

UNITED CHURCH  
**columbine**  
*Changing the Way People See God*

**2015-2016**

Annual Report

May 15, 2016

Columbine United Church  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); United Church of Christ;  
United Methodist Church

6375 South Platte Canyon Road  
Littleton, Colorado 80123  
Phone: (303) 798-1845 Fax: (303) 798-1097  
Email: [cuc@columbinechurch.org](mailto:cuc@columbinechurch.org)  
Home Page: [www.columbinechurch.org](http://www.columbinechurch.org)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
**May 15, 2016 Annual Congregational Meeting**

Agenda.....	1
Minutes of May 17, 2015 Annual Congregational Meeting .....	2
Treasurer’s Report .....	4
Nominating Committee Report .....	9
Annual Reports from Staff	
Pastor and Head of Staff – Steve Poos-Benson .....	10
Executive Pastor – Justin Spurlock .....	11
Annual Reports from Council	
Council President – Andy Sexton .....	17
Clerk – Jeannie Kiel.....	18
Generosity-Stewardship – Marie Schreiber .....	20
Next Generation – Aimee Crispin .....	21
Mission – Susan Markley .....	22
Care & Nurture – Betsy Rehling .....	24
Adult Education – Russ Jackson .....	25
Worship Committee – John Hausman .....	27

# **COLUMBINE UNITED CHURCH**

## **2016 Annual Congregational Meeting**

May 15, 2016 – 9:00AM

### **AGENDA**

- I. Call Meeting to Order – Andy Sexton
  - A. Appointment of Parliamentarian
  - B. Establish Quorum – Jeannie Kiel
- II. Opening Prayer – Steve Poos-Benson
- III. Approval of May 17, 2015 Minutes  
& November 29, 2015 Minutes
- IV. Treasurer’s Report
  - A. Financial Report for 2015-2016 – Jay Haworth
  - B. Q&A – Justin Spurlock
- V. Approval of Budget for 2016-2017 – Andy Sexton
- VI. Nominating Committee Report – Justin Spurlock
- VII. Election of Council, Boards, and Committees – Andy Sexton
- VIII. Recognition of Outgoing Elected Officers – Justin Spurlock
- IX. Approval of By-Laws Revisions – Janet McIllece
- X. State of the Church - Pastors
- XI. Closing Prayer – Justin Spurlock
- XII. Adjourn the Annual Meeting – Janet McIllece

Columbine United Church  
Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting  
May 17, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Richard Boorum at 9:38 a.m. It was established that there was a quorum. Rev. Dr. Steve Poos-Benson gave an opening prayer.

Motion was made to appoint Terri Townsend parliamentarian for the meeting. Motion carried.

The minutes of the annual congregational meeting from May 18, 2014 were submitted for approval. A motion was made and seconded to approve. Motion carried.

**Financial Report and Budget Presentation**

A financial report was given by Lee Ann Smith, the church's Business Manager. We had budgeted to spend \$750,000 but we actually spend \$719,000. We have an excess of \$3,808.

**2016 Budget Proposal**

It is again a balanced budget. We are using our weekly revenue for the past year to define our budget. We have reinstated program budgets. We have increased the Wilder Preschool lease. We have provided a salary increase. We will maintain our current staffing. We will be working at a budget of \$764,316.

Following is a brief table showing the revenue and expense comparisons for the past two fiscal years along with the FY2016 proposed budget.

	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016 Proposed
Revenue	738,827	723,519	764,316
Expenses	765,986	719,711	764,316
+/-	(27,159)	3,808	0

It was moved and seconded that the proposed budget be accepted as presented in the annual report. The motion carried.

**Apportionment/Per Capita**

CUC will begin this. Denominations charge us per person. We have a lot of people that are not strongly involved in the church. This apportionment will help lower our membership. This will lower our benevolence line item in the budget. This is not to raise pledges. If you already give a minimum of \$67 per member per household, then this is covered. There are considerations for those under twenty-five years old, in a nursing home, etc. Letters will be sent out to members explaining this. There will be a waiver form to turn in. Those people not attending for one year will be moved to inactive in the rolls.

**Membership**

We will add a third type of membership to our rolls: Affiliate Members. These people cannot become full status members of CUC. They may come to us as a lifelong member to another religion or church. For whatever reason, they have chosen not to become full status members of CUC. They attend regularly and have a strong presence at CUC. They will be eligible to participate on committees. Because they are not full status members, they will not be counted toward benevolences. We want to acknowledge those who participate but aren't members.

## **Year in Review**

**Terri Townsend** This has been a year of transition; our staff works hard to make these work. We have a small staff that work very hard but very well together. We need to thank them for all of their work. Our finances have been tricky. There is a lot of saving through Lee Ann and a lot of giving through the congregation. Pledging just doesn't work well. We are trying to find a balance. The Business Plan is moving forward. We are looking at Pods and Hubs, what the church will look like in the future, what it will do. Justin created the Business Plan. He created a road map to move into the future. Justin also wrote several grants. This is tricky work. We have received \$12,000 in grants. There is a lot going on. All members are welcome to come to Council meetings.

## **Nominating Committee Recommendations**

Tim James presented the following recommendations from the Nominating committee for various committee and council vacancies. These are as follows:

Terri Townsend becomes Past President, Andy Sexton becomes Council President

Janet McIllece is nominated for President Elect of Council

Jay Haworth is nominated for Treasurer

Marie Schreiber is nominated for Generosity Chair

Jerry Koepke is nominated for Member at Large

Craig Monroe is nominated for Member at Large

Marianne Andres is nominated to the Human Resource committee

Tom Bury is nominated to the Finance Committee

Major Seaton and Susan Smith are nominated to the Nominating Committee

Anne Prather is nominated to the Congregational Care Committee

The committee still needs to fill the position Education/Next Gen Committee Chair.

There were no nominations from the floor.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the nomination for council. Motion carried.

A motion was made to approve nomination for the Human Resource Committee. Motion carried.

**Rev. Spurlock recognized all outgoing council members.** They are Brooke Wagner and Sam Noyes (Member at Large), Ken and Heather Beckey (Generosity), Kris Bartuska and Stephanie Townsend (Education/Next Gen), Rick Hinn (Treasurer), Jeff Steffen, Barbara Cable and Bev Blake (Nominating), Lindsey DeBolt (Human Resource), Dwight Rudolph (Finance) and Richard Boorom (Past President). Justin thanked each one for their work the past three years and presented everyone with a plaque of service recognition.

There being no further business to come before the congregation, it was moved, seconded and approved that the meeting be adjourned.

The meeting was closed by a prayer by Rev. Justin Spurlock at 10:33 a.m.

**ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT**  
**YEAR ENDING APRIL 30, 2016**

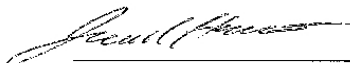
The attached sheets are the Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2016.

- STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES, INCLUDING DESIGNATED FUND STATUS AND FY2017 ANNUAL BUDGET
- BALANCE SHEET
- RESERVE FUND TRANSACTIONS
- BENEVOLENCE & MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS

Highlights

- \$101,111 was distributed to Denominational, Local Outreach and Global Mission giving, a 30% increase over last year's giving.
- Pledges and identified giving received were \$670,350 versus a budget of \$687,477.
- Total Revenue was \$780,771 vs a budget of \$764,316.
- Expenses were \$780,771 vs a budget of \$764,316.
- There is no excess of receipts over expenses for the fiscal year.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jay Haworth, Treasurer  
James

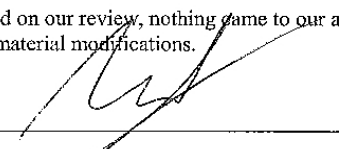
5/12/16  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

---

**FINANCIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT**

The undersigned member(s) of the Financial Review Committee have reviewed the books and records of Columbine United Church for the twelve months ending April 30, 2016, and have performed certain tests thereon.

Based on our review, nothing came to our attention that would indicate the financial statements as presented require any material modifications.


By  \_\_\_\_\_

By  \_\_\_\_\_

Date 2016-05-11

Date 5-11-2016

To the best of my knowledge, the attached financial statements fairly represent the economic activity for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2016. I am not aware of any circumstances that should be disclosed to the Financial Review Committee or require modification to the underlying financial records.

By   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lee Ann Smith, Business Manager

Date 5/11/16

## Statement of Receipts and Expenses

	Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 2015	Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 2016		Fiscal Year 2016-2017
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget
<b>Receipts</b>				
Pledges, Contributions, and Identified Giving	672,195	670,350	687,477	704,939
Plate Contributions	11,876	12,794	10,347	10,712
Investment Income	8,562	(2,411)	4,000	0
Miscellaneous	13,042	10,363	12,900	12,900
Grocery Coupons	5,879	5,010	5,408	6,284
Breakfast Contributions	11,965	8,889	12,173	11,996
Funded from Reserves	0	75,775	32,011	14,499
<b>Total Receipts and Revenue</b>	<b>723,519</b>	<b>780,771</b>	<b>764,316</b>	<b>761,330</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Staff Expenses	513,242	559,662	547,260	558,735
Operational Expenses	101,689	100,816	97,980	92,424
Programs - Adult Christian Education	0	0	0	500
Programs - Breakfast	9,125	9,411	8,500	8,500
Programs - Care and Support	186	98	500	500
Programs - Childrens Ministry	0	3,000	3,000	5,500
Programs - Fellowship	3,640	2,656	3,500	3,000
Programs - Membership	222	243	500	500
Programs - Music	0	8,500	8,500	8,500
Programs - Prayer Shawl	0	0	700	0
Programs - Senior Ministry	0	0	0	500
Programs - Worship	254	2,436	1,700	6,700
Programs - Youth	<u>9,640</u>	<u>10,773</u>	<u>9,000</u>	<u>9,000</u>
Total Programs	23,067	37,118	35,900	43,200
<b>Total Ordinary Expenses</b>	<b>637,998</b>	<b>697,596</b>	<b>681,140</b>	<b>694,359</b>
Denomination Support	37,925	38,867	38,867	21,870
Missions Support	40,098	40,868	40,868	41,662
<b>Total Benevolences</b>	<b>78,023</b>	<b>79,735</b>	<b>79,736</b>	<b>63,532</b>
Technology	3,690	3,440	3,440	3,440
<b>Grand Total Expenses</b>	<b>719,711</b>	<b>780,771</b>	<b>764,316</b>	<b>761,330</b>
<b>Excess of Receipts over Expenses</b>	<b>3,808</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>(0)</b>

### Designated Fund Balances

Adult Education	\$ 119
Building & Grounds	20,323
Congregational Care	3,663
Children's Ministry	1,731
Endowments	45,979
Generosity/Stewardship	1,571
Missions	14,087
Music	9,519
Office & Accounting	41,732
Outreach & Marketing	14,707
Pastors	2,711
Reserves	189,887
Worship	1,805
Youth	3,150
<b>Total Designated Funds</b>	<b>\$ 350,986</b>

**Balance Sheet**  
**April 30, 2016**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<b>Bank Accounts</b>	
Vectra Bank Checking	25,259
Vectra Bank Savings	410
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>	<b>25,669</b>
 <b>Investments</b>	
Charles Schwab	273,246
Presbyterian Foundation	39,248
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>312,494</b>
Petty Cash Funds	817
Grocery Coupon Stock	1,020
Prepaid General Insurance	2,715
Prepaid Health Insurance	8,388
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b><u>351,103</u></b>
 <b>Liabilities and Designated Funds</b>	
Program Designated Funds	101,331
Mission Funds	14,087
Endowment Funds	45,979
Reserve Funds	189,897
Payroll Taxes	771
Accounts Payable	(962)
Accrued Liabilities	0
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b><u>351,103</u></b>



## Reserve Fund Transactions for Fiscal Year 2016

### General Reserve Fund

Date	Explanation	Increase	Decrease	Balance
5/1/2015	Opening Balance			107,690
5/1/2015	FY2015 Surplus	3,808		111,498
3/31/2016	Utilize Matching Campaign Funds		25,311	86,187

In 2004 the Finance Committee determined that the minimum level for the General Reserve fund should be 10% of the year's total budget. In FY2017 the total budget will be \$761,330, so the FY2017 target for the General Reserve Fund is approximately \$76,100.

### Cell Tower Sale Reserve Fund

Date	Explanation	Increase	Decrease	New Balance
5/1/2015	Opening Balance			139,319
4/30/2016	Utilize 3 years (FY2014, 2015, 2016) of Lease Payments		37,500	101,819
4/30/2016	Utilize Year 4 (FY2017) Lease Payment		12,965	88,854

The Cell Tower in the church's steeple, leased by Cricket Wireless and owned by CUC, was sold to Crown Castle during FY2014. The sale allows CUC to benefit from future establishment of other towers on the church property. The lease payments from Cricket were \$12,500 per year at the time of the sale.

### Copier Replacement Fund

Date	Explanation	Increase	Decrease	New Balance
5/1/2015	Opening Balance			10,698.91
4/30/2016	Closing Balance			10,698.91

The Copier Fund is reserved for replacing the major copiers and printers as they wear out.

### Technology Replacement Fund

Date	Explanation	Increase	Decrease	New Balance
5/1/2015	Opening Balance			2,704.26
FY2016	Monthly setasides at \$286.67/month	3,440.04		6,144.30
FY2016	Computer Purchases & Replacements		1,264.83	4,879.47
FY2016	Software Purchases		214.30	4,665.17
FY2016	Website Renovation		508.06	4,157.11

The Technology Fund is reserved for replacing technological items within the church building, as well as computers and associated items for the staff.

