoming administration.

University Church mourned the death of Nathan Reed in December 2016. Nathan Reed was the son of Nancy and Richard Reed and had grown up in University Church. He had shared his talents as a graffiti artist by creating an original work of art during an Arts Sunday service. University Church celebrated his life with a memorial service.

2017

In January 2017, Jean Newcomer took over as the new office manager though Karen Fields continued to help with the transition and to manage the resale shop.

After the Chicago Academy of Music and Fabiana's bakery had vacated the building, University Church had a budget deficit from the space usage income. The church also needed to answer the question of how to best use the building during the week when services were not being held. Martin McKinney, who was the chair of the Multimedia Committee, brought a proposal to the Board that he would lease space from the church for a nonprofit that he had started in 2016 called Stories Connect. Stories Connect provided an online platform for writers to publish pieces on "the social, political, and economic movements of our time," especially as they respond to "the problem of race as a tool of division that sustains other forms of oppression." Stories Connect would also start a cafe called Sanctuary Cafe in the church kitchen and dining room that would pay a \$15 living wage, have an emphasis on employing people who might have difficulty finding employment, and try to use locally sourced, fair trade, sustainable ingredients. Sanctuary Cafe would collaborate with artists to display their work. The Board approved the proposal, and Stories Connect and Sanctuary Cafe had started operations in University Church by March 2017.

In February 2017, Vincent Cole began his work as property manager for the University Church building, the Covenantal Community, and Woodlawn Developmental Associates. The funds for this position were supplied by a pass through from the Covenantal Community of money that was previously used to pay its mortgage that had been retired in 2016. Adding this position to the church staff removed some of the responsibility of oversight of the building and the renters from the pastor's and office manager's duties. Vincent Coles's title of Minister of Affordable Housing highlighted University Church's commitment to helping to provide affordable housing in the community by maintaining the apartment buildings at the Covenantal Community and Woodlawn Developmental Associates.

In 2017, the new Blue Gargoyle continued to expand its activities. It had obtained its own 501(c)(3) status and was running a tutoring program, open mic nights, and classes in Capoeira and Aikido martial arts. It also started an eight-week summer internship, focused on training for work in food service, which was run in the Sanctuary Café. In fall 2017, the new Blue Gargoyle helped with planning engagement with teens on Halloween that took place on 53rd Street. This effort was aimed at providing alternative activities for teens to avoid the "Purge" that had occurred on Halloween the previous year, where some teens had been involved in vandalism and fighting.

In September 2017, Joy Richardson-Moon began leading a class during the church service for preschool children called Sacred Circle. Junior Church continued to meet during the worship service for older children.

In September 2017, Richard Mayo and Erica Weathers became interns at University Church.

University Church mourned the death of Minister Don Coleman in 2017. A service was held to celebrate his passing and many church members, family, and friends gathered to remember his ministry and life of service to social justice.

Reverend Julian DeShazier's Pastor Report at the end of 2017 highlighted stresses that the staff, Board, and congregation had felt during the transition from the partnership with the Chicago School of Music and Fabiana's Bakery to Stories Connect and Sanctuary Cafe. The change in office staff and hiring a new property manager were also stressful, but Reverend Julian DeShazier expressed the hope that all of these changes would prepare the church to move forward. His Pastor's Report also stressed the need for all of the various groups and partners of University Church to figure out better patterns of communication with each other and with the congregation so that their work and achievements could be shared with the church community as a whole. One of his hopes for 2018 was that it would be year that would have themes of "play and rest."

