



**Sixth Avenue
United Church**

**Annual Report
for 2014**

**Annual Meeting
January 25, 2015**

Agenda for the Annual Meeting:

- Call to Order
- Opening Prayer
- State of the Church
- Approval of 2015 Budget
- Election of Officers:
 - Moderator: Vickie Golobic
 - Wider Church Ministry Co-Chairs: Elisabeth & John Pinsonneault
 - Financial Ministry: Sandy Calkins
- Open Discussion
- Closing Prayer
- Adjourn

Contents:

Leadership and Staff

Moderator

Inner Church

Building

Music

Christian Education

Covenanted Ministries

Jane Vennard

Jenny Morgan

Lucas Novak

Pastor Chris

Moderator

What a year 2014 was in the life of Sixth Avenue U.C.C.! Through the outstanding work of the Pastoral Search Committee, a candidate was selected and in May, the congregation voted to call the Rev. Chris Gilmore as our new pastor at Sixth Avenue. Chris' first Sunday "in the pulpit" was on August 17th and we joyously celebrated his installation on Sunday, Oct. 19th. Ever since, we have truly experienced what it means to "hit the ground running"! I want to personally thank the Search Committee for their dedication to the task they were charged with: Leslie Hughes (Chairperson), Molly Eldridge, Larry Yoder, Ann Stoenner, Merlin Logan and Kim Shinabery.

We were extremely fortunate to have Rev. Jack Wieczorek, as our Interim Pastor during the search process. Someone in the congregation shared with me that Jack was the perfect "shepherd" for our congregation during the transition. That was a perfect description of Jack, and I value the time we were able to work together.

Joshua North-Shea joined the Sixth Avenue staff in early 2014. Wearing two hats.....Office Manager and Caretaker.....Joshua stays very busy.

Sixth Avenue saw two of our members ordained into the U.C.C. in 2014. It was a privilege to participate in the ordination services for Jenny Morgan and Lucas Novak.

Thanks to all of you for the support and help you provided to me and the Leadership Team throughout 2014. 2015 promises to be full of new opportunities for each of us individually and for Sixth Avenue as a community.

Respectfully submitted,
Vickie Golobic

Inner Church Ministry

The Inner Church Team had a busy year planning several celebratory events. Receptions were held or coordinated for:

- Lucas Novak's ordination in the spring;
- Jenny Morgan's ordination at Highlands Church in the summer;
- Rosina Spray and Winnie Mills following their memorial services;
- A congregational Thank You for Reverend Jack in July; and
- Reverend Chris Gilmore with a welcome when his selection was announced and again on his first Sunday as pastor;
- Homecoming/Welcome Back Sunday potluck;
- Pledge/Stewardship dinner with Mexican themed food.

Our *Annual Ice Cream Social* on the front lawn of the church was well attended again this year. *Dinners for Six* hosted by members of the congregation were also well attended and will continue in 2015. With the help of many people, especially Jack Dow and Tom Schaffnit, we kept the sanctuary banners changed according to the liturgical season. Ann Stoenner's new banner for Rev. Chris was beautifully crafted. Hanging of the greens in the sanctuary complete with poinsettias was accomplished in December.

The Sunday School continues to grow, which is great news for the church. Reverend Kim Shinabery kept the Sunday School going as she lost her assistant – Mo Scott due to graduation and a Central American adventure. However, brother Connor has stepped in to help out.

With the help of many members, Sunday coffee hour – renamed “*Happy Hour*” has always been a great time for welcoming people, fellowship and food. This congregation has some wonderful, creative bakers.

Thanks for everyone who made things work every week, especially the members of the Inner Church Team – Brian LeMaire, Dale Britt, Elaine Haley, and Marilyn Rollins, who were very willing to do whatever was asked of them.

A HUGE thank you to Larry Crabbe, Merlin Logan, and Rod DeLuca and others for helping to set-up Mayflower Hall, make coffee and get things ready for coffee-happy hour and also to put things away afterwards.

Respectfully submitted,
Lanny Dick, Inner Team Chair

Building Ministry

While so many changes took place around 6th Ave UCC in 2014, the building stood as a silent observer, supporting us faithfully. It’s interesting to imagine our actual church building, standing silent, watching, as, within, so many changes have taken place over the years. Just a glance at the stained glass windows will give some idea of how far back the history of our church goes. We have had times for celebration, times when the heartbeat of the church was faint, and returns to glory. I would like to think our building is enjoying our new energy and direction as much as we- like a quiet old friend, hoping for us to be at our best.

