

HISTORY



Member of Unitarian Universalist Association

The Uncommon Denomination

The First 16 Years

1994 - 2010

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Introduction

The following history commemorates the first 16 years of High Plains Church Unitarian Universalist (1994-2010). It tells the story of how our church came into existence and of early successes and struggles.

Each of our church presidents, who are still available to us, past and present, tells of the highlights during his or her term of office. Each of our ministers sends a message of greeting and relates memorable moments.

Pictures are included to help us remember times and experiences. We are grateful to everyone providing pictures and especially to those who contributed written accounts.

Someone has said: “Survival is the main thing for anyone—or for any organization. After that, it’s all gravy!” HPCUU has not only survived, but has grown. We might even be on the brink of “flourishing,” which was one of our early stated goals.

From our very beginnings, we have been blessed with wonderful people. Sadly, some of those have left us, following jobs and life pursuits. We miss them all dearly and hope they will someday return, even only if for visits. Fortunately, they have always been replaced by other, equally talented individuals who have been willing to devote time, energy, and financial support. Indeed, we are all now enjoying the “gravy” that comes from being associated with so many people who are willing to give so much of themselves to others in our church, local community, and to other inhabitants of our planet Earth.

It is to all the past, present and future members and friends of HPCUU that this history is dedicated. If only we could all be here 100 years from now to see what we have all created together. **What a reunion party that would be!**

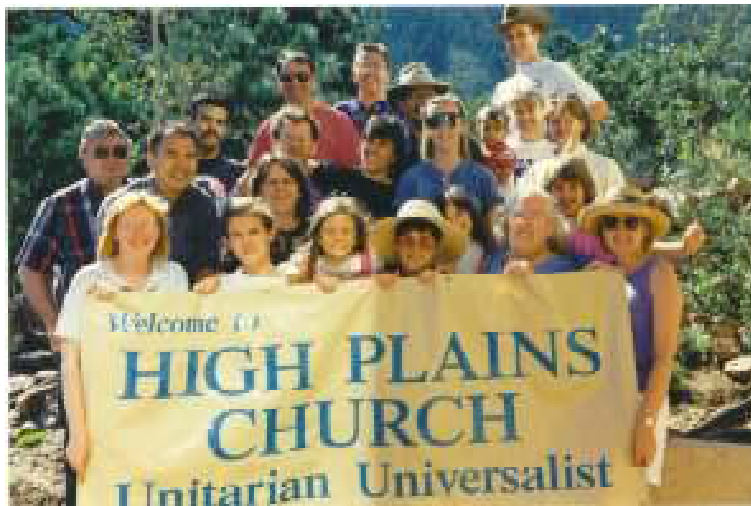
Charter Members

The following names were the first in the High Plains Membership book, signed on April 3, 1994. These people are referred to as “charter members.”

Betty Davis Carole Stewart Sue Neufeld
Donna Duran Kent Bendall Jan Bendall
Phillip Clowes DeeAnne Clowes Lee Espino
Janet Hickox Carol Howard Paula Jampsa
Bill McMillan Denise MacMillan Alan Maloney
Kay Nash Jeanne Moore Marion Wells
Raeburn A. Parnell Terry Moore
John Shannon John Patterson Joan Patterson
Rick Wells Jessica Schulze John Schulze
Jack Majors Sue Majors Peg Green Beth Given

The following members added their signatures to the book in the summer and fall of 1994:

Jane Barrow Walt Barrow Lynne Brown
Cathy Post Martha Williams Andy Marcus
Hannah Guthrie Linda Marcus



The Beginning From 1993-1995

by Jack Majors

The vision of a second Unitarian Universalist presence in Colorado Springs began during the mid-1980s. The recently renovated All Souls Unitarian Church (ASUC), built in 1891 at 730 N. Tejon, was crowded. All Souls weighed various options, including selling their building.

They were still studying this dilemma when, in the late 1980s, several forces came together to accelerate All Souls' growth: the Reverend Harvey Joyner's strong, liberal voice was attracting new members; the statewide anti-gay Amendment 2 was creating interest in liberal churches; and All Souls was participating in a very successful Unitarian Universalist (UUA) print media campaign. After disappointing results with a two-service experiment to accommodate the new growth, the idea of establishing a second church was born.

Reverend Sue Turner, Executive Director of the Mountain Desert District (MDD) of UUA, helped All Souls members take the first steps. The UUA program called for both ASUC and UUA to make significant matching financial contributions for several years, helping the fledgling congregation get off the ground.

All ASUC members were invited to participate in "Circle Supper" discussions of the "new church" concept. More than 150 of the 200 members took part – all on the same night. Participants indicated their level of support, or not, for ASUC's actively engaging in the UUA program to establish a new church. Support was almost unanimous, although only about 20 brave souls indicated their willingness to move to a newly forming congregation.

In a special meeting, ASUC members approved entering into UUA's New Congregation Program. I was chosen to attend a June 1993 special training in Boston for "New Congregation Organizers." Back home, we held organizational meetings for those willing to make the move as well as strong supporters of the enterprise who would remain at ASUC. We chose our "High Plains" name to reflect the Front Range and northeast Colorado Springs terrain. We elected officers and a steering committee, and we established an Order of Service that remains largely unchanged today.

The TIMELINE of the "Critical Events and Dates" is contained in the text at the bottom of each page. This is intended to give a quick overview of our history.