2018

The new year for the Board opened with a discussion of whether University Church would officially become an ally of the coalition of groups who wanted the Obama Center, the University of Chicago, and the City of Chicago to sign a Community Benefits Agreement. The Obama Center Foundation had decided to locate the Obama Center in Jackson Park, and groups from the surrounding communities, including the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization, Southside Together Organizing for Power, Prayer and Action Collective (of students), the Bronzeville Regional Collective, and Friends of the Parks, among others, had come together with a list of community benefits that they wanted the Obama Foundation, the University of Chicago, and the City of Chicago

to guarantee. These benefits included not displacing residents or businesses, a Black business corridor, revenue sharing with the community, employment for community members with living wages, replacing lost parkland, partnering with area schools, and quarterly reporting on progress toward these goals. The Obama Foundation was refusing to sign the agreement saying they had all of these objectives as goals but did not want to be tied down to a formal statement. The Community Benefits Coalition wanted University Church to become an official ally of the coalition and use its influence to get other religious organizations to put pressure on the Foundation, City, and University to sign the agreement. The Board was divided on whether pressuring the Obama Foundation was necessary and also on whether the congregation as a whole would want the church to be an ally of the coalition. A congregational meeting was held in April 2018, and the congregational opinion was mixed. In the end, a vote was held at the congregational meeting as to whether a formal vote would be taken on becoming an ally. The vote was tied between taking a formal vote and not taking a formal vote on the matter. The tie was broken when Moderator Stephanie Weaver voted against taking a formal vote. A task force was formed after the congregational meeting to continue to study the matter and to help educate the congregation so that a formal vote on becoming an ally could be taken at a later date.

In February 2018, University Church offered a series of small-group classes on White Privilege using a UCC curriculum. It was facilitated by UCC staff and ran once a week for six weeks. The class focused on class members becoming aware of living in a world “where the playing field is not equal, depending on race or ethnicity” and, after becoming aware, taking steps toward “dismantling white privilege.” One of the assignments of the class was to write a “spiritual autobiography through the lens of race.” At the end of the class series, sections of the autobiographies were read aloud and discussed.

Also in February 2018, the Black Lives Matter Committee of University Church held an educational session that was very well attended. Rolland Perry did a rap performance during the session that was described in the Board Minutes as “amazing.”

In April 2018, longtime member Edward Campbell passed away at age 102. Edward Campbell had been married to Eleanor Campbell, who was the head of the project writing the history of University Church for its first hundred years that was prepared for the church’s anniversary in 1994. Edward Campbell often filled in to play the organ and piano at University Church through the years. He was also a choir member for many years and could always be counted on to bake his sourdough bread for the Advent Festival and other special occasions.

In April 2018, the delegation to Saq Ja’, Guatemala, returned from their yearly visit to the village with a new proposal from the residents that University Church could help to sponsor solar panels for the village. Solar panels would give the people of Saq Ja’ access to electric lighting, which would greatly help students studying at the village school and would be a cleaner source of energy for cooking than wood fires. The Social Justice Committee began a fundraising effort for the solar panels.

In June 2018, the committees were formed that were to plan for the 125th Anniversary Celebration of University Church that would occur in 2019. These committees were the Celebration Committee, the Media and Outreach Committee, and the Stewardship Committee. The Celebration Committee, led by Barb Havens and Almarie Wagner, was tasked with planning the Celebration Weekend to be held in October 2019. The Media and Outreach Committee, led by Lois Snavely and Dorrie Mayfield, was in charge of publicity for the event and sending out invitations. The Stewardship Committee, led by Stephanie Weaver, was in charge of planning a fundraising campaign around commemorating the 125th anniversary. It was decided that the goal would be to try to raise \$125,000 in order to do a comprehensive building assessment and start on the most-needed repairs, to do repairs and maintenance to the Skinner organ and grand piano, to put some funds aside for programming for children and youth, and to install bike racks. A portion of the \$125,000 would also be raised through encouraging members to leave bequests to University Church in their wills and trusts. A class on the importance of having a will or trust was given by lawyer Craig Truitt, who was also the scoutmaster of the Boy Scout troop which continued to meet in the church.

The Sanctuary Cafe and Stories Connect continued in operation, and the Board Minutes reported that in July they had productive meetings with the church staff and felt that their operations would allow them to pay rent on a more regular basis. There were still some ongoing tensions between Sanctuary Café staff and University Church members over the use of the kitchen and balancing the need for sanitary restaurant practices and the church’s need to have access to the kitchen for coffee hour and church events.