As is always the case, caring for the building is more of an action/ reaction commitment rather than a long term plan. We budget year to year, but when the furnace springs a leak or other plumbing goes out, we act. There are many high needs areas of the church, and while we would love to be more proactive in maintenance, the tight budget of 6th Ave is a constant constraint. There were days in 2014, like most years, when members gathered on a Saturday to clean, move, polish, weed, plant, and help maintain our building. These days were important not only to the church, but as a fun way for people to come together and enjoy community.

Over the last two years, the Leadership Team has made a new commitment to improve our relationships with our tenants. For too long, these relationships have been vague, and we are looking for better ways to communicate and work together with our tenants. Part of this was a renewed commitment for a cleaner church- we are hiring a professional cleaning service to do a deeper clean in certain areas of the church- especially the bathrooms- to maintain our building as an attractive location for renters.

Many church members deserve a very sincere ‘thank you’ for taking time during the year to help take care of the building. So many have been ready to help- this really is a team effort. I do want to separately acknowledge Merlin and Joshua for being so committed to our building and for the time they have spent toward that goal. As we continue to move forward, it is good to be reminded how blessed we are to worship in such a beautiful sanctuary.

James Scott

Music Ministry

In 2014, the music department continued to grow. Marlina Moore continued directing the adult choir and collaborated with Kim Shinabery to have the children sing more often this year. That goal was accomplished, with the children finishing last season singing in April and June.

So far this season, they sang in October, November, and December. Pianist Ann Markey continued to provide music for every service. The adult choir added a few more regular members, and numbered 13 at its maximum.

August and December were especially active for the music department. The choir convened a month early in August, in order to provide special music for Interim Pastor Jack Wieczorek's last Sunday and for Pastor Chris Gilmore's first Sunday. Many choir members also participated in former intern Jenny Morgan's ordination and installation service at Highlands Church in Northwest Denver.

In December, The children sang, Ann Markey played piano for our first-ever Blue Christmas service, member Jim Hill played a hymn and postlude every Sunday, and we had a guest violinist on December 7th. The adult choir sang for the first time in two years on Christmas Eve, and Jim Hill also joined in at that service.

Respectfully submitted by Marlena Moore, Music Director

Christian Education

2014 was a wonderfully productive and fulfilling year.

I was honored to be on the Search Committee and found the experience both exciting and rewarding. Our team worked well together and came to the right decision in recommending Rev. Chris Gilmore as our pastor.

I enjoyed working with Jack Wieczorek during our interim period. His caring, calm style lessened the stresses that can occur during an interim period.

Working with Chris is both a pleasure and a challenge. We meet weekly, keeping any miscommunication and confusion down to a minimum. Because he is open and welcoming toward all the clergy in our congregation, I feel more included in the work of this church. This, however, also presents a challenge as often my body interferes with my spirit's desire to be more involved.

In addition to the children singing regularly during worship, we have introduced several new ways of welcoming the children as part of the worshipping community. During Jack's tenure, we began including the children in the first part of the worship service and providing a children's talk. Since Chris began, the children now ring the bell at the beginning of the service, assist the pastor in giving communion, presented a play during Advent, and are provided with worship activity sheets related to the theme of the service and Sunday School.

Each week, our Sunday School lessons coincide with the theme of the worship service. We have also used the bulletin board by the stairs into the kitchen to focus on learning values such as kindness, good choices, and inclusion in the community. Children learn values that help them make proper choices in their lives when they see adults modeling these values. So we have focused on helping the children pay attention to both what they see others do and what choices they make.

We missed Mo when he left for his trip but are thankful to now have Connor helping. It doesn't seem so long ago that Connor was in Sunday School as a child. Both he and Mo are good with the children, helping them with activities and supervising their playtime. I'm thankful that each of them has been willing to become part of our Sunday School program.

Providing programming for such a wide age range is challenging. We have tried to have a craft that is not boring for the older children and not too difficult for the younger children. One of my goals for 2015 year is to divide the class into two age appropriate groups, one to provide more challenging lessons to the older children whose understanding of their faith is developing by leaps and bounds and the other to give the younger children both a craft and a time to play.

Another goal of mine for 2015 is form a more active youth group. We have been trying to do this since Jack came, but I am sure that with Chris' avid interest in youth and his energy and guidance with new endeavors, we can succeed in this vital enterprise for our youth and our congregation.

I am thankful to all those who have provided assistance; there are so many that it would be impossible to recognize each person by name. I am grateful for the parents of our children and youth; their interest in providing the best programming possible includes helping with the programming and supporting the involvement of their child/ren. I especially want to thank Vickie Golobic and Lanny Dick for their continual support. A special thanks to Christopher Gilmore for being here with us. Finally, I want to thank everyone in the congregation for welcoming our children and including them in our community.