Early 1993—————
**Pre Planning by ASUC
and MDD**

—————**Spring 1993**
**Decision by ASUC to proceed in
creating a new congregation.**

Finally, on Sunday, February 22, 1994, we held our first service at our first church home, at 7750 North Union. Many good ASUC friends attended; they made it happen. Over the years, like a loving parent, ASUC has always been there at important occasions, to cheer us on and to provide tangible support. For this, we are most grateful and appreciative. It has always meant so much to know we were never alone.

Our first church home was in a small but classy office building at 7750 North Union. It held 75, plus about 15 children in a second space. We enjoyed full use of the space seven days a week, and furnished it with purchased used chairs plus donated items.

Marion Wells became our first Director of Religious Education (DRE). My term as the first President ended in December, 1994, when Terry Moore became President, serving from January, 1995 through June, 1996. Peg Greene was a constant resource in organizing once-a-month 'Co-Created Services,' when three or four members teamed to create and present a service. On other Sundays, we relied on "visiting ministers" from along the Front Range. These services were generally well-received and sometimes even given accolades!

We moved in April 1995, after receiving notice that our month-to-month rent would be greatly increased. This disaster turned into a 'rose' when we rented a more affordable and spacious area in the Corporate Office Center of Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC) near Woodmen and I-25. We became a 'church in a box,' meaning that we toted all needed materials to church in various cars each Sunday. But, the meeting space was very much first class, with comfortable seating, and a view overlooking Pike's Peak. We were feeling that we had found our place.



However, after only a few months, we were asked to leave because the building owners were uncomfortable with the "image" of having a church in their professional building. We have always suspected that it was not the image of a church that bothered

them so much as the image of a liberal church. We decided to move on. In retrospect, perhaps it was the fight we should have fought. It could have brought free publicity and drawn many of similar mind, but who knows? At the time we were very small and felt vulnerable.

About this time we changed from a 'steering committee' to a 'Board

June 1993	February 1994
Entered New Congregation	First Service
Progran w/UUA	7750 N. Union

of Trustees.’ In June 1995, one of our founding members, Alan Maloney, was tragically killed in an automobile accident. He was serving as our Treasurer at the time of his death. Alan was a great opera buff, and shortly before his death had introduced some of us to the Colorado Springs Opera Company’s production of Puccini’s “Tournadot.” We were thrilled by the production and much saddened by Alan’s death.



In September 1995 we moved to 1714 Brookwood, in a “ratty strip mall” with outrageous rent, but the location and actual inside space was quite satisfactory. UUA came through with a grant to help us with the rent.

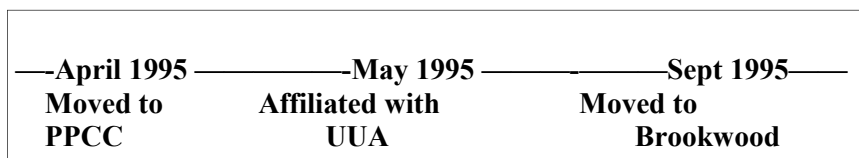
The following month, Katie Kandarian became our Intern Minister. Katie was in her last year at the Illif School of Theology in Denver in preparation for the ministry. Katie had a gifted ability to calm, delight and draw out children. She set the stage for HPCUU becoming a very special place for children, a tradition continuing to this day. About this same time, Meg Kelso became DRE and got the children’s program “jump-started”.

One of our sermons during this time was given by All Souls member, David Porter, a USAFA Psychologist. He provided us with the “Goose Model of Leadership.” which we eagerly adopted as the way we wanted to “fly.” In this model, members of the formation take turns in going forward to lead, while those who are tired of being in front honk the new leaders onward from the rear. Using it, we have been able to give some very good and dedicated leaders much needed rest while encouraging new members to assume responsible positions.



June 1996-June 1997
By Martha Williams

During the spring of ’96, HPCUU held our first all-church planning retreat, where we articulated a vision and listed planning goals. Our first choir began meeting, and at our election, Carole Stewart accepted the position of Vice



President. At her first meeting, held in June, the President resigned! As there were only four of us in the room, a past president, the resigning president, Carole and myself, I have always been grateful that she was willing to accept the challenge of leading the church during a time of many changes.

We no longer felt the excitement of starting a new church. We were establishing processes to maintain stability, and many of us had been working hard for three years. We needed an influx of new people in order to take a break from our leadership roles.

During the summer, Carole and I attended Russell Lockwood Leadership School, where we learned about consensus decision-making. Back at High Plains, we enthusiastically put it into practice with the Board. We found it to be time-consuming, but of value, as long as everyone focused on meeting the needs of the entire church.

In the fall of '96, we began paying Meg Kelso for her work as RE Director, even though we could afford only a small portion of the hours she



actually worked. Meg, Peg Green and I attended the Mountain Desert District (MDD) meeting in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Also that fall, we filed an intent to apply for the UUA's Extension Ministry program. We had 33 adults and 25 children to form 25 pledging units, and the average pledge was \$635. We knew the pledges would have to increase if we were to have a minister; we were still too dependent on grants. Our first pledge drive was "Our Vision for a Flourishing Church," and pledges increased by 87% after the canvas team spoke face-to-face with each contributor in his or her home! It should be noted that the idea for a "Flourishing Church" was suggested by Peg Greene during one of our planning sessions. Then, to follow up on the idea, she drew a wonderful bouquet of flowers which were used to illustrate our progress toward our goal instead of the usual dull thermometer. Thank you, Peg for your insight and artistry!

