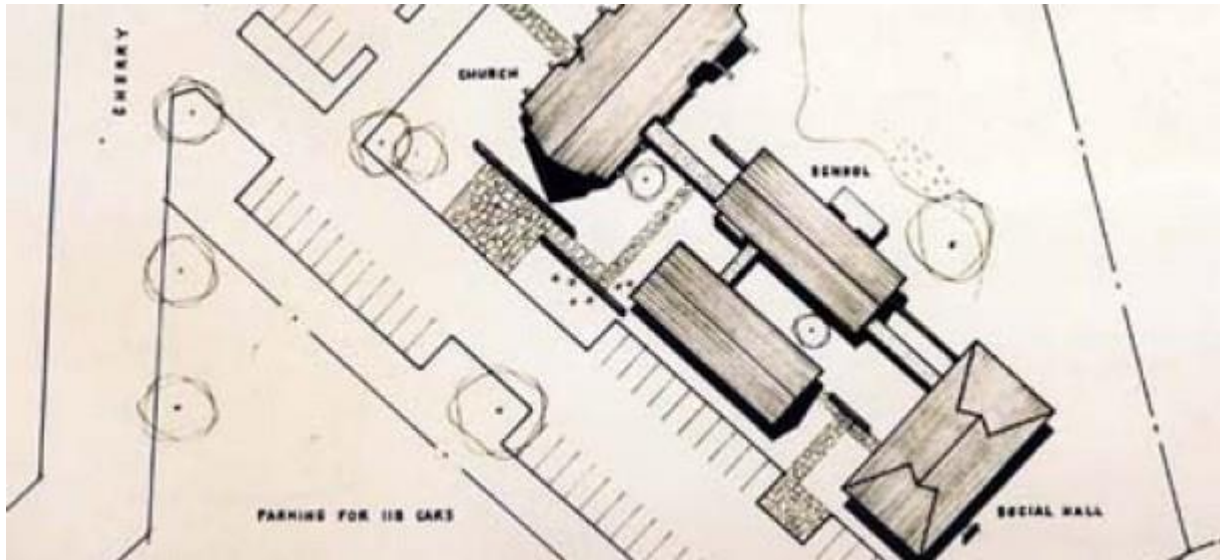


## UUCP History - the 1980s



In January 1981, the Frosts left for England on a six-month sabbatical as part of the Leadership Leaves program. In 1980–1981, the Board of Trustees generally met twice each month, and the congregation approved the creation of the Vice President for Social Concerns position. The lay-led Human Growth Programs, which lasted from 1974 to 1981, explored individuals' needs and offered Saturday workshops on such topics as single parenting, men's lives, and the psychology of adolescence. Volunteerism seemed alive and well. We added Unitarian Singles monthly suppers, a magazine exchange, dinners for new members, and hospitality for visiting pulpit speakers to an already full calendar of traditional programs – plus a capital fund drive.

### **Repairs and Renewal**

During the 1970s, it became apparent that our building, of which we were so proud, was not perfect. The worst problem was water, which increasingly leaked through various roofs into our main auditorium, lounge, and classrooms, and through the walls and floor of the small auditorium. In addition, upgraded office and kitchen equipment was needed, and our exterior doors did not provide sufficient security. Individual members quietly donated funds to solve some of the most urgent problems, but by 1979, it was obvious that major action was required. Detailed planning commenced in early 1980, culminating in a major capital fund drive in the fall, led by Jim Johnson and Peter Putnam. The goal was \$100,000; within five weeks, \$134,000 was pledged and repairs began. So that future repairs could be taken care of promptly, in April 1983, the Major Repair Fund was approved as part of each year's budget. In May 1985, the congregation voted to make this annual provision an increasing percentage of the total internal operating budget, reaching a level of 10% by 1988–1989.

### **Ministerial Housing Assistance**

Another major financial concern was the need to assist the minister in purchasing a residence. In December 1980, the church arranged a new \$40,000 loan from the Plandome Church and added \$15,000 of capital fund proceeds; this \$55,000 allowed the minister to obtain a mortgage and

purchase a home in partnership with the church. When the Frosts returned in September 1981, they and the church jointly purchased a residence at 74 Deer Path in Princeton.

Their new home started the Frosts' tradition of hosting receptions for church newcomers. The New U program was instituted that year to provide a thoughtful path for newcomers to become integrated into the life of the church; Jean Bussard was the first coordinator. In June 1981, Laura Hayes retired as choir director, having been a volunteer in our music activities since 1958 and started our first organized choir.

