

2013-14

Annual Report



Peoples Church

Unitarian Universalist

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MINISTER'S YEAR END REPORT - REVEREND TOM CAPO

This year I have been working with many of the committees and the Board of the church; I have worked with the Worship Committee, the Values in Action Committee, the Paraministry Team, the Religious Education Council, and the Board of Trustees. In addition, I have worked diligently to represent Peoples Church in the Cedar Rapids community. I have been involved with the Inter-Religious Council, Ethical Perspectives on the News, Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission, the Iowa Abortion Access Fund, the Program Committee at Prairiewoods, Downtown Rotary, and the Blue Zone Committee. And I continue to spend time with local clergy and with the Eastern Iowa Cluster of UU ministers. I have also participated in a clergy spiritual direction group this year. The church hosted the Jesus Seminar on the Road for the second time this year.

I have participated in/attended many activities at Peoples including the Jesus Seminar Book Club, the Foodie Group, and the Humanist Group. I also participated in the Christmas Pageant and in a worship service with the children downstairs.

I also hired Pam Edwards as our new administrator, and she is proving to be a real asset. I have supervised Sarah Stutler, DRE, and seen her growth in leading the RE Council to create a thriving RE program.

I see the people of this church increasingly taking initiative at the church; the painting around the church is a good example of this. Also there are new people joining us every Sunday. The Introduction to Membership Classes have resulted in 7 new members this year.

I have tendered my resignation from Peoples Church due to a call to DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church in Naperville, Illinois. I have grown a great deal as minister with the support of the Peoples Church, and I believe that I have offered some of my gifts and talents to this wonderful congregation. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your minister these past 6 years.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR – PAM EDWARDS

It has been a year of change for the Administrator's position. Mark Hanna resigned in February 2014 and his place was temporarily filled by church friend Barb Pople. I was hired in March 2014. Reverend Capo and many church members have helped me (and are still helping me) to learn about Peoples Church: not only the nuts and bolts of daily administration, but its enduring heart and presence in the community as a model of Unitarian Universalist beliefs. I have been working to restore some procedures that have lapsed, while adding new ones to improve efficiency of operation. Maintaining the soundness of the building is on-going (air-conditioning repairs, new sump pump). So are efforts to save money (replacing individual hand soap pumps with industrial dispensers). The Administrator serves as a repository of church information and I've been exploring ways to keep people in the loop through different forms of communication.

Everyone has been working as a team so the church will be ready to receive our new Interim Minister in August: Reverend Jeff Briere. We are simultaneously sad to see Reverend Tom Capo leave for his new church, while looking forward to a new phase in the life of Peoples Church with Reverend Jeff Briere.

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - SARAH STUTLER

This year the RE program offered summer programming. In July the DRE led a Cosmic Walk Workshop open to the whole congregation at Prairiewoods. The workshop was attended by 18 people. Everyone enjoyed the event, turkeys, deer and a group at the sweat house added to the ambiance as class participants played hand held drums and percussion instruments and walked the Cosmic Trail. Sister Betty also addressed the group and Don White, Vice President of Renew Iowa led us on a tour of the renewable energy system at Prairiewoods after the walk.

At the end of July the RE program sponsored another church-wide Spiritual Development event, SpiritFest. This event was an overnight camping retreat with workshops, meals, Sunrise Yoga, a Full Moon Circle and more. The event was held on the property of Sue Davis and Jerry Oydgard in the Amanas. It was a wonderful event culminating with an outdoor pancake breakfast and on-site Sunday Worship Service led by Reverend Tom Capo.

August 18th the annual RE sponsored Congregational Taco Bar and Parent/Teacher Orientation were held after Service. A new Teaching Team Model was presented as well as the SpiritPlay curriculum was introduced. The teachers and families were very excited by the Curriculum Trainings and new classroom arrangements and materials. The Pre-K Story Book program enrichments, Introduction of K-2 SpiritPlay, 3-5 Guided With Love, New Middle School Coming of Age and Compass Points, High School RE and the new High School Wednesday Night Youth Group, the new 3-5 classroom and Children's and Youth Library all generated great enthusiasm.

RE classes and High School Youth group started on September 8 the new Service time and RE time has been implemented. The model includes all the children in the entire service with the DRE and Reverend Tom Capo coordinating cross-generational activities within the service.