At the December congregational meeting, the congregation voted to proceed with their application to the UUA for an extension minister, and we also adopted by-laws. We set the minimum age for membership at 16 years, and a minimum pledge to be equal to the amount due to the MDD and UUA in order to be a voting member. Officers were required to have been voting members for three months. We established proxy voting, established indemnification for those doing church work, and changed our fiscal year to



July 1 through June 30. As December waned, we began discussing the importance of creating an attractive worship space; this at the urging of Katie, our Interim Minister. We experimented with chair placement, Katie donated a Romanian pulpit cloth, and we began using flowers every Sunday.

1997 brought more exciting changes to High Plains. The Worship Team provided every service while we were without a minister until August. We created a website which did (and does) attract many of our visitors. We held an all-church discussion about what we wanted in our new minister, and the list included: able to communicate electronically; enjoy music as much as we did; and to be able to cope in a conservative city. Additionally, we began exploring our attitudes regarding being inclusive to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual communities, to begin fulfilling our vision of becoming an official UUA Welcoming Congregation.

The spring of 1997 brought a visit from Margaret Beard, Director of UUA's Extension program. She interviewed individuals in small groups, discovering who we were in order to select the best possible minister for us. You might be surprised to learn that our only choice was whether or not to accept the minister Margaret selected.

On Friday June 6, we learned about our prospective minister, Mike Morran. We held a service based on a packet of materials he sent which included his autobiographical sketch, evaluation by his intern committee, outlines from classes and workshops he had led, and a videotape of one of his sermons. Mike and his wife Tammy were expecting their first baby in July, so we waited until August for their arrival – and a baby shower!

October 1995	—————	May 1996	—————	November 1996
Katie Kandarian		First choir		First Pledge
Interim Minister arrives		formed		Campaign

June 1997-June 1999
by Betty Davis

The biggest church event while I was President was the arrival of our first minister, Mike Morran, and his wife Tammy and baby Zack in August, 1997. We had 42 members; 56 adults attended Mike's first service.



That fall we wrestled with the relationship between the new minister and the congregation's lay leadership. Together we worked our way to a healthy balance where the day-to-day decisions and work continued to be the membership's responsibility, while Mike took on the role of advisor, counselor and spiritual leader. He stressed that we are all responsible for the ministry of the church, and we created a Committee on Ministry to assess the effectiveness of the church ministry, facilitate communication, and to evaluate the minister's performance.

Our second all-church visioning workshop in October 1997 set these priorities: achieving financial independence; increasing social action; involvement and opportunities for personal growth via small groups; owning our own building; and developing an outreach plan.

February 1997	June 1997	August 1997
Applied to UUA for Extension Ministry Program	Approval of UUA	Mike Morran Ordained

We continued study of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual issues. The Women's Journaling Group began in January 1998, and in February Mike began a six-week Coming of Age workshop for 12-15 year olds and their parents. Ten kids and three adults attended a two-day overnight Urban Experience.

In March we inaugurated the Email system, and in June changed the by-laws to double the length of board members' service to two-year staggered terms.

In our annual report to the UUA in June we described ourselves as exhausted, excited and worried – the latter because our financial support from the UUA and All Souls was decreasing. Our average annual pledge increased to \$1270.

In August we marched in our first Gay Pride parade. In December our wonderful DRE, Meg Kelso, moved to New Jersey. She noted that between February 1994 and December 1998, High Plains' number of active adults (including friends) had grown from 29 to 80, and the number of enrolled children had increased to more than 50.



We developed a Board Policy on Disruptive Behavior when we were faced with the difficult situation of one of our friends complaining of sexually harassing behavior on the part of one of our members. We held workshops based on the philosophy: "While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation, when any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to express his or her beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed....."

In January 1999 we had the first of three annual Midwinter Music Medley fundraising events. In February we started Home Groups, a precursor to our current Ultimacy and Intimacy (U&I) groups, and that month also began a Women's Circle. We celebrated our five-year anniversary with cake and champagne after worship service. Kari Miller wisely pointed out that five-year-olds are only in kindergarten; we should not expect to have had the same accomplishments as grown-up churches.

Newsletters during my June '97 – June '99 tenure show topics familiar today, in 2004. There were requests for more hymnals, the yellow bucket was being used to collect food and other items for people in need, and there was a new-building task force. Exhortations to purchase grocery scrip were common, leadership school was being touted, and coffee-making volunteers sought.

Those same newsletters show other topics not seen today. There was a full adult choir which rehearsed weekly and performed regularly; there were frequent adult classes; the Fellowship Team planned regular family and adult outings.

By June 1999, we had 73 adult members plus 58 children enrolled in the RE program. Our youth had attended the 9th grade trip and we participated in Meals on Wheels and First Visitor. We had also met a \$5000 matching grant from the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Colorado. Our goals included: to resolve our space problem, present plans for land acquisition and building by December 1999, to increase our building fund and to increase membership to 95 by June 2000 and to 110 by June 2001.



As I said in my final message (as President) in the June 1999 newsletter: This church has accomplished so much....let us

July 1999- June 2001 **by Greg Stump**

Some interesting numbers:

Membership:

July 99 =	73 members
July 01 =	94 members (29% growth)

RE Enrollment:

July 99 =	58 children
July 01 =	77 children (33% growth)

Canvass Amount:

July 99 =	\$54,000
July 01 =	\$82,000 (52% growth)

HPCUU's July '99 – June '01 history can be summarized simply – **moving to two Sunday services, two years of two services, and moving out of two services.**

Although two services is something some of you may prefer to forget, the good news was that we had to move to two services because we were growing, and we continued to grow after we made the change.