After many Sundays of doughnut sales and other fundraisers in 1982, the junior high group took a self-funded four-day trip to Boston to discover their UU roots. This became a biennial project that lasted for several years. The "Coming of Age" program for Junior LRYers was begun, with individual mentors to help the teenagers reach decisions on becoming members of the church.

In the summer of 1982, Cynthia Ward resigned, after seven years as our religious education coordinator, to study for the ministry. Harlene Michaels succeeded her in September, which was also the month Joanne Case was hired as office secretary.

The nuclear arms race, world and local hunger, women's rights, and Central America led the list of our social concerns in the early to mid-1980s. In the fall of 1979, a special Sunday collection raised \$1,400 toward efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. In 1982, the congregation voted unanimously to support "a verifiable nuclear arms freeze." In the summer of 1983, we housed and hosted a group of "100 Scandinavian Women Marching for Peace" en route to Washington, DC.

In 1982, Barbara and Paul Sigmund (not members of our church, but political and academic leaders in Princeton) returned from a fact-finding trip to Central America sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and spoke in our pulpit on human rights and conditions in that area. In fall 1983, we responded to the UUSC's urgent appeal for medical supplies for El Salvador, raising more than \$1,000 in a special collection, more than any other church in the denomination. This effort was repeated in 1985 for Nicaragua, with similar results.

In 1984, we joined other churches in Loaves and Fishes, a program to provide meals for more than 400 needy persons in Trenton on weekends, when the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen does not operate. Our weekly food collections, first for the Forum project and in recent years for the Crisis Ministry, have continued.

### **Donating Auction Proceeds to Outreach**

That year, the congregation voted to increase outreach funds from 50% of Auction, Etc., proceeds to 100% in stages over three years. The Silent Auction became a separate event held in early June, netting \$6,300; in 1985, it was renamed the Fellowship Auction and established as a fall event. In 1987, the congregation moved to ensure that at least \$10,000 each year went to outreach: to Auction, Etc., proceeds we add Fellowship Auction proceeds as needed. From 1984 to 1993, the annual outreach fund more than tripled, rising from \$3,700 to \$12,000.

### **Annual Pledges Exceed \$100,000**

In the spring of 1984, annual pledges for the church operating budget reached \$100,000 for the first time. That was also the year three of our church members were elected to the governing bodies of Hopewell Township, Princeton Township, and Princeton Borough. In the spring of 1985, we accepted the resignations of two staff persons: Virginia Brewer, who had been resident custodian for five years, and Harlene Michaels, who left her position as the RE coordinator to become an elementary schoolteacher.

Commemorating the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther, the fifth and sixth graders came up with 69 things wrong with the world; they reported that they were prohibited from reaching 95 only by time constraints.

During the summer of 1985, Karen Snow was hired as director of religious education. In December, 250 church and townspeople filled our large auditorium to attend the ordination ceremony for Cynthia Ward as a Unitarian Universalist Minister of Education. The 1986 annual meeting celebrated Edward Frost's tenth anniversary as our minister with a wicked skit, "A Deucedly Decent Decade or Ten Years Before the Mass."

### **A Little Introspection**

Issues of "Growth and Development," led by Marvin Reed and Edward Frost, were addressed with a vengeance in 1986–1987, when 38 neighborhood and focus groups met to discuss 20 critical issues concerning church life: everything from music to endowments and spiritual needs to spin-off congregations. Our first organized observance of Passover was held in Robinson Lounge that spring. In January, the minister left on a second sabbatical, which he spent in Tucson, Arizona, to gain deeper understanding of American Indian beliefs.

Growth and development programs were also underway within the UUA. After two years of study, the 1985 General Assembly of the UUA had ratified a new Purposes and Principles preamble to the UUA constitution to state unifying principles of the liberal faith. From 1985 to spring 1987, Edward Frost and other UU ministers created study materials for local congregations. Upon his return from sabbatical, Dr. Frost led an eight-session workshop, "What Unitarian-Universalists Believe: Living Principles for a Living Faith." It was about this time that framed "UUA Principles and Purposes" were hung at our church entrance and in the church school area. In 1987, too, the UUA published its new magazine, *World*, to replace its former tabloid; and the Metro New York District hired Howell Lind to fill the recreated district executive position.