In October the RE program offered two Our Whole Lives programs and High School Youth Group on Wednesday nights. The High School Youth Group sponsored meals to help support the families attending Wednesday Night programs. The High School students were able to attend a production of Jesus Christ Super Star at Theater Cedar Rapids as an enrichment to their Movies With Meanings Curriculum. The RE program co-sponsored the Chili Cook-Off and Halloween Party.

The Holiday Pageant auditions were held and over twenty five members of the congregation tried out for parts. The RE children participated in two large downstairs RE worship services; the Acorn Service and the Cornucopia Service where they participated in baking Bread Dough Cornucopias as a service project for the Willis Dady Center. The Coming of Age students also did a class Service project of Leaf Raking and Yard Cleanup for members of the congregation. High School Students attended Def Con in Des Moines and a Nursery Staff training was held.

December and January included the Peoples Church Youth sponsoring a Unitarian Universalist Christmas tree at Summit Pointe Residential Center in Marion. Another original DRE written and Directed Holiday Pageant, "The UU Nightmare Before Christmas". The High School students sponsored the Holiday Pageant Pancake Brunch and the Coming of Age students sold RE 2014 Calendars to raise funds for the Boston and Chicago UU Heritage and Service trips.

In February RE students participated in large group fellowship building activities. And the Second Annual RE Mardi Gras was a roaring success, 1920's style with the debut of The Bourbon Street SpeakEasy complete with Flappers, a 1920's live piano entertainment and a Black Jack Dealer.

In March the High School and Middle School students worked together on the Coming of Age Service. The RE students created Seed Bombs as a service project and volunteered to work at the Peoples Church booth at EcoFest. The Seed Bombs were a great success. The DRE also coordinated volunteers for the Congregational Photo Directory.

In April the RE Program hosted the Annual Easter Egg Hunt and Children's activities, this year RE sponsored Easter Bunny photos for congregational members and the children sang during the Prelude at Service. The DRE completed a Reiki 1 training program and attended two events as a representative of Peoples Church, Building Inclusive Communities and Marion Blue Zones Food Environment Seminar.

The High School youth and Youth Advisers went to Boston in May and the DRE attended a Renaissance training on UU Identity. The RE Council and the DRE participated in a staff review process. In June the Coming of Age Middle School students and teachers will be going on a UU History and Service trip to Chicago.

Overall there were 39 families and 69 youth registered in the program. The Pre-K weekly attendance average was 6.0 with a peak attendance of 10. The K-2 weekly attendance was 8.2 with a peak attendance of 11. The 3-5 weekly attendance average was 7.7 with a peak attendance of 14. The Middle School attendance average was 5.4 with a peak attendance of 9. And, the High School weekly attendance average was 4.5 with a peak attendance of 6. Attendance overall averaged 31.3 youth. Adults participating averaged 13.2 with a peak of 16. Nursery utilization on Sundays averaged 3.6 with a peak of 9.

The DRE wishes to thank Peoples Church for a wonderful and meaningful year in service.

VAN VECHTEN GUILD – ANN WOODWARD

The Van Vechten Guild met monthly on second Mondays from September through June, except for January. Attendance averaged 15, with 25 at our May meeting. Programs included discussion on the Blue Zone Project, History of the Van Vechten Family, and “The Meaning of Life.” Special presentations included Zuiko Redding from the CR Zen Center, and Miyoko Hikiji, author of the book, All I Could Be: My Story as a Woman Warrior in Iraq. Social meetings included a cookie exchange at Christmas, silver polishing for the Van Vechten Centennial event, and a summer potluck yet to be held on June 9th.

The Guild’s treasury balance at the end of the year is \$1806.51. A profit of \$537.20 was made with pecan sales. Major expenses were centennial costs (\$400), and payment of the 2014 VVG \$500 church pledge plus an additional \$300.00 donation.

The Guild celebrated its centennial with a wonderful service and high coffee on May 4th, which was well attended. All in all, a very good year for the Guild, with increased membership, good attendance, and interesting programs.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Woodward, President

WORSHIP ASSOCIATES – SCOTT MANSFIELD

The worship associates are Scott Mansfield, Bryan Davis, Robyn Miessler-Kubanek, Maria Kell, Kathleen Watson, Joseph Watson, Lance Maynard, Deb Maynard, and Martha Capo. Each Sunday we provide the opening announcements, Chalice lighting, and Offertory words. We sometimes helped out with the sermon as well. Once a month, the Worship associates are responsible for the entire service. And during June and July we are responsible for all the services. This summer we will be responsible for services in August as well.