## FY2016 Benevolence and Mission Contributions

(amounts paid directly by the church from benevolences, donations, or memorial funds)

<u>Organization or Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Bessie's Hope	\$ 3,082
Church World Service	875
Colorado Haiti Project	300
Common Hope (Guatemala)	720
CROP Walk for Hunger	250
Denver Inner City Parish	2,400
HAAT Force (South Metro Homelessness)	4,555
El Porvenir (Nicaragua Water Project)	900
Family Promise	4,210
Heifer Project	1,200
Inter Faith Community Services	4,324
Just Coffee (Café' Justo)	530
Littleton Meals on Wheels	3,600
Loaves and Fishes / Habitat for Humanity	3,445
Love INC	1,200
Mission Trips	6,947
National Multiple Sclerosis Society	600
Network Coffee House	1,800
Presbytery of Denver (Benevolence and Directed Giving)	14,009
Rocky Mountain Stroke Center	225
Second Wind Fund	10,766
Serving Kids	3,555
The Action Center	3,600
United Church of Christ (Benevolence and Directed Giving)	14,009
United Methodist Church (Benevolence and Directed Giving)	14,009
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$ 101,111</u></b>

## Nominating Report 2016-2017

\*Highlighted positions are being presented for election

Position	Current Person	Term Ends
Council		
Past President	Andy Sexton	May 2017 (2017)
President	Janet McIllece	May 2017 (2018)
President-Elect	Jerry Clayton	May 2017 (2019)
Secretary/Clerk	Jane Jackson	May 2019
Treasurer/Board of P&F	Jay Haworth	May 2018
Board of Staff Parish Relations Chair	Carrie Rice	May 2017
Board of Ministry & Missions Chair	Lorraine Hesselbach	May 2019
Member-At-Large (B of M&M)	Jerry Koepke	May 2018
Member-At-Large (B of P&F)	Craig Monroe	May 2017
Board of Ministry & Missions Chair	Lorraine Hesselbach	May 2019
Past President	Andy Sexton	May 2017
Council Member at Large	Jerry Koepke	May 2018
Adult Ed Chair	Russ Jackson	May 2017
Next Generations Chair	Aimee Crispin	May 2018
Worship Chair	John Hausman	May 2017
Congregational Care Chair	Anne Prather	May 2019
Missions Chair	Susan Markley	May 2017
Connections Chair	Fred Mahe	May 2018
Marketing & Outreach Chair	Todd Rice	May 2018
Fellowship & Involvement Chair	Tom Rehling	May 2019
Hubs & Pods Chair	TBD	May 2019
Board of Staff Parish Relations Chair	Carrie Rice	May 2017
Past President	Andy Sexton	May 2017 (2017)
President	Janet McIllece	May 2017 (2018)
President-Elect	Jerry Clayton	May 2017 (2019)
Member	Marianne Andres	May 2018
Member	Clay Hollandsworth	May 2019
Board of Property & Finance (Administration) Chair	Jay Haworth	May 2018
President-Elect	Jerry Clayton	May 2019
Council Member at Large	Craig Monroe	May 2017
Finance Chair	Laura James	May 2017
Stewardship Chair	Marie Schreiber	May 2018
Property Chair	Jack Dunn	May 2019
Nominating Committee Member	Major Seaton	May 2017
Member	Mel Roghair	May 2018
Member	Dena Way	May 2017
Member	Lindie Woodruff	May 2018
Council Appointee	From Council	May 2017

**Annual Report**  
**Steve Poos-Benson**  
**Senior Pastor**

What an amazing year it has been, both professionally and personally.

In some ways I look back and think, “Wow, I never hope to have another year like that,” yet, the lessons that I learned were deep and profound.

I learned first-hand the power of the grief process in the wake of my father’s death. I experienced first-hand your love, support and grace as you walked with me.

I learned how delicate things are. I learned what kinds of things we count on to live and communicate. When I lost my voice, I felt like I had lost a part of myself. I found it humbling, and exasperating to open my mouth and wonder what type of sound my vocal chords would make. Again, your patience has inspired me to keep on working. My voice feels strong again thanks to the help of our own Jeff Steffen and the vocal exercises he’s taught me.

One of the great joys of working at CUC is our church staff. Our Executive Pastor Justin has performed in amazing ways. Not only is he an excellent administrator, visionary, preacher, teacher and worship leader, he’s a great colleague and friend. Mitch Samu stays by my side week in and week out. We all enjoy his inspiring music and leadership; behind the scenes, we love his warmth, smile and friendship. Lee Ann has kept us balanced in all things financial, Dot and Josie keep the office humming, Tag keeps the place green and clean, and Katie and Carla have the children and youth growing in their faith. Rev. Jane Ritterson has been an excellent addition to the staff. Her depth of experience, warmth, and love of people have made her invaluable to all of us.

The church council this past year has thrived. President Andy Sexton led the group through considerable change. We’re actively implementing a new council structure that will increase involvement, communication and vision.

One of my passions is Adult Education. I’ve found a great joy watching our adult program take off and thrive. Everything from Sunday morning Adult Education, Advanced Spirituality, Tuesday’s Faith Forum, visiting speakers, special classes, a visit to a mosque, and the Men’s group, have empowered people in their faith development. I’ve been excited by the addition of our Advocacy committee. They’ve sponsored programs that have opened our eyes to the social and political dimension of congregational life. Their current year-long series on relationship violence is promoting my goal of civility. I encourage all of you to take advantage of these many classes and opportunities to grow.

One of the most intriguing additions to the church’s programming has been our Fresh Worship service. Jane Ritterson and I have created Fresh as an interfaith worship celebration held on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Susan Smith leads us in an hour of yoga. Following yoga, we transition to our service where we explore the many dimensions of spiritual practices from other religions. It’s not required to do yoga to come to Fresh. Yoga is an inspiring interfaith spiritual dimension that is a stand-alone experience. If yoga isn’t something you enjoy, then join us at 7:30 for the service. Following each service, we enjoy a wine and cheese fellowship time. It truly is a *Fresh* experience.

Working at CUC is a constant source of joy and meaning. We really do change the way people think about God and Christ. I know that my thinking continually grows and changes. I hope we inspire you to do the same.

As always, it’s a blessing to serve as your Pastor.

## **Executive Pastor Report 2016**

### **Rev. Justin Spurlock**

Five years! It's been five years since you called me to be one of your pastors. It has been a privilege, a blessing, and a pleasure to lead and serve among you during these years. I'm excited for what we will do together as we look toward the future. This past year of my ministry has been dedicated to the future of CUC as I have worked to 1) create a better governing structure 2) put into place a more effective way of doing stewardship, and 3) put together new teams of people who are intentional in marketing and outreach, connecting with our visitors, and reaching out in new ways to people beyond the walls of CUC. All of this has been accomplished with the help, time, and energy of our staff, amazing volunteers, and fantastic teams and committees.

### **Thank-You**

I want to thank our Council President, Andy Sexton, for leading and facilitating Council and the leadership of CUC. His leadership allowed our CUC Council to tackle issues with ease, grace, and a great amount of discernment. Thanks for leading CUC during the past 12 months!