In September 2018, Minister Courtney Armento and Minister Antonia Coleman joined University Church as interns.

In September 2018, Sarah Jones and Allen Reynolds began leading classes on Bible literacy that were for children in pre-confirmation ages.

The new Blue Gargoyle became the fiscal agent for Teen Halloween at the Promontory Restaurant, which was the 2018 effort for Halloween to provide a safe place for teens who came into Hyde Park. Over 400 teenagers enjoyed music and activities at the Promontory. However, after the event was over, some of the 4,000+ teens throughout the neighborhood, who were chased by the police, committed acts of vandalism in the community. Several community meetings were hosted at University Church by the Blue Gargoyle to discuss Halloween and how the situation could be improved for 2019.

In October 2018, Jason Carson Wilson, who had been an intern at University Church, was ordained and called by University Church to be a minister of social justice. This call facilitated meeting his ordination requirements. Jason Carson Wilson would continue to work on social justice issues on behalf of the University Church in Washington, DC.

In fall 2018, Life Touch Photography did photos for a new photo directory for University Church. The directory would be ready for the 125th Anniversary Celebration in 2019.

In October 2018, a celebration and fundraiser was held in the Sanctuary Cafe for Margarito's Forest, a children's book written by Andy Carter and illustrated by Allison Havens. The book told the story of Don Margarito, a Guatemalan who helped to preserve his local forest. The book was translated into Spanish and K'iche'. Very few written sources for teaching the Mayan language K'iche' exist, and the fundraising part of the evening, which included the sale of Allison Havens' original illustrations, raised money to send copies of Margarito's Forest to children in Guatemala to help them learn to read in K'iche'.

In October 2018, Dominic Surya, the Board Recording Secretary, made a proposal to the Board that the Mission Partners of University Church, which were defined as groups that relied on University Church because of the long-term investment that University Church had made in them and that supported the broad mission and goals of University Church, would make periodic reports to the Board of University Church. At the time the proposal was made the Mission Partners were Stories Connect and the Sanctuary Café, the new Blue Gargoyle, the Woodlawn Development Association, and the Covenantal Community. These regular reports would help keep the Board better informed about the Mission Partners and allow the Mission Partners more chances to collaborate with the Board and the congregation of University Church.

2019

The year of University Church's 125th Anniversary opened with ongoing plans for the October Anniversary Celebration and plans for the launch of the 125th Anniversary fundraising campaign. Chicago Theological Seminary was reserved for the October Banquet, and save-the-date postcards were sent out with a picture of the church and the theme for the anniversary: "Anchored in the Past, Beacon to the Future." For the celebration weekend, there would be a concert on Friday evening. Saturday morning would have programs at University Church including a reunion of previous church interns and panel discussions. A banquet would be held Saturday evening. Sunday morning would feature a homecoming church service.

The agenda for the monthly Board meetings was redesigned so that only half the committees would report each month. More of the work of the church was expected to be done during committee meetings and not during the Board meetings. Moderator Sarah Jones also proposed that when the bylaws were rewritten (which according to the existing bylaws was supposed to be done in 2018) efforts would be made to make the Board smaller to streamline the meetings. A Finance Committee was formed for the first time in several decades and began to have regular meetings. This committee, which included the chair, treasurer, co-treasurer, financial secretary, housing minister, and trustees, was charged by the bylaws with making financial decisions for the church, including the care of the church building. Having the committees take more of a role in church administration would allow Julian DeShazier to focus more on a pastoral role and spiritual leadership for the congregation.

The Board voted to sponsor Minister Courtney Armento's resolution against domestic and intimate partner violence that was to be presented at the Disciples of Christ General Assembly.