Peace,
Rev. Dr. Kimberly A. Shinabery

Covenanted Minister
Reverend Jane E. Vennard

In appreciation for the three-way covenant I hold with Sixth Avenue United Church I report on my ministry for the past year.

I am just completing a new book entitled *Teaching – The Sacred Art: The Joy of Opening Minds and Hearts* to be published by SkyLight Paths. It is due out in April and I am planning a launch party the end of that month at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Centennial.

I continue to see about 24 people for spiritual direction, most of them monthly. They come from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds and are all ages. Many of them are religious professionals, others are active in their churches as lay people, and some are struggling with organized religion. It is an honor to journey with them and I often feel I learn more from those who come than they could possibly learn from me.

My teaching ministry has included a one-week summer class and a one-week interterm class at the Iliff School of Theology. In addition to my Iliff teaching I taught at Columbia Presbyterian Seminary in Atlanta in their Spiritual Formation Certificate Program. In winter I spent a weekend of teaching at Baton Rough First United Methodist Church and a weekend in Syracuse NY leading a women's clergy retreat for the United Methodist Church. In May I traveled to Baltimore to lead a retreat for the spiritual directors of the Church of the Brethren. In the fall I went to San Antonio to teach for the Academy for Spiritual Formation sponsored by the Upper Room of the United Methodist Church and to Atchison, Kansas to lead a continuing education program for spiritual directors in that area.

Closer to home, I preached at Susan McKee's ordination service at Park Hill UCC, at First Plymouth UCC on Transfiguration Sunday, at Iliff Honors Chapel, and at Dignity Denver. I led study groups and retreat days on my book *Fully Awake and Truly Alive* at Montview Presbyterian Church, First Universalist Church, Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Arvada UMC, and Benet Hill Monastery.

For professional development I continue to see my own spiritual director monthly. In January I attended a weekend event with James Finley, psychotherapist and spiritual director sponsored by Spiritual Direction Colorado. In late August I took a three day solitary silent retreat in a small house outside of Cripple Creek owned by the Dominican Sisters of Great Bend, Kansas. In September I attended a three day retreat for spiritual directors at the Sacred Heart Jesuit Retreat house and then returned in December for another four days of silent retreating in

one of their small hermitages I attend a monthly peer supervision group in spiritual direction and participate in quarterly meetings of Spiritual Direction Colorado.

I have enjoyed being at Sixth Avenue more regularly this year, finding comfort and encouragement in our community, and plan to be present in church in a variety of ways in the coming year. I am deeply appreciative of the 25 years that Sixth Avenue has supported my ministry of teaching, writing, and spiritual direction.

Jane E Vennard

**Covenanted Minister
Jenny Morgan**

Dear Friends at Sixth Avenue UCC,

As the New Year begins, I want to provide a short update and a few words of gratitude to Pastor Chris and the community at 6th Avenue UCC. My partner, Kristy Jordan, and I are doing well. We had 22 of the Jordan Family in town for Christmas, 8 of whom stayed in our home!! We are enjoying our relationship, our families, and the many good gifts God has given us. A highlight of 2014 was my ordination and installation to Highlands Church in a 4-Way Covenant with Sixth Avenue UCC, The Metro Denver Association of the UCC, and myself.

It was an exciting year for ministry. I completed my 4th year as Co-Pastor of Highlands Church Denver. Having the blessing and affirmation of ordination in the United Church of Christ has served to deepen my confidence and is opening doors of faith and justice for Highlands Church. The people at Highlands Church are eagerly expanding their understanding of the wide embrace of God and our ministries are engaging with the UCC as grounding for how we do ministry.

For example, our Family and Children's Soul Care Pastor is using "Godly Play" curriculum and connecting with UCC churches that do the same. She and a team of her volunteers are attending the conference at First Plymouth Congregational UCC next month. Another example of the UCC's beautiful impact on Highlands Church is the third annual national conference for Progressive Youth Ministry in Chicago this spring. Some of the best speakers, facilitators, and participants at the event have been UCC ministers from around the nation.

As a pastor at Highlands Church, I continue to preach and teach at least twice each month. I lead the staff team and I serve on our Leadership Council as the pastoral liaison. I also facilitate the church's collaborative leadership structure, lead prayer and leadership retreats, and oversee the development of new leaders.

Approximately 600 people attend worship, which includes 50-60 children and lots of folks who live in the North Denver neighborhood. Our outreach into the neighborhood includes work with *Family Promise*, *Bienvenidos Food Bank*, North High School, and *Habitat for Humanity*. We are in the 3rd year of a collaborative community partnership with the people of La Florida, Honduras where we work with ADEC, a Honduran-led clean water NGO. I have the privilege of coming alongside the team of volunteers from the church who lead this effort. I will be joining them in April 2015 as we travel to Honduras.