### **Growth & Energy**

Have you noticed the surge in attendance at both worship services over the past several months? The 8:00 a.m. Traditional Service is averaging 90-100 in worship almost every week. The 10:00 a.m. Contemporary Service is packing out the sanctuary and the overflow seating in the Narthex. We are having parking problems due to the number of people in worship at 10:00 a.m.! It took about 6 months for our congregation to realign from three worship services to only two worship services. Now that realignment is taking place, we are seeing a surge of growth! Having two worship services allowed us to create a dedicated Adult Education time on Sunday mornings. We are seeing more adults in our classes than ever before. Not only has it increased adult education on Sunday mornings, but we are also seeing an increase in weekday and weeknight classes as well. Last year, we received multiple grants (approximately \$20,000) from the Presbyterians and United Methodists for our Neighboring Hubs initiative – our program to come alongside clusters of CUC individuals and families to serve and minister in real life (where faith and life meet!). Our first phase has focused on Wilder Elementary. Over the past 9 months, we have found several ways to serve the teachers, staff, parents, and students of Wilder Elementary alongside our CUC families who have children attending there. We have served coffee and donuts to parents as they drop their kids off at school in the mornings. We provided teacher survival kits for every Wilder Elementary teacher to offer encouragement and support as they went through Parent-Teacher Conference week. We hosted a Parents Night Out during December to give Wilder Elementary parents a chance to go out on a date or finish up last minute Christmas shopping (we saw about 50 Wilder kids that night). Finally, we provided a Teacher & Staff appreciation lunch in February where we saw almost every Wilder staff member and teacher come through our doors to have a catered lunch. A huge thanks to Barb Rudolf for coordinating these efforts!

Have you noticed that Pastor Jane is incredible? The Rev. Jane Ritterson came on staff in May 2015 and has been busy calling you, visiting you, and providing needed pastoral care throughout the congregation. Her energy, effort, and leadership is improving CUC's capability and capacity of doing amazing pastoral care for our congregation.

Our Marketing & Outreach committee started last Fall and they have quickly made a huge impact on CUC – and all of their efforts have been without a dedicated budget! We are seeing new faces come through our doors on Sunday mornings, and finding established individuals coming to events that they have never attended before.

I hope you have noticed the streamlining and better communications of our Missions and Service ministries and programs over the past year. We want to give a huge thanks to Susan Markley, our Chair, and the entire committee, for their efforts to strategically align and streamline our various mission ministry efforts. You will continue to see this major transformation take place during the next 12 months, as well!

## **Attracting Millennials**

Many of you want to know, “How are we doing at reaching Millennials, and what are we going to do to reach more Millennials?” It is important to define the age range of a Millennial (as they are getting older, just like all of us!). Millennials are approximately 20-35 years old! Just a decade ago, most Millennials were teenagers or in college. Now, they are growing up, getting married and having kids. What does that mean for us? Littleton and the surrounding counties are popular places for young married couples with very young kids to move to. In fact, Littleton is the second most popular city in the nation for married Millennials to move. With Millennial social values skewing more progressive and open, CUC finds itself in a prime place to attract Millennial families – think Millennials in their late 20s and early 30s who are married and starting to have kids. These are the new residents moving into our neighborhoods. Neither Littleton nor CUC are set up to target Millennial singles. But with some small tweaks and pivots in worship and programs, we can do very well with Millennial Parents with kids. Usually the search for a church starts with some type of crisis in their lives – moving across the country, starting a new job, a death in the family, or having your first child. This is still very true of Millennials! It will be important for us to identify these various crises and be able to provide important ministries and programs that will address their longings and losses.

We have much work to do to reach out and to keep the Millennials that visit CUC. CUC’s ministry model, programs, and worship style are very much centered on Baby Boomers. We will need to make adjustments to our Sunday worship services and our core programs if we hope to keep a large number of our Millennial visitors. It will be important that we do this in a way that doesn’t alienate other generations. We must pivot in a way that creates a Sunday morning and programmatic experience that works for all of our demographic groups.

## **Organizational Goals for 2016-2017**

We have several organizational goals for CUC over the next year. These goals will allow us to better align CUC with our long-term strategic plan and vision.

### **Goal 1: (Re)Organize & Align**

Over the past two years, CUC’s Staff, Leadership Team, and Council have focused on a Strategic Business plan for the next 5-10 years. Part of this plan required new leadership structures, processes, and procedures for doing ministry. The first part of this strategic alignment has been reorganizing our governing structure – our committees and boards. This past Fall, our Council voted to change how we organize our Council and Committees, and added three new Boards so that CUC’s Council can focus on high level decisions – vision, strategy, major organizational decisions, and major crises. The organizational chart is included at the end of this report. Under the Council, are three Boards – 1) a Board of Ministry & Mission that most of the Committee Chairs will be members of, 2) a Board of Staff Parish Relations that will work on the development, support and encouragement of the staff and managing the relationship between the staff and the congregation, and 3) a Board of Property and Finance that will focus on the administrative aspects of our finances, stewardship, security, technologic infrastructure, and our building and property. Under each of these boards will be our current committees and several new committees. We are shifting and spreading various levels of authority to make decisions across this new organizational structure so that committees that are on the front-lines and closer to the actions of ministry will be empowered to make decisions, rather than most decisions having to be made by Council. The new model requires more leaders. By bringing more individuals into the leadership structure, we should create greater buy-in to the vision and strategic plans of CUC. The next phases our reorganization and realignment will focus on 1) bringing our ministries and programs in alignment with our strategic plan, and 2) reshaping our staff to be focused on our new strategic priorities, goals, and objectives.

### **Goal 2: Thriving Attendance**

As mentioned above, we currently average about 300 total at our Sunday morning worship services. The last few months have seen about 320 in attendance. But, the summer attendance slump is coming and will bring that average back down. We would like to grow our weekly average worship attendance to 400+. In order to do that, we must grow at a 6% rate per year. Here is what that looks like:

- Year 1 – additional 18 on average in worship
- Year 2 – additional 19 on average in worship
- Year 3 – additional 20 on average in worship
- Year 4 – additional 22 on average in worship

All of this is easily achievable if we can make several investments and pivots in how we are currently doing ministry. We need to invest money in Marketing & Outreach. We need to give greater attention to visitor hospitality and follow-up. We must create clear paths for new visitors to connect with people like you in the congregation and get involved in our ministries, programs, and groups. We have increased our New Member classes from 1-2x per year to 3x per year to accommodate the increase in new members. We would like to have enough new members to increase classes to 4x-5x per year.

#### Goal 3: Succession Planning & Risk Taking

Steve retires in 8 years! Those eight years will fly by. I have already been here for 5 years. Can you believe that – 5 years have flown by! It is rare for a congregation to have a Pastor for 30+ years. It provides significant benefits and strengths. However, there is one big draw back – planning for their succession! Over the past year, our Mission Study Team was tasked with studying our major staff needs for the next 5-10 years. Their biggest conclusion – we must plan for Steve’s retirement and succession and that must begin now. We have several projects that become riskier the closer we get to his retirement. That means we must take any major organizational risks between today and 2020, as we will not want to take major risks in the year or two before his retirement. Over the next year, several groups will be working together to consider various succession plans, as well as a number of organizational actions that need to be taken and completed during the next 5 years.