We had more people arriving for church and children's Religious Education (RE) than our rental space on Brookwood Drive could handle. Sometimes, people overflowed into the fellowship area; classrooms designed for eight kids had 14. Clearly something had to be done. As any good UU church would do, we formed a committee, sent out a survey and held a congregational meeting to hear all voices. The result was that in October '99, High Plains Church moved to a two-service format. Also, as good UUs, everybody pitched in, we solved problems as they emerged, and we made "more room at the table." Although the change solved the space problem in theory, the overwhelming feedback for the next two years was "This isn't how we like to do church." Common sentiments included: "I miss seeing my friends who attend the other service." "It's too hard to find two of everything, such as

worship leaders, musicians, greeters, etc.” “Our community is fragmented.” It’s like a pair of shoes that don’t quite fit – you can tolerate it for awhile, but it’s not going to work in the long run.

Other highlights of the ’99-’00 church year included: participation in the annual Gay Pride Parade, an all-church retreat in the the mountains to set church goals, full-time nursery care by Hazel Bolin, baby Ben born to Minister Mike and wife Tammy, David Coit departs Director of Religious Education position, Lori Stump hired as new DRE, wonderful art displays in the sanctuary. Boardmembers were: Greg Stump, President; Merle Stryker, Vice President; David Chandler, Treasurer; Tim Oliver, Secretary; Kay Walch, Gloria Weld/Bobbi Crook, At Large.

Church year ’00-’01 began with the introduction of a new, very important program, our Ultimacy and Intimacy (U&I) Groups. More than half the congregation signed up for the eight facilitated groups, connecting over food, fellowship and discussions of timely and timeless topics. We initiated another church program in 2000, that of The High Plains Church Council, in which Team Leaders strengthen and coordinate our church’s many activities. Both programs continue today.

Now back to the space problem. Still feeling cramped and disconnected, even with two services, we decided in the spring of 2001 to take action. The “Decision 2001” team made recommendations to the board and congregation. Team members George Oliver, Mike Zimmerman, Linda Macdonald, Clay Bosler, John Donlin, Mary Lou Jones, Laura Harmon and Heidi Smith impressed everyone with their ability to get a lot done in a short

October 1999	October 2000	September 2000
Started two Services Format	First Annual Church Family Retreat	U and I first meetings

period of time. The team’s well-developed recommendation to the congregation in May was to “rent to grow” – in other words, rent a larger facility to allow us to continue to grow. Their suggestion was implemented within two months; that story is told by the next President, Tim Oliver, in the next chapter.



Other highlights of church year 2000 – 2001 included: Annual church picnic; Coming of Age ceremony by Mike Morran and Lori Stump; first annual services auction; the

passing of one of our close friends and avid supporters, Kay Arnold; a church retreat that was fun instead of work; a congregational assessment led by the Committee on Ministry; and UUA growth consultant Jeri Moulder helped our Board think about growth and space.

Boardmembers were: Greg Stump, President; Kay Walch, Vice President; Nuna Bosler, Treasurer; Amy Plapp, Secretary; Tim Oliver and Bobbi Crook, At Large.



July, 2001 – June, 2003
by Tim Oliver

Vision: *High Plains Church is a welcoming community of diverse people and beliefs, united by respect and compassion, and committed to a culture of involvement, service, and learning. Gathering to comfort and inspire one another, we journey toward spiritual transformation for ourselves and the world.*

Mission: *Our mission is to sustain and enhance the quality of our worship and religious education programs as we deepen our connections to one another, to spirit, and to truth. Inspired by diversity and called to the work of justice, we open our minds and hearts in a growing community of fellowship, teaching, and learning.*



We began my term of office as President by moving from our own “24-7” leased space on Brookwood to renting gym and cafeteria space on Sunday-mornings-only at Rockrimmon Elementary School.

The Transition Team headed by Linda Grimaldi paved the way for this new lifestyle in several ways: they held a ‘garage sale’ to clean out excess materials; they parceled out the church-owned artwork by having a ‘rental auction’; and they helped us purchase and install a shed at Rockrimmon for storing on-site items we’d need weekly. We rented office and meeting space from All Souls in their Susan B. Anthony Annex.

We held our first Rockrimmon Sunday service in August, 2001 and began learning the process of setting up church in the gym and RE in the cafeteria, then storing it all away at the end of the service. At that first service, Shayla Rad and Kari Miller helped dedicate the gym as sacred to us with Native American chants and a

smudge stick. It continually amazes me how we can transform an elementary school gym into sacred space for three hours each Sunday.

As we learned to live without our own space, we learned a lot about coffee shops in the north end of town, an area more convenient to most of our members than our rented office space at All Souls downtown.

On and after September 11, we missed having our own space in which to grieve, but that lack provided opportunity to affirm our connections as All Souls opened their sanctuary for us in joint services. The turmoil following 9/11 surfaced differences among members and friends as to appropriate ways of responding to world events. It was during this time that we added the words in our opening welcome each Sunday to include political differences.