Ministry is thriving and I am learning and growing. Being new to ordained ministry combined with pastoring a new church also has its challenges. I struggle to say "no," which means there are times when I am busier than is healthy for me. There are a few things within the UCC that I hope to work on in the New Year. I was invited to serve on the Wider Church Committee (Team) for The Metro Denver Association, but was unable to say yes this year due to the workload at Highlands Church. I hope to join that team next year.

Pastor Chris and I are participants in the same UCC Clergy Cluster. This group, and Chris in particular, is a lifeline for me spiritually and relationally. I'm looking forward to getting to know the men and women in that group more. I'm also looking forward to attending the conference on homiletics this May in Denver sponsored by Iliff Seminary. And it's been an ongoing joy to support other UCC ministers in their ordinations and installations during 2014.

Thank you for your love, friendship, support, and accountability in ministry. I had hoped to attend Sixth's Avenue's Annual Meeting this year and see you all in person, but Kristy and I will be on vacation during that time.

God be with you all!

Peace, Jenny

Covenanted Minister
Lucas Novak

Greetings from the Anschutz Medical Campus and the University of Colorado Hospital (UCH)! As I write this, I am between patient visits and preparing for a course at the medical school I'll be facilitating next week. This has been my ministry for much of the past year. As Staff Chaplain at UCH, I find the days are rarely short, never dull, and always ministry. In addition to the units I cover (Burn/Trauma ICU and Cardiothoracic ICU), I have been heavily involved in putting together a process for addressing the compassion fatigue and burnout needs of our staff. Remember all that Ebola stuff? I became the "Ebola chaplain" as a result of this work, focusing on the spiritual and existential needs of patients and staff, should we ever receive a patient, to care for both patients and staff as they experience total isolation. Like I said, the days are never dull. I am grateful for the support I feel in my ministry from you all and grateful for the community of faith that is 6th Ave. as you carry out your own ministries, as well!

Lucas Novak

Pastor Chris Gilmore

Annual reports are always interesting things to write. So often they are rarely read, and yet, having them to look back upon is a great thing to get a feel for what was happening in the life of a church. While I was only at Sixth Avenue for the latter half of 2014, a lot still happened in the life of the church. In addition to the highs and lows of each of our lives, we experience a lot in a year as a faith community. And so we look back:

The first part of the year was a time of transition – with Joshua North-Shea being hired as the Sexton/Office Manager taking over from Robert McGooley who served the church faithfully for six years.

The interim minister, Jack Wieczorek led the weekly services as the search committee interviewed candidates for the permanent minister position. New members were received, book club continued, and a special service of ordination was held for Lucas Novak at the end of March.

In May, I had the joy of candidating for the position of senior Minister and was humbled to be called as the next pastor of Sixth Avenue.

Over the course of the summer a memorial service was held celebrating the life of Ruben Cook, Sixth Avenue once again participated in the joint worship service at the end of July (with seven other UCC churches) and after a service honoring Jack's ministry here, I began my ministry on August 18th. In addition, that day was also the ordination and installation of the Rev. Jenny Morgan at Highlands Community Church. Jenny is a member at Sixth Avenue and is called to be one of the ministers of Highlands. It is hopefully the beginning of a unique partnership between our two churches.

I spent the first few months getting to know as many members of the church as I could. I have also spent time getting to know our partners in ministry through CHUM (Capitol Hill United Ministries) as well as our some of our tenants in the building. In addition, we have begun to increase our outreach with various ministries in the city. We have served lunch multiple times at the Denver Inner City Parish, continued to collect food, socks, and mittens, and are in the process of becoming one of the churches who house women through WHI (Women's Homelessness Initiative). We are planning to begin this program in February in partnership with people from First Plymouth UCC in Englewood.

In October the church celebrated with others in the Metro Denver Association off the UCC for my installation with the Rev's Curt Preston and Erin Gilmore preaching. Our acting conference minister Rev. Sue Artt was also able to join in the service, leading the covenant. We had a rich and full Advent season as well as a well-attended and heart-warming Christmas Eve service with the choir sharing with us three beautiful anthems, O Holy Queen, The Little Drummer Boy, and Peace, Peace (as the congregation sang Silent Night).

2014 was a year of many changes for Sixth Avenue. I have enjoyed deeply the connections and memories we have already created and I look forward to our continued work together as we begin to plan for what lies ahead in 2015. I am grateful for the help from the leadership team and the staff. The biggest challenges I see are finding ways to gather as a whole congregation and discerning together where it is God calls us as a church into the future. It is my hope that we will be able to find time for an all church retreat sometime during the year and that we will find places for each and every person to share their gifts in service to the world.

Grace and peace,

Chris