#### Goal 4: Building & Property

For the past year, Lee Ann Smith and I have met with a building consultant. Council also met the building consultant last Fall. The consultant gave our Council the assignment of visiting area churches to look at their buildings and spaces, and how those spaces were used, in order to better understand potential spaces that we might want to renovate or build. Our council members visited about a dozen churches in the area. Our next step is to figure out the "why" of our building - what capabilities and capacities do we need in a building to achieve our 10-year goals. Then we will meet with the consultant again and move to the bid and contracting phase. Another key decision that will need to be made over the next year is how much should we spend. If we want to make MAJOR renovations and additions, then costs could easily run from \$1 Million to \$2 Million. If we choose to mostly do upkeep and minor remodeling, then we can probably keep the costs to about \$500,000. Additionally, we could consider becoming a “multisite church” where our South Platte/Christiansen Lane campus is our primary campus and base of operations, but we also utilize 1-3 other locations around the area for potential places to expand. We could potentially develop multiple worship services happening simultaneously during the prime Sunday morning worship window (starting times between 9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m).

#### **2016-2017 Budget Preparation**

The CUC Staff, Finance Committee, and Council worked very hard to create the annual budget for this upcoming fiscal year. Our Business Manager, Lee Ann Smith, put in many long hours to get us to the point where we are today in presenting it to you. However, due to our financial situation, there are significant budget lines missing as a result of a lack of funds and these missing items could dramatically affect our ability to thrive over the next year.

- We saved approximately \$30,000 over last year in decreased costs. We cleaned our membership rolls this past year – moving approximately 350 members to the inactive rolls. This saves us approximately \$17,000 that we would have owed our three denominations. In addition, we changed insurance and liability providers saving CUC approximately \$6,000. Other miscellaneous expenses were decreased as well.
- Approximately \$70,000 of new or increased program, staff, building, or administrative costs were

proposed and requested for the year. However, almost all of them cannot be funded due to lack of revenue.

- Currently, raises for pastors and staff are not included in the budget.
- We need to make several investments in technology, environmental projection, and lighting for Sunday morning worship. We are currently unable to include these needed expenditures in the budget.
- We need to create a Marketing & Outreach budget with a minimum of \$3,000 in order to reach out and attract new visitors of all ages. Currently, we are unable to include this in the budget.
- Over the past year, we have greatly benefited from the sanctuary décor skills of Barry Brown – during Easter and Christmas! We want to add similar elements to worship during other seasons of the church year such as Lent and Pentecost. We need an additional \$3,000 - \$4,000 for these efforts.
- Virtual Columbine – 80% of the people who watch our weekly sermon videos and listen to our podcasts are people just like you! You, as the members of CUC often will re-watch a sermon or check out a podcast when you missed a Sunday. Only about 20% of our video and podcast traffic comes from individuals outside of the metro area. What we are finding is that when you are away, you connect with us virtually via social media and videos. As this becomes more of a trend, it is important for us to add a staff member who can turn all of our in-person content (sermons, prayers, and classes) into useable material for social media and the web. The approximate cost to begin making upgrades and improvements is about \$7,500.

### **CUC Staff**

We have an incredible staff. It is a very lean staff, and our staff as a whole is efficient, profoundly talented, and asked to give more time and energy than comparable staff of other congregations of this size. Our current staff is maxed out on what they can accomplish. Nevertheless, our strategic business plan charts out a path for more effective ministry, thriving programs, and church growth. Without the ability to adequately compensate our staff, bring on additional part-time and full-time staff, and at the very least, increase hours for some of our hourly staff members, we will be unable to achieve many of our goals over the next year. We know from experience and from research that a church that is not growing is in decline. The following are current realities with which we must contend over the next year:

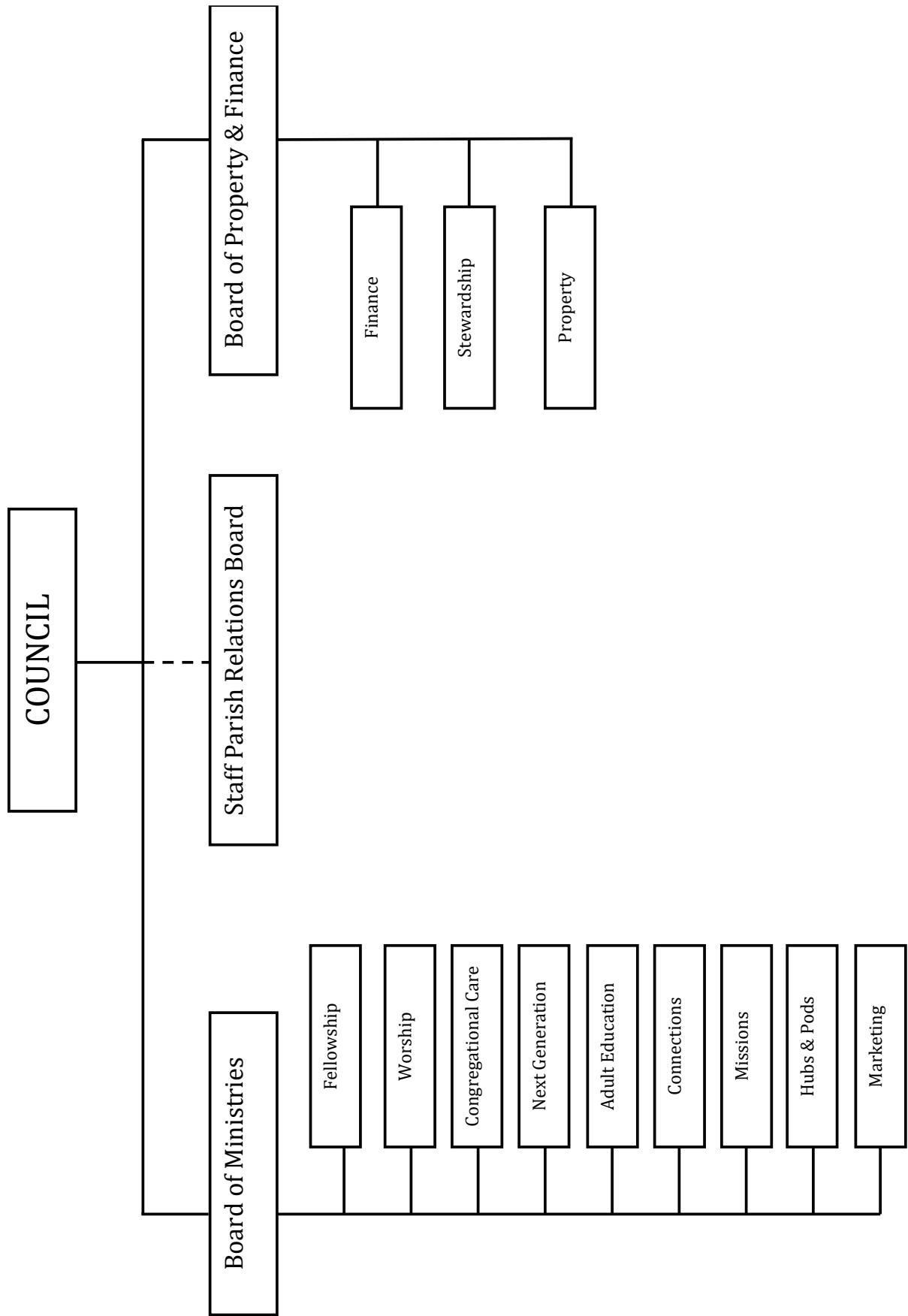
- If we cannot increase hours of some current staff and the number of staff members overall, it will require a major restructuring of our current staffing, current programs, and our ability to offer certain ministries.
- CUC optimal minimum attendance on Sunday worship attendance is around 350-400 adults. Over the past several years, we have averaged 300 on Sunday morning. It is important for us to increase attendance by approximately 50-100 more individuals each Sunday. In addition to attracting and keeping more visitors, the biggest factor to increasing attendance is your frequency of attendance.
- During the past five years, we have increased the number of visitors and new members each Sunday. However, our current members are attending less frequently – those who used to attend 3-4 times per month now average 1-2 times per month. Over time, that dramatically affects our Sunday morning average attendance. That shift is not unique to CUC – it is happening across the nation. We will need to continue to increase the number of visitors and new members while simultaneously increasing the frequency of attendance by our current members. If each member of CUC would attend even six more Sundays a year than they currently do, our attendance would go up by 100



additional people each Sunday.