### **Back to Two Services**

Based on the work of the Growth and Development Committee, it was decided that adult overcrowding on Sundays made it advisable to return to two services beginning in September 1987. New auditorium chairs arrived that fall, and the Board approved post-service brunches not only for members' pleasure but as fundraisers by the various groups that prepared the food. Brunches did not reduce attendance at the traditional coffee hour, and from September through March, we continued to consume our normal allotment of 86 pounds of coffee, 30 pounds of sugar, and 500 packets of Sweet & Low.

Art Severance, our intern minister for six months in 1987–1988, arrived in the fall and immediately started Young Adults, a social group that quickly spawned the longer-lasting Not Necessarily Young Adults. In February, Karen Snow began the adult seminar in feminist theology, “Cakes for the Queen of Heaven,” which led to “Cakes II” and other spirituality groups for women. The church school’s major service project in 1988 was to send school supplies and letters through the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee to children in Nicaragua; Julie Muller translated their correspondence into Spanish. From the “Growth and Development” discussions came the decision to terminate in June 1988 our 15-year rental relationship with the Princeton School for Exceptional Children, which had grown tremendously over the previous decade, and to recapture for church use those upstairs spaces that had been shared with the school. Over the summer, Mary Peck and Edna Willis led the major rehabilitation and redecoration of rooms 21–23, the hallways, kitchen, minister’s and secretary’s offices, and the child care room.

The new Visual Arts Committee soon turned the combined rooms 21–22 into a gallery, the start of an annual series exhibiting art by talented church members. The pace of activities of the Women’s Alliance increased in the 1980s and continued into the 1990s. Alliance activities included the annual Harvest Table and Christmas Boutique, inauguration of a quilting group, sponsorship of many church brunches, provision of meals for the Senior Resource Center, an annual party at the Princeton Nursing Home, steadfast annual support to the Clara Barton Camp (for diabetic girls) scholarship programs, Womanspace and Head Start supplies, support for the Campus Ministry, and annual trips for the whole church. It also provided the church with new drapes, chair coverings in Robinson Lounge, and plastic film to reduce the glare on our windows.

Care for the environment grew in the late ’80s. Concerned about the effect of chlorofluorocarbons, Sunday coffee hour switched from styrofoam to paper cups. No-smoking policies began with the small auditorium “whenever children are present,” then extended to include the large auditorium, all classrooms, and three-fourths of the lounge; we finally established a smoke-free building in 1993. High-grade paper recycling was introduced in the early ’90s, and the celebration of Earth Day became an important tradition for our family services.

The Long Range Planning Committee, appointed in the spring of 1988, conducted a special congregational dinner meeting and two days of discussion/workshops in October to provide a forum on planning for the future. During the next few months, 207 persons participated in 27 neighborhood groups for further input. “The 1989–1994 Long Range Plan” was distributed at our Annual Meeting and received by the Board as an information base and resource for its decisions. Although there had been such plans in the past, this document emphasized long-range planning as an ongoing responsibility.

In 1988–1989, not one but two of our members served as officers of the New York Metro District Board: Carl Haag, vice president (later to become president), and Kamal Nigam, youth representative. The UUA published goals urging an integrated effort toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual outreach and inclusion. Two years earlier, the Rev. Scott Alexander had spoken in our pulpit on AIDS awareness, and AIDS information had been the focus of a Women’s Alliance program.

On December 1, 1988, Karen Snow left to become the public programs specialist at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. With the church school growing again in the late '80s, the members requesting more adult education programs, and the minister needing help with increased pastoral care responsibilities, the time had come to hire a second minister. In February 1989, the congregation voted to form a committee, headed by Ted Fetter, to seek a minister of education and program.

### **Edward Frost Called to Atlanta; We Seek Two Ministers**

In May 1989, as the search for a minister of education and program was getting organized, Edward Frost announced that he had accepted a call to be senior minister of the large Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, Georgia. A second committee, headed by Doug Rhodes, was quickly elected to seek a parish minister. The simultaneous search for two ministers continued until May 1991.

### **The Eighties Leadership**

Ministers – Dr. Edward A. Frost (until 1989), Dr. Peter H. Sampson, Interim (1989–1990), Dr. Paul S. Johnson (1991–2002), Christine F. Reed, Minister of Religious Education (1998–2011)  
Church Presidents – Sally Easter (1979–1981), Hugh Janney (1981–1982), Sidney Willis (1982–1985), Douglas Rhodes (1985–1987), Elaine Nigam (1987–1989), James Johnson (1989–1992)