In February 2019, an agent from the City of Chicago came to Sanctuary Café and issued a citation to the café for operating without a business license. It was then discovered that when Stories Connect had applied for a business license for the café in January of 2017, the application had been denied because the church was zoned "residential" and could not house a business. Stories Connect's lease was expiring at the end of March 2019, and University Church decided that in light of the zoning problem and a number of other issues the lease could not be renewed. The Sanctuary Café closed its operations in June of 2019, and the church was again left without a renter for most of its space.

Through the years the structure of the worship service and serving of communion in the service had continued to change. In 2019, communion was served every Sunday in the Sanctuary, but as part of the main service only on the first Sunday of every month and for special celebrations (like Christmas and Easter). On other Sundays, communion was celebrated after the service and led by various ordained members of the congregation and ministerial staff. Staff took responsibility for the set-up before the service and the elements were displayed on the altar during the entire service. Only grape juice was offered, not wine, and intinction was encouraged. A gluten-free option was available for those who asked for it.

Joys and Concerns was preserved as a moment in worship for communal prayer. Announcements were moved to be after the Welcome to try to keep Joys and Concerns as a time for prayer and not for general announcements. The Joys and Concerns were introduced by singing the Taize song "O Lord, Hear My Prayer." Joys were responded to by saying "Thanks be to you, O God" and concerns by "God in your mercy, hear our prayers." The microphone was passed to congregants having joys or concerns instead of having them come up to the microphone as was previously done.

University Church has continued to re-create its own versions of the liturgical year. February has been celebrated as "Black History Month" and "All Souls Day" as "Heritage Sunday." University Church has added celebrations to its liturgical year of Kwanza after Christmas, Martin Luther King Sunday in January, Angola Sunday in February, October's Hispanic Heritage Month with special recognition of Native American traditions, a Guatemalan Sunday, and Mexico's "Día de los Muertos." There has been a new call to make March more related to Women's History Month. Special services outside of Sundays have continued to evolve, for example, a "Longest Night" event instead of a "Blue Christmas" service; a Christmas Eve's Eve pot-luck instead of a Christmas Eve pageant, an Ash Wednesday service during the workday; a "7 Last Words of Christ" by seven seminarians on Good Friday during Holy Week; and a sunrise service on the Point with a breakfast pot-luck at the Church on Easter Sunday morning. Reverend Julian Deshazier has adapted the infant baptism/dedication services to include the elements of salt, vinegar, pepper, oil, and sugar, which symbolize different blessings for the life of the child being baptized.

Adult education classes meeting on Sunday evenings started a series discussing sexuality and theology. On Sunday mornings a Bible study class began to meet before the service and focused mainly on the scripture reading for the day.

In May 2019, the Disciples Divinity House celebrated its 125th anniversary with a gala dinner at the Quadrangle Club. The Disciples Divinity House also unveiled plans for tuckpointing the outside of its building and redesigning the courtyard it shares with University Church for better accessibility. Work on the courtyard started in July 2019. The Sunday morning church service on May 26, 2019, held at University Church brought back many previous church members from across the country for a joyous celebration. This service served as a prelude for University Church's own 125th anniversary celebration in the fall of 2019.

Looking Forward to the Next 125 Years

As University Church celebrates its 125th Anniversary and prepares for the next 125 years, its congregation can be proud of its long legacy as a force for social justice in the world. The church has worked on justice for many who are otherwise ignored by society, whether they are racial minorities, people needing affordable housing, youth, LGBTQ, or immigrants. University Church has been blessed with a beautiful building for worship services and for sharing with the wider community. This sharing of space has included tutoring services; art and music classes; sanctuary for immigrants; meeting space for the Boy Scouts, AA, and other groups; performance space for community groups; space for weddings, ordinations, baptisms, and memorial services; space for other churches and youth groups to meet in; and several different iterations of cafés, including the Blue Gargoyle, Fabiana's Café, and the Sanctuary Cafe. University Church will continue to develop new ways to open its doors during the week to the community and continue to be a "Beacon to the Future" as it continues to share its radically inclusive vision of God's love.