- We need additional staffing for the following areas: marketing and outreach, visitor follow-up, additional hours or staff for children and youth ministries, technology, content management, graphic design, and communications. If we are unable to bring on staff for these areas, we will quickly fall behind as a congregation and will be looking at a serious potential decline in approximately 3-5 years.
- If we are able to increase staffing, we will be able to achieve many new goals and objectives, maintain a strategic advantage as a thriving congregation, and potentially increase our worship attendance to 400 over the next 5 years.
- We must configure our staff around The Congregational Growth Cycle. 1) We will need staff who can focus on Marketing, Outreach and Social Media. 2) Staff members are needed for welcoming, connecting, and assimilating visitors into the life of the congregation. 3) We need staff dedicated to creating community and fellowship at CUC in order to create more community and involvement, thereby creating a stronger and more integrated congregation. Once we have staff members in each of these three phases, we can truly thrive and grow as a church.

# CUC ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## **President's Report Andy Sexton**

It has truly been an honor to serve as Council President for the past year. I have had the privilege of getting to know and work with some amazing people. I would especially like to thank outgoing President Terri Townsend as well as all of the Council members in helping to guide me through the responsibilities of being President.

As I look back on the past year, it is apparent to me what an amazing place Columbine United Church is. We have an exceptional staff who work together to make CUC the open, accepting place that it is. We have an amazing music program providing two different worship styles as well as many performances throughout the year. Our children and youth programs continue to thrive and grow. Considering the size of our congregation, we have a lighter staff than our numbers demand and I have come to realize how important volunteers are in the many successes of our church. Thank you to all who volunteer.

A lot of the focus of Council during the past year has been to look ahead and come up with some ideas to allow CUC to continue to grow and be a leader in the community. In the past year, we have:

- Agreed to continue with two Sunday morning worship services throughout the year allowing for Adult Education to thrive in between services;
- Put together a Mission Study Committee to look at the current staff as well as future staffing needs;
- Met with an architect and began visiting different churches in the area to look at and come up with some ideas related to our building needs;
- Changed the committee and Council structure to ensure an efficient use of time and resources,
- Worked with the Denver Presbytery to secure Jane Ritterson as a member of the Presbytery and as long-term CUC staff; and
- Continued to serve our local and larger communities through various missions and services projects.

Serving as Council President has been educational and helped me to grow in my faith. It has been a pleasure to be a part of this congregation in this capacity. Thank you for this opportunity and for your faith in me. I look forward to many more years of continued work with all of you.

**Clerk's Report for May 1, 2015-April 30, 2016**  
**Jeannie Kiel**

Church Membership on April 30, 2015	574 families/1203 members
Church Membership on April 30, 2016	522 families/753 members

SUMMARY OF CHURCH ACTIVITY

New members by letter of transfer or confession of faith	30
Confirmations	7
Baptism Infant/Child	12
Baptism Adult	1
Marriages	5
Memorial Services	11
Members Transferring to other churches	6
Members removed from the roll at their request	25
Made inactive and removed from the roll	446
Members removed from the roll due to death	9
Members moved to affiliate status	1

**Special Congregational Meeting**  
**Jeannie Kiel**

November 29, 2015

Meeting called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Andy Sexton.

Quorum is established.

Terri Townsend is appointed parliamentarian.

The purpose of this meeting is to formalize Rev. Jane Ritterson's hiring for the purpose of the Presbytery. When we hired Jane as our Pastor of Care and Visitation, we did so in an informal way. We would like to establish Jane into the Denver Presbytery. In order to do this, we must go through a formal process. Our first step is to create a Pastor Nominating Committee. The Council has nominated six people to do this work.

Motion was made to accept these people, Stephanie Townsend, Richard Boorum, Mark Johnson, Fred Mahe, Janet McIllece and Laura James, as our Pastor Nominating Committee.

Motion carries.

We value Jane and all of the great work she has done here. She has been a tremendous asset to the staff and congregation at CUC.

Meeting is adjourned at 10:06.

**CUC COUNCIL REPORT 4/18/2016 for the  
GENEROSITY-STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE  
Marie Schreiber  
2016 Pledge Campaign Report**

Thank you to Lee Ann Smith for collecting the information on receiving pledge cards from members and friends of CUC. We normally keep a record of the incoming pledges for 20 weeks and compare them to prior years. This year was a successful and exciting campaign. While we would have wished for a greater number of total pledges so that finances could, easily increase the budget for 2016, we did receive pledges greater than prior years. The campaign theme was 20/20 .. asking families to consider increasing their pledge by \$20 weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, etc. The result of this effort alone was 82 giving units increasing their pledges for a combined total of an increase of \$19,840.

2016 campaign, week 20, total pledged \$528,030, Number of pledges 217, Average Annual Pledge \$2,433;

2015 campaign, week 20, total pledged \$470,840, Number of pledges 215, Average Annual Pledge \$2,190;

2014 campaign, week 20, total pledged \$507,288, Number of pledges 224, Average Annual Pledge \$2,265

Pledge cards were sent to all active members and friends. Extra pledge cards were handed out at new member classes, were included in the front of the Black Ritual of Friendship booklets, were requested by pastors and staff at each worship service for weeks, and were always available in the office. Follow up letters were sent to those who had pledged last year but not this year. We learned that it is important to tell people about those organizations we give to, which encourages others to do the same, and that talking about money and pledges and offerings every Sunday is okay, and now expected!

Currently working on the Text 2 Give process, mainly aimed at millennials.

We have had some kinks to work out on the Giving Stations which will make credit card donations accessible, easy to use, and prominent.

The Generosity-Stewardship Committee will be reviewing our Annual Plan and work towards "Changing a Life by developing a quarterly vision update of our accomplishments and clear donation steps that will have impacted 1-2 individuals, and that will continue to change lives." We need to "show the need" and increase participation at CUC, which steps directly into an increase in finances. Have you brought new people into your committee this year?

We want to thank the staff for the weekly e-blast that has started highlighting finance, generosity and stewardship with the lead article in the e-blast relating to finances at CUC. Members and friends are very happy to have this open communication.

## **Next Generation Annual Report** **Aimee Crispin**

It has been a busy and fulfilling year for the youth and families at CUC.