Our next transition was to plan our way step-by-step out of the Extension Ministry program and into being a mature congregation with a Settled Minister. We began by involving the entire congregation in a series of meetings to revisit our Vision and Mission Statements. Betty Davis commented that five years earlier, the initial vision had seemed an incredible stretch, but that she realized we had become that early set vision. We hope the same thing will happen with our new Vision and Mission Statements, adopted after 10 small group meetings, many task force sessions and an all-member vote.

Next step in the plan was a Ministerial Discernment process during which we ‘drew a picture’ of our ideal minister. To the surprise of no one, the picture emerged looking a lot like Mike Morran.

The Board was working on a draft agreement to call Mike as our full-time Settled Minister when the proverbial ‘other shoe’ dropped. Mike advised us that he had accepted a call to be Senior Minister at First Unitarian in Denver.

The June good-bye service included the entire congregation forming a circle from which the Morran family stepped backward, leaving the circle with a powerful message that Mike’s service to the congregation was ended. To emphasize the point, Mike changed out of his ‘Minister suit’ into casual clothes for the party afterward in the cafeteria.

The UUA and Mountain Desert District provided invaluable assistance in giving us direction to fill our ministerial needs. Their strong guidance advised that it is a mistake to jump from one permanent minister to the next permanent minister. The Board-appointed Search Committee of Gail Ballare, Jennifer Lacy and George Oliver introduced Reverend Gail Collins-Ranadive as our Interim Minister. Reverend Gail is a “Professional Interim,” trained in helping congregations make the transition between ministers.

Through 2002- 2003, Reverend Gail challenged us to examine who we were as a congregation and where we wanted to be as we grew up. She was not shy about bringing our ‘growing edges’ to our attention, and was a constant source of affirmation for us as we continued to foster the spirit of good will that is the mark of our congregation.

With Reverend Gail at work, the Board established Settled Minister parameters for a Search Team elected by the congregation: Nancy Prince, Chair, along with David Chandler, Linda Grimaldi, Judy Sargent, Steve Vaughn and Jim Walch. During the next year, each member of the Team invested more than 250 hours at meetings, in telephone interviews, doing homework, in-person interviews, traveling, etc. etc. Gallons of coffee (and I’m told one or two bottles of wine) were consumed.

At the end of the process the Team presented Matthew Johnson-Doyle to the congregation as their recommendation to become our first Settled Minister. The vote was unanimous at the congregational meeting to call him. After the vote, Morgan, aka Mrs. Johnson-Doyle, was handed an application for a librarian position at a local school.

Our membership continued to climb, and by December 2002, we managed to stretch our membership number over the century mark for the first time. We continued our Welcoming Congregation activities with a second series of classes, this time led by David Chandler and Tom Whitten. 14 folks participated.

We said fond farewells to Reverend Gail as she left for her next congregation in Flagstaff, Arizona, and I passed the challenges of being the leading goose in our flock on to Amy Plapp.

August 2001	September 2002
First service at Rockrimmon	Reverend Collins Ranadive begins as Interim Minister

July '03-July '04
by Amy Plapp

Reverend Gail left us with some pointed questions about our plans for the future. In particular she asked us to consider that we were at best ambivalent about the idea of growing as a congregation, and perhaps on some level even opposed to it. We would face her questions together with our new, first, “settled” Minister.

Matthew hit the ground running. He seemed to have a fount of fresh sermons in him, plenty of energy for attending meetings and social events, endless enthusiasm for getting to know each and every High Plains Member and Friend, and lots of new ideas. The community seemed to reorganize and revitalize itself with his help. There were a few growing pains along the way as relationships were formed, but there was largely an attitude of mutual respect and a willingness to listen.

The rate at which visitors found us (and RETURNED!) to Sunday services increased. Long-term members sometimes found themselves in the unfamiliar position of not being able to keep up with new names and faces. New members began to reveal their interests and talents, and current members seemed to come back from old burnouts. Most teams developed leaders and a good component of volunteers. In turn, Board meetings seemed more enjoyable and shorter, as the Board no longer needed to micro-manage church operations.



In November, we ordained Matthew as a UU Minister and installed him as our settled Minister, in a festive full-day of activities including morning service and evening ceremonies and party. As robed ministers and the many guests marched solemnly under Rockrimmon's basketball hoops, and spoke and prayed in sonorous tones, some High Plains members became more appreciative of our own down-to-earth style. The ceremony was warm, meaningful, and a memorable event in the life of the church.

In December, the Board rented a small office/conference room space, which helped us feel a bit more organized and focused. Matthew moved out of his home office, and team meetings and adult education classes were held in the new space, even as northside coffee houses were still used as annexes.

As the church year progressed, money was less of a problem. The previous fiscal year had ended with a huge garage sale netting more than



\$3,000. In the fall, we received word that a \$7,000 District Chalice Lighters grant for funding ministerial transition expenses would be sent in a few months. Our annual November auction grossed more than \$8,000 and in spring 2003, we received another \$7,000+, this time from UUA to carry out an extensive joint

publicity campaign with All Souls. The publicity plan had been developed over the past two years by members of both churches. Finally, a three-member canvass team ran a pledge drive that brought in commitments exceeding \$100,000, the most successful campaign ever.

One of the canvass goals had been to decrease church reliance on fundraisers, moving towards funding the entire operating budget through pledges and contributions. At budget time however, the Board chose to use some of the additional pledge funds to increase part-time staff hours, hire a nursery caregiver and continue to rent office space. In the end, fundraisers and other types of income still made up about 10% of the budget, down from 14% the previous year. This engendered some

feelings of disappointment and dissatisfaction within the congregation, but ultimately the budget was passed largely as submitted.

