

# THROUGH THICK AND THIN

THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS  
(1961 - 1980)

The History of  
The Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Boca Raton

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The first record of action leading to formation of a Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in the South Palm Beach County area was a news release prepared for the Sun Sentinel by an unidentified "publicity chairman." In it "people with liberal religious views" were invited to hear Monroe Husbands, Fellowship Director of the American Unitarian Association, Boston, Massachusetts, on the topic "Who are These Unitarians?" The meeting was to be held Sunday, March 19, 1961, at the Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce.

A follow-up news release reported a steering committee was set up to explore the possibility of establishing a Unitarian Fellowship within the Delray, Boynton and Boca Raton area. Serving on the committee were Arthur Niles, chairman, Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Kornblue, Mrs. Endre A. Norem (now Ethel Petruzelli), Mr. and Mrs. Horace F. Wells, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Breslau. A second meeting was planned for March 26. "The Unitarian Study Group" continued to meet and to have speakers throughout the spring at the Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce.

At the end of the year 1961 a series of meetings began in homes and were recorded briefly by Ethel Norem. The first was held Dec. 9 at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Kornblue, with the Rev. Walter C. Jolly of the Unitarian Church in Ft. Lauderdale leading the discussion. The number attending was not given, but at the next meeting - at the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Niles six were present.

In early 1962 meetings were held at the homes of Mr. and Mrs. Endre A. Norem, Mr. and Mrs. Horace Wells, Mrs. Marian Kuth (later Marian Greene, a prime mover in establishing the church), Mr. and Mrs. William Gun, and Mr. and Mrs. John H. Apetz. On Feb. 23 the

group met at the Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce. The last meeting recorded by the unofficial secretary, Ethel Norem, was June 13 at the home of Marian Kuth at which the first officers were elected: Bill Gun, vice-president and resident manager of Walston brokerage firm, president; Ed Kornblue, vice-president; Ethel Norem, secretary (later replaced by Mrs. Gerald Marqusee); Mrs. Keith Berntson, treasurer; and Marian Kuth, head of religious education.

On Sept. 21 the first roster of officers was completed, bylaws were adopted and the assembled group of 22 authorized the new president to apply for membership in the Unitarian Universalist Association, which had been formed on May 11, 1961, by the merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America. This was done in his letter of Sept. 24 with a \$5.00 token contribution enclosed. In the Association's reply of Sept. 27 the Fellowship was welcomed as the 390th currently affiliated. Establishment of the group as a UU Fellowship was considered to be effected with the inaugural service of Oct. 14. This historic meeting was held in the University Bowl, N. Dixie Highway, where by now they were meeting as attendance had grown to 55. Speaking at the meeting were James Lee, regional director of the Thomas Jefferson Council of the UU Church, and Fred E. Stanton, president of the Florida conference of Liberal Churches. On that date the following 17 persons subscribed their support to the bylaws and purposes of the UU Fellowship of Boca Raton and became its charter members.

S. Leonard Singer  
Diana M. Gunn  
Caroline Duncan  
Barbara Berntson

Mary Ellen Christensen  
Ethel Norem  
Endre A. Norem  
Janet L. Singer  
Rose Marqusee  
Jean Kornblue  
Wilma M. Thompson  
Mario Petruzelli  
Viola Petruzelli  
Olive P. Niles  
Arthur H. Niles  
William S. Gunn  
Edwin P. Kornblue

The first budget figure, for 1962-63, was \$1750, of which \$1550 was pledges, \$150 collections and \$50 miscellaneous.