In August and November, groups attended the “Feed My Starving Children” event and prepared thousands of meals to be sent around the world in impoverished countries. Both events were very successful.

Our children and youth ministry has made some exciting changes this year. Our Pre-K and K group is now “Sprouting Faith,” and we are using a new hands-on curriculum with lessons using hands-on items. The children are enjoying it! We hired a children’s worship leader that has added high energy songs and dances during worship each Sunday. There are around 100 children attending our children’s programs in any given month. Carla and her team have been working hard with a great group of kids. They have continued with their Sunday School program, their weekly gatherings, their Sunday lunches, and their mission work with the community. They get together to have fun, burn off energy, and build spirituality.

In October we hosted the annual Pumpkin Palooza/ Fall Festival. There was a chili lunch and pumpkin carving. About 15 families attended the event, and it was a great success.

Another addition this year was the “Neighboring Hubs” events with Wilder Elementary. We provided coffee and donuts to the parents, teachers appreciation bags during conferences, and a parents’ night out in December.

We continue to provide our 3rd graders with Bibles, thank you to Michelle Noyes for continuing this tradition.

We hosted the annual Easter Eggstravaganza and despite the weather, it was a huge success. An indoor egg hunt, egg roulette, petting zoo, crafts, and snacks were all part of the fun. Thanks to the pastors for being willing to get smashed with raw eggs!

We are busily preparing for our VBS program, “Expedition Norway!” We are working hard to increase the numbers of children attending this year.

Thank you to Justin Spurlock, Katie Gaertner, Jeannie Kiel, Laura Graber, Carrie Rice, Dena Way, Jill and Rick Hinn, and Carla Larson for your commitment to this committee!

## **Missions Committee Report** **Susan Markley**

The Missions Committee consists of approximately 14 members that represent supported missions. We meet on the fourth Monday of the month, generally at 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor. All are welcome to attend. Our mission is to build relationships that open the door to God's love through caring community outreach. As an outreach church, we are heavily invested in providing meaningful change in the surrounding community. Our mission efforts are in the following areas:

Hunger and Homelessness Intervention  
Youth and Education Support  
Senior Support  
Community Support and Development  
Disaster Response

Toward that end we supported several organizations with funding and volunteering. The following is a list of our activities this past year:

### **Local Food Missions**

We supported The Action Center and Interfaith Community Services with funding and weekly food collection. Through our Feed the Need grocery store collections, we boosted food donations for Interfaith Community Services. Together the collections totaled 25,135 meals.

### **Homelessness Mitigation**

**Family Promise:** We continued a partnership with St. James Presbyterian Church to host homeless families for a week for five times during the year and split the costs. Additionally, we provided one quarter of the Christmas Eve offering (\$3,555.55) to this organization to assist their activities with the homeless in the South Metro area.

**Homelessness Awareness/Action Task (HAAT) Force:** Columbine supported HAAT to maintain a southwest metro area severe weather overnight shelter in partnership with Love, INC. We also provided one quarter of the Christmas Eve offering (\$3,555.55) to this organization to assist their activities with the homeless in the South Metro area.

**Habitat for Humanity:** we sponsored a home construction in Denver and provided volunteers to build it.

**Network Coffee House:** We continued our partnership with Network Ministries, which runs the Network Coffee House in Denver. We also covered part of operating costs for the hospitality center.

**Youth and Education:** The Action Center - BackPak Program: Columbine joined a partnership with Light of the World Catholic Church for this mission. We gave 1,831 meals to youth in Jefferson County this year.

**Winter Gear Program:** We collected hundreds of winter coats and gear items and provided one quarter of the Christmas Eve offering to assist low income students through the Jeffco Schools Foundation's Jeffco Serving Kids program. This consisted of an award of \$3,555.55, which was a substantial boost to the foundation's capacity to continue serving the 35% (nearly 30,000) of Jefferson County school district students that are living in or near poverty.

**Angel Tree** toy drive: Your support to this effort collected over 100 gifts benefiting children in need through the Salvation Army.

**Second Wind Fund:** Columbine organized a team of over 100 church members to walk and run in support of this youth suicide prevention organization. Together we raised over \$5000 at the event. Additionally, we provided one quarter of the Christmas Eve offering (\$3,555.55) to this organization to assist their activities with



youth at risk for suicide in the South Metro area.

**Senior Support:**

TLC Meals on Wheels: Columbine provided funding and volunteers for this program, which provides hot prepared meals and volunteers to deliver them to shut-in local seniors.

**Bessie's Hope:** Columbine provided funding to support operating costs for this program, which is a metro-wide effort to connect visiting volunteers with seniors in assisted living facilities.

**Community Development:**

**Denver Inner City Parish:** Columbine continued funding for DICP, which provides education, community and senior programs in downtown Denver.

**Love, INC,** a community development and intervention provider in the SW Metro area. Columbine is a host for the Love INC Stepping Forward Mentoring Program, which assists people referred by the non-profit organization for short term mentorship. Additionally, we provide Love, INC with monthly funding and volunteers for other efforts, one example of which was the disaster response support at Southview Place Towers in Littleton. We also collected diapers in the month of April for Love, INC ministries: we provided 1803 diapers and 34 wipe packages. This equates to 18 covered babies for a month. Thanks to all of you for this great support, even considering the April snow!

**Holiday Mail for Heroes:** We signed over 300 Christmas cards for our service members, which were delivered to the Veterans Hospital in Denver. Thank you for remembering our veterans!

**Disaster Response:**

Southview Place Towers Apartments in Littleton: Love INC partnered with the Red Cross, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army and other organizations to assist those affected by the fire in Littleton. Initially, the seniors were housed at the Littleton United Methodist Church. From the onset of the disaster to the last moving efforts, a village gathered to help. The village consisted of Red Cross personnel providing medical care, volunteers providing 3 meals a day, people shopping for new clothes and then washing those clothes for the residents, people provided transportation to and from appointments, people packed 36 apartments and moved the belongings to storage or another apartment, people helped many others with small but important tasks as they prepared to move. Many Columbine United Church folks came over and volunteered their time. This truly was a village effort.

**Unique Local, National, and International Missions:** Columbine United Church donated \$300 to Church World Service to support its programs for Syrian refugees.

**Alternative Christmas:** Columbine collected Christmas donations for Heifer International, Church World Service, and Habitat for Humanity.

**Guatemala Mission (Common Hope):** Columbine funded community development and education for students living in Antigua, New Hope and San Rafael, Guatemala.

**Agua for Nicaragua (El Porvenir - Nicaragua):** We initiated a monthly donation to El Porvenir for their ongoing water and community development projects in Nicaragua.

**Member Support:** During the year the Missions Committee provided Thanksgiving baskets for shut-in members, one-time grants for Christian education, and sponsorship for youth mission trips. We also provided one time gifts to organizations fighting diseases that have been a part of our congregation; this year we donated to the Rocky Mountain Stroke Center and to the Multiple Sclerosis Walk.