Another significant event during the year was the development of a strategic plan. About half our members met in small group discussions sponsored by a strategic planning task force. That group then synthesized the results with past reports and other research, into a strategic planning document for the church. This plan laid out goals for staff additions and other programmatic changes over the coming years, and proposed the formation of a facilities task force to begin the process of evaluating our space needs and planning for the future.



2004 is High Plains' 10th Anniversary Year. We were spun off as a new congregation by All Souls in 1994, and now we are remembering and celebrating with events throughout the year, including special Sunday services, publication of this booklet, an essay contest and a Homecoming Weekend. As we finish up our first decade, we look forward to continued growth, a stronger presence in the local area, a building of our own, and the continuation of our own warm, loving community.

—November 2002—	—Spring 2003—	—August 2004—
Reverend Matthew Johnson-Doyle Ordained	Strategic Plan Developed	10th Anniversary

July, 2005 – June, 2007

by Karen Clemmensen

An important goal of these years in which I served as Board President, was the purchase of land and/or building to serve as our first permanent church home. A Facilities Task Force, formed during the tenure of Amy Plapp as Board President, worked tirelessly to investigate properties for sale in the region and to recommend one for purchase. We worked with UUA consultant, Larry Wheeler, to determine the feasibility of such a purchase and to design a successful Capital Campaign.

By the end of church fiscal year 2007, Capital Campaign Chairman, Jack Majors, reported capital campaign commitments of \$452,000, combined with grants and loan forgiveness by the All Souls Unitarian Universalist Endowment Fund, totaled an available \$827,000 for the purchase and renovation of 1825 Dominion Way.

With gratitude to ASUUC for a loan and grant totaling \$450,000 and to the UUA for a loan of the majority of the remaining balance, HPCUU signed a contract to purchase 1825 Dominion Way, previously known as Mountasia Family Fun Center, on December 20, 2006. We also purchased 4 modular units which serve as RE classrooms as well as meeting space.

With high hopes of moving into our new church home as soon as possible, we began a several months long process of repairs, refurbishing, remodeling and compliance with state, county and local regulations. Over 75% of the congregation participated in the challenging physical work of transforming the Fun Center into a Spiritual Sanctuary. We held first services in the summer of 2007 and dedicated the building in September, 2007. Another focus during these years was preparing for the transition from a pastoral-level church to a program-level

church. A By-Laws Revision Task Force began to look at changes that would be needed to accommodate a church of more than 150 members. A Personnel Committee was created to develop a Personnel Practices and Procedures Handbook and the church created the new staff positions of Director of Ministry to Youth and Administrative Assistant. The Finance Team began a process to update our financial procedures. We began to transition to a Board-Council system of governance by funding the Church Council and giving them more autonomy to carry out church programs. We also redesigned the charter for the Leadership Development Team to provide for training and for a more seamless transition into leadership by our members. By the end of church year 2006-2007, our membership was nearing the program church level of 150 members.

In addition to these accomplishments, the membership of our church continued to support and participate in other church and community-oriented activities:

- Ultimacy and Intimacy (U & I) groups served a need for small-group ministry.
- Our Religious Education program, directed by Lori Stump, expanded to serve the need for life span faith development.
- We participated in several Social Action sponsored events such as Silver Key; Meals on Wheels; Marion House Soup Kitchen; the Gay Pride Parade; supporting needy families through the holidays; and, Rebuild America
- We endorsed the community ministry of Nathan Mesnikoff.
- The Reverend Matthew Johnson-Doyle continued to offer thoughtful and thought provoking sermons as well as spiritual support and organizational guidance through these event-filled years.

Sue Neufeld, Sheri Trumpfheller, Dan Leslie, Sue Majors, John Donlin, Marty Sarlette, Dale Hohm and Julie Feuerbach provided exceptional leadership by serving on our Board of Trustees during this important time in the growth and development of our church.



July, 2007 – June 2009

By Julie Feuerbach

The **2007 - 2008** year was a busy one! We moved into our own building, finished phase 2 of the renovations, craned our portable RE classrooms out of our parking lot and over the main building, and opened the miniature golf course for business. We established a Building & Grounds Council which was delegated the responsibility for maintaining and coordinating the use of the facility. A social action/justice/education workshop was conducted and a plan for the establishment of a Social Action Council was drafted and implemented. This was our first year with a Finance Council structure, led by our Church Financial Officer. The Finance Council reviewed and recommended changes to our existing finance policies/procedures, to better reflect this new structure. They also continued the process of assessing financial oversight and changes needed in our current system. The Bylaws Revision Task Force completed its revisions and the congregation voted to accept them at the May 18 business meeting.

In February of 2008 we learned the sad news that our

minister and his family would be moving at the end of June. Upon learning of Matthew's resignation, the Board started the ministerial transition process. We appointed an Interim Minister Selection Committee, met with the MDD District Executive and MDD Ministerial Settlement Representative, and selected a slate of individuals for the Ministerial Search Committee which was approved by the congregation at the annual business meeting in May.

The 2007–2008 Board of Trustees were as follows: Julie Feuerbach (President), Andy Foat (Vice President), Carol Montgomery (CFO), Judy Bolin (Secretary), Dale Hohm (At Large - Leadership portfolio), and Larry Sargent (At Large – Planning Portfolio). The membership of High Plains Church was 160 by June of 2008.

