

**Fairlington United Methodist Church**  
**3900 King Street, Alexandria VA 22302**  
Charge Conference Report  
October 21, 2017

*Fairlington UMC is a community of faith dedicated to more fully living out our mission to welcome, nurture and serve.*

2017 has been a very active year for FUMC. Renovation planning has been on-going, highlights include hiring the architectural firm Lemay, Erickson and Wilcox, completing an assessment of the church's mechanical system and receiving some recommended, related next steps. Planning is underway to begin a formal capital campaign during the first half of 2018 and work continues to identify the most effective ways to ensure that the full congregation receives regular feedback regarding the process and opportunities for involvement. We expect the architectural firm to be ready to provide a full church briefing on plans and recommendations before the end of 2017.

Concurrently FUMC has been completing the steps involved in the Next Level Innovations assessments. Our church-wide retreat is scheduled for October 27-29. NLI timing and outcomes will complement ministry/outreach planning for the future and inform the final building renovation design.

**Building and Sustaining Interfaith Partnerships:**

In February 2017 FUMM hosted the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Interfaith Dinner with Beth-El Hebrew Congregation, with 118 in attendance. This year's speaker was Noa Baum, author of *A Land Twice Promised* that addresses an array of issues from both an Israeli and Palestinian perspective. On February 19 we also hosted a panel discussion with Rabbi Brett Isserow and Imam Mohammed Uzman and our clergy.

During August our Sunday worship services focused on Abraham as the founder of three faith traditions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Rabbi Isserow from Beth El Hebrew congregation and Imam Ankaya participated

**Preschool partnership:** Our preschool continues to thrive and is now serving 22 special needs children. This year the preschool has covered the cost of renovating 4 bathrooms in the education wing of the church at a cost totaling \$67,000.

**Reconciling Ministry:** FUMC celebrated its 4<sup>th</sup> year as a reconciling congregation on Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, with guest preacher, Dr. David McAllister Wilson, President of Wesley Theological Seminary, preaching on the topic "We are One." In keeping with our goal to embrace the fullness of our welcoming statement, as well as in light of the current racial tensions in our country, FUMC organized three conversations on race this year, with attendance ranging from 9 to 25. The last conversation occurred the day after the Charlottesville tragedy, giving an opportunity for those who attended (supporting efforts of Charlottesville First UMC to peacefully respond to white supremacists) and

others to share their experiences and reactions to those events and discuss what we as a church can do going forward.

FUMC joined the capital-area United Methodist contingent in the DC capital pride parade for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Our team raised \$1,000 that was donated to two DC non-profits that provide support and services to homeless LGBTQ youth. We hosted a viewing of the documentary film, “An Act of Love,” about the defrocking and later reinstatement of the Rev. Frank Schaefer for officiating the same sex wedding of his son; 20 people attended. Finally, in February, FUMC participated in a conversation that Bishop Sharma Lewis hosted with reconciling churches and individuals in the Virginia Conference.

This fall FUMC members joined others at Annandale UMC to complete training in assisting individuals seeking to update their DACA status.

**Congregational Activities focusing on nurturing:** FUMC has increased Christian formation opportunities through Sunday School, additional adult Bible studies for those new to the Bible and those who have been studying longer term, spirituality workshops and opportunities to learn and practice a variety of prayer forms including *daily examen*, *lectio divina*, *prayer walking* and other contemplative patterns as well as emphasizing the importance of beginning meetings and gathering with prayer.

**Congregational activities focusing on outreach/missions:** FUMC members participate in a broad array of mission opportunities including Meals on Wheels, ALIVE, Carpenter’s Shelter, Max’s Place, ALIVE furniture delivery, ALIVE food collection and ALIVE children’s craft ministry at Cora Kelly center. FUMC Neighborhood outreach has included its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Easter Egg Hunt, with 475 attendees from the church and the community. FUMM sponsored the annual chicken barbecue that netted just over \$2,000 for church mission activities.

The Fairlington United Methodist Women (**FUMW**) assembled 61 health kits, 49 school kits, 12 sewing kits and 20 layette kits for UMCOR setting a new record for the number taken to Conference. FUMW introduced “fellowship excursions” to local museums and other points of interest relating to UMW issues and hosted a DVD movie series on women leaders around the world. We continue to support Rising Hope UMC through financial, food & clothing support and the HOPE RISING Gala.

Two new mission outreach programs are noteworthy:

**Rental Security Deposit Assistance Program:** FUMC, working through Alexandria Social Services, helps individuals and families pay their security deposit, which remains at market rates (\$1,000 - \$2,000) even if the person receives subsidized housing. So far this year the program has assisted 56 households totaling \$16,105. This is a new program and the demand continues to outpace funding reflecting how scarce affordable housing is in Alexandria.

**The Spirituality in Nature (SING)** program completed its first year and resulted in a Green Church award given by the Virginia UMC Conference. This has been another opportunity for those seeking ways to find spiritual deepening and fellowship to do so through guided practices in nature. 240 volunteer hours were invested in 2016-17.

In June FUMC also installed a water fountain that enables everyone to refill water bottles and reduce the use of plastic. To date the fountain has already saved 350 plastic bottled from being added to trash and landfill.

As FUMC readies for our NLI retreat and its recommendations and an advanced presentation from the architects regarding how our space may be modified to increase our welcoming, nurturing and service we are excited about all that God is doing among us. Our desire is to listen deeply, act courageously and be a source of transformation for all who seek it here and for those we touch through our outreach missions.

**Our primary challenges for the year ahead are three:**

- Implement a results oriented capital campaign for church renovation
- Continue to ensure that our building modifications align with program needs and priorities
- Sustain and increase the active participation of members and the attraction of new members committed to welcome, nurture and service

**Our Prayer for Fairlington**

Dear God, we pray for our church, Fairlington UMC, as we consider where you are leading us in the Next Level Innovations program.

We pray for a spirit of wisdom so that we can listen and discern Your voice.

We pray for a willing heart to step out in faith with boldness and courage.

We pray that our lives may be open to the Holy Spirit, that we may know Your power at work in us, and that we may be the Church you intend us to be. In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen

Anne Wilson  
Chair, Fairlington United Methodist Church Council