**Congregational Care Committee**  
**Chair, Betsy Rehling**

The purpose of the Congregational Care Committee is to provide communication, friendship and care throughout the congregational family of CUC. We oversee many small groups within the congregation including, but not limited to CGs, prayer shawl gift coordination, prayer cards, and Care Groups. We also are responsible for the weekly Joys and Concerns lists.

The committee has seven members and Pastor Jane Ritterson, and we work with all the pastors to keep current regarding congregational needs, transitions and concerns. The committee meets twice monthly in order to discuss new concerns, updates on existing concerns, and to make decisions on how best to respond to current situations among members. Members take turns being responsible for writing and submitting weekly Joys and Concern sheets to the office. Between meetings, the committee contacts people by phone, visiting, and email to check in on folks as they are dealing with new and ongoing situations in their lives so we can be supportive.

The committee also oversees and directs the Agape Visitation Team, who offer a listening ear and a supportive shoulder to those in our congregation who need it. We currently have 10 team members who are ministering to an ever-changing number of our church family averaging between 15 and 20. Rev. Tom Rehling continues to meet with the Team several times a year for further training and feedback sessions to continue to help them as they minister to our congregation.

We also are grateful to members of CUC for their help in making us aware of needs, concerns and happenings in the lives of members so that we may be supportive and helpful.

We work with the CUC staff to help keep communications flowing when members die so that funerals can be arranged, notice given, and appropriate follow up care can be given to the bereaved.

Members of the Congregational Care Committee currently are:  
Lori Beckey, Cheri Cleland, Kay Dunn, Dixie Wilmot Maas, Lee Soggin, and Susan Zeeb.

It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of this committee for the past three years and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve CUC in this capacity.

## **Adult Education** **Russ Jackson**

### **Sunday Morning**

With the church deciding to move to two services on Sunday morning, the Adult Education Committee began offering classes during the hour between the two services. A synopsis of classes offered are listed below:

- Rev Poos-Benson, discussion on The Art of Forgiveness.
- Rev. Justin Spurlock on the Council of Nicea
- Rev Poos-Benson discussion on The Art of Listening
- Rev Poos-Benson discussion on The Art of Giving
- Rev Poos-Benson discussion on The Art of Dying
- Rev Poos-Benson discussions on the Sunday Morning Sermons
- Rev. Dr. Steve Poos-Benson discussions on Immigration
- Joe Rice discussed How to Have Your Voice Heard by your elected Representatives
- Rev. Dr. Steve Poos-Benson and Rev. Justin Spurlock discussed What the Bible tells us about Relationship Violence
- Rev. Dr. Steve Poos-Benson continues the series titled What does the Bible say on Abortion
- Rev. Dr. Steve Poos-Benson continues the series titled What does the Bible say on Capital Punishment
- Linda Newell, State Senator, 26th District, will present How a Bill Becomes a Law .... Or Doesn't
- Dr. Steve Poos-Benson led a discussion on the Sermon on the Mount

### **Faith Forum**

As in previous years, the Tuesday morning Faith Forum group provided a varied and entertaining lineup of topics. Following is a sample of classes offered:

- Ruthann Moomy and Suzan Leach led a discussion on What do we mean by “religion”?
- Ruthann Moomy and Suzan Leach led a discussion on Religion - Fundamentalism --Violence - Do These Things Go Together?
- Rev. Dr. Steve Poos-Benson led a discussion whether Earth Traditions/Nature Religions believe in the Soul?
- Rev. Tom Rehling led a discussion on Our Interpersonal Relationship Styles
- Rev. Justin Spurlock led a discussion on Killing God. Are you holding on to ideas and beliefs of God that are destructive and harmful?
- Ron Routh and Tom Rehling explored the book Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah by Richard Bach.
- Judi Buehrer and Julie Roghair will lead a discussion on Martin Luther, the birth of Protestantism and the Reformation.
- Bill Kaseman and Rev. Tom Rehling led a discussion on The Parables: Those of Jesus and Ours.
- Betsy Rehling and Audrey Clendenning led a discussion on the complex topic of immigration.
- Cheryl Swing led a discussion on the ever-evolving landscape of gender and sexuality.
- Dean Pickett discussed the divided U. S. Supreme Court opinion holding that the Constitution allows same sex couples to marry.
- Rev Justin Spurlock led a discussion on what we all think about - "Sin".

### **Tuesday Evening Classes**

Fresh

- Fresh meets once a month with Rev. Dr. Steve Poos-Benson facilitating. The class begins with a session followed by meditation, prayers of peace, and teaching.

Advanced Spirituality

- Rev. Dr. Steve Poos-Benson led discussions on a variety of topics ranging from the Jewish Mysticism practice of Kabbalah, native American spiritual faith in the Kiowa nation, Contemplative Prayer, and a private tour for

church members of the Denver Islamic Society's Mosque.

### **LGBTQI Discussion**

- Cheryl Swing led a multi-session discussion on Gender and Sexuality and the Challenges These Topics Present. Going Back to College
- Susan Smith presented a class titled Going back to College. Topics addressed include finishing your degree, how education can help you advance your career, potential costs, financial aid, and military benefits.

Financial Peace University

- Class was offered twice this year, once in the spring and once in fall. Brian Snyder was the instructor. Attendance varied between 12-20.

### **Men's Room**

- The Men's Room participants discussed a variety of topics that are relevant to men in today's ever- changing world.

### **Advocacy Subcommittee**

This year the Advocacy subcommittee pursued three unique topics to study;

- Bread for the World Offering of Letters

Offering of Letters effort, the church mailed letters to our representatives in Congress to encourage them to support the reauthorization and funding of the federal child nutrition bill.

- Relationship Violence

Relationship Violence speakers discussed the systemic problems with the issue, why people stay in abusive relationships, and how does an abuser reform.

- How to become more involved with your State Legislature.

Current and former members of the state legislature were invited to discuss how to get engaged with your representatives and senators and how to get involved with the governing process.

Finally - Anyone wishing other topics to be considered for an Adult Education class please contact any member of the Adult Education Committee.

**Worship Committee**  
**John Hausman**

The worship committee has been working to continue to assess the future needs and look of the worship spaces at Columbine. As part of that assessment, new candle tables were purchased for the sanctuary using a memorial fund given to the church. In addition, worship was consolidated into two Sunday morning services from the previous three services. As a result, we've seen attendance increase in both services throughout the year. As we continue to look forward to meet the vision of CUC, we will continue to work with the pastors to plan the layout and technology of the worship spaces.

The Worship Committee continues to coordinate the decorations for the Christmas season. On an annual basis, the decorating will occur on the Sunday afternoon prior to Thanksgiving. All members of the congregation are always welcome to join in the decorating process. The committee also coordinates the flowers for the Easter services each year. This year, the order was increased to help prolong the life and look of the flowers as they endure four flowerings of the cross. We hope the families who were able to take flowers home after the 11AM service enjoyed them as an addition to their Easter celebration at home.

The committee would like to extend a special thank you to Barry Brown who provided beautiful seasonal decorations for the sanctuary during both the Christmas and Easter seasons. Your talents are greatly appreciated!

Please feel free to continue to share your suggestions and comments for the future of the worships spaces at Columbine. Thanks for your continued patience and support as we continue move together towards our future vision for Columbine United Church!