The **2008 - 2009** year was one of transition. We welcomed our half-time, consulting minister, Wanda Daniel, in August. Wanda helped us to discern what was working well, and what could use some attention. Additionally, she helped us to recognize needs at High Plains Church that were not being addressed and how we, as a congregation, could meet them. At the beginning of the year, the board established a set of priorities on which to focus. These included the following:

Ministerial Search: Thanks to all the hard work of our Ministerial Search Committee (Karen Clemmensen, Betty Davis - chair, Phyllis Dunn, Alan Gershanov, Danielle Heimer, Seth Herdt, Dan Leslie, and Diane Oliver), our search for a new minister was successful! In April, we unanimously called the Reverend Roger Butts to be our next full time Settled Minister, starting in August of 2009.

Church Infrastructure/Organization: We reviewed

the overall organization of High Plains Church, updated/developed policies and procedures, updated/developed job descriptions for board members and other leadership positions within the church, and started the process of restructuring/reorganizing where needed. This included the recommendation that two task forces be formed for the 2009 – 2010 year: a Finance Study and Advisory Task Force, and a Security and Safety Task Force.

Pastoral Care: Wanda Daniel, Judy Bolin, and Carol Montgomery worked together to develop a Pastoral Lay Care team which is now up and running. They recruited and trained members, developed the structure/organization of this team, and worked with the current caring team to determine how these two teams would work together.

Fiduciary Oversight: Reviewing our financial structure was a priority, with an emphasis on setting up an appropriate accounting system, with proper internal controls and oversight capabilities. Members of our finance team spent numerous hours working on this; we also contracted with a CPA to get this system up and running for the 2009 – 2010 fiscal year, and to provide training with its implementation for the first few months. This priority was continued into the 2009 – 2010 year, with the appointment of a Finance Study & Advisory Task Force.

Members of the 2008 - 2009 Board of Trustees were: Julie Feuerbach (President), Annabel Carney (Vice President), Judy Bolin (Secretary), Larry Sargent (At-large member), and Amy Lassen (At-large member). Curt Wilkinson and Susan Boutin both served in the position as our Church Financial Officer (CFO) at different times during the year. The membership of High Plains Church was 167 by June of 2009.

Our Ministers

Reverend Kathy (Katie) Kandarian, a Parish Minister since 1999, spent September 1995 to December 1996 at High Plains Church. In 2004, she says, “It seems amazing that High Plains is already ten years old, and yet so much has happened in that time, that I can’t imagine a time in which High Plains Church didn’t exist. I served you as Intern New Congregation Minister, and we worked together establishing vision and a common form for worship. I recall how well you did worship for such a new church. There was a sense of ritual, spirituality and



wonderful music. I loved learning how to minister to the children, and truly became a minister when I was with you. Thank you! Mazeltov!

Reverend Kandarian attended Iliff School of Theology, graduating in 1998. She is currently serving at Starr King UU Church in Hayward, California. Katie, says she and her three children live only a mile away from the church. She loves living in California (where there is much liberal thought and action), loves being near a UU seminary (new ideas) and enjoys her congregation filled with warm, outgoing and dedicated members.

Reverend Mike Morran served High Plains from August 1997 to July 2002. He is currently serving at First Unitarian Society of Denver in Denver, Colorado. A lifelong Unitarian Universalist, Mike grew up in the Evanston, Illinois congregation. After dismally failing the Chicago public school system, traveling widely with little to carry, and previous careers in mechanical engineering and social work, Mike began seminary studies in his mid-thirties. High Plains was his first full time ministry. He is happily married to Tammy, and they take great joy in raising their two boys, Zack and Ben, born 1997 and 2000 respectively.



Mike says, “ On your tenth anniversary, it is my pleasure to remind you that you are better than you know. I have seen lives touched and transformed, souls deepened, and worlds expanded within the embrace of your community. I remember you as appropriately loving, and deservedly demanding, and it was my pleasure to serve among you for the five years we spent together. Keep the faith.

Your existence is meaningful and deeply sustaining to people scattered throughout the world.”

Reverend Gail Collins-Ranadive served as Interim Minister for High Plains Church from September 2002 to July 2003. She says, “I feel so blessed to be doing this life/work of ministry, and I am deeply grateful that serving High Plains Church was part of my path.”



Reverend Gail said YES to ministry after raising a family, entering Starr King School at the age of fifty. She returned to her native New England for her internship and then served a small settled congregation in southern Massachusetts part time for three years.

Reverend Gail served interim congregations in four very varied areas, striving to learn what each landscape has to teach her spirit. She hopes to share these insights in a book she’s writing on sabbatical next year, while serving a second year in Arizona, part time.

Reverend Gail is the mother of two daughters, the older of whom has just graduated from the Episcopal Seminary of the South, the younger of whom has just had a baby daughter, bringing the total grandchildren to three—all girls!

Reverend Matthew Johnson-Doyle was called by the congregation of High Plains Church Unitarian Universalist to serve as the Minister in July 2003. Matthew is a third generation Unitarian Universalist who grew up in the



Pacific Northwest. He graduated with a B.A. from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington and earned a Master of Divinity from Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. Matthew completed his internship at First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. He served as chair of his youth group, college group and student body president at Meadville

Lombard, in addition to many other leadership positions in district and national UU organizations. His wife, Morgan, also a born-and-raised Unitarian Universalist, is a librarian at Sierra High School in Colorado Springs.

Matthew says, “What a pleasure it is to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of High Plains with you. I think of those words we all know: “This Little Light of Mine. I’m going to let it shine. Put it under a bushel. No!” That is the spirit of this congregation. You began because you understand that we must make room for the next 50, 100, 500 people who need Unitarian Universalism, who long for a faith that says yes to diversity, yes to exploration, yes to life. May that spirit be with us through the next 10 years and 100 years after that, and forever more.”

“I arrived in 2003 fresh out of seminary to be the

minister of a wonderful fast growing church. The congregation had (and has) a strong sense of mission, a calling to be the place that welcomes liberal religious seekers. The five years I have spent here have been wonderful ones: full of hard work, celebration, and purpose. Lori Stump, the Director of Religious Education, is one of the finest DRE's in our association and grew the program. We hired Judy St. Peter as the Office Assistant and Gia Henery as the Youth Director in 2006, and each made a great addition to our staff. When I started with you, we were meeting at Rockrimmon Elementary School, but quickly outgrew that space. We formed a "Facilities Task Force" to help figure out options and moved to larger quarters at Timberview Middle School in 2005. In December of the next year we purchased the property on Dominion Way for \$1,000,000. We held the first worship service here on August 12, 2007.



“Also in my tenure, we strengthened our team structure, with three councils holding responsibility, allowing the board to focus more on policy and vision.

We re-wrote the mission (to build a liberal spiritual community that welcomes all to lives of wholeness) and the vision (one mountain; many paths; insight and inspiration on life's journey). We welcomed a net of sixty new members during this time (a gross of about 80)—over half the church's current membership. Most of all, people had fun together. They enjoyed each other's company, laughed at even my jokes, raised lovely children, and reached out to the new. It was good times."



Reverend Roger Butts was called to High Plains in the spring of 2009 and began his work here in August 2009. Since coming to Colorado Springs, Rev. Butts has joined the board of the Greenberg Center for Learning and Tolerance, a group that works to appreciate diversity and human rights in the Springs, as well as bringing renewed awareness to the lessons of the Holocaust. Roger has also taught a course on Mary Oliver and on religious humanism, the latter the focus of attention by the CS Gazette.

Before he came to High Plains Church, Roger was the minister at the Unitarian Church, Davenport from 2002-2009. Raised in Galesburg, Illinois, he went to college at Appalachian State University, where he studied political science.

After graduation, he moved to Washington, DC where he worked for Senator Terry Sanford (D-NC), as a teacher at the National Young Leaders Conference, and as a meeting planner at the National Research Council. In 1999, he enrolled at Wesley Theological Seminary, in Washington, D.C., a United Methodist seminary with many Unitarian Universalists in attendance. At Wesley, Roger studied theology under Josiah Ulysses Young III, an Africana scholar whose specialty includes Dietrich Bonhoeffer. During these years, Roger also indexed the authoritative Bonhoeffer biography re-released by Fortress Press, did field work in Sterling Virginia, completed an internship at the UU Church of Annapolis, and served as a chaplain at both American University for UU students there and at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore. Roger continues his studies in theology at the UU Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, where his work focuses on the liberal church and holocaust remembrances.

Reverend Butts says, “After a year among the High Plains congregation, I am excited to bring a few visions to the congregation. First, continuing and expanding the church's sense of hospitality. Second, continuing to build on the strong worship services that are a part of High Plains Church. Third, envisioning a Center for the Arts and Religion and a Center for Spiritual and Faith Development for the northern part of Colorado Springs. In 2010-2011, I will bring to the church a year-long worship and adult religious education program I call “Neighboring Faiths for All.” I am very pleased to be among you!”

Anyone wishing to join the church on April 3, 1994 was asked to prepare and read a written message: “**How I came to be here....**” These excerpts from those statements reveal the diverse backgrounds and high aspirations that formed the foundation on which HPCUU was built.

I am here like the tail of a kite. I told my husband it would be too much work...The kite blew towards northern Colorado Springs, closer to home. The committee to form a new congregation gained momentum... I got excited! This is a very creative process; I got hooked..... Marion Wells

...I am here because I want a church in which I do not feel like one of the multitude. I also want a place that will welcome and teach my children. Joan Patterson

My mother first began attending Unitarian fellowships when I was 8 years old. ..I participated in LRY as a teenager....I seek an interesting intellectual environment, a welcoming and supportive community, and a haven from the prevailing prejudices within Colorado Springs. John Patterson

I've considered myself a Unitarian Universalist for at least 15 years, but for most of that time, didn't feel a sense of belonging to any of the few churches I occasionally attended. Upon coming to Colorado Springs three years ago, I found a church that met my needs for liberal religious expression and community. High Plains, for me, is an exciting adventure, the way to spread the Unitarian Universalist "good news".... Denise MacMillan

Simply put, I am looking here at High Plains for a community of religious inquiry and for reinforcement of my faith in the inherent sanity and intelligence of my fellow man. I am NOT looking for any final answers to religious questions or dogmatic affirmations of doctrine, but rather for mutual encouragement of questioning the moral, ethical, juridical and cosmological issues that constitute religious inquiry.....I trust this congregation will support my seeking. Alan Maloney



HPCUU Congregation - Circa 2002

Compiled and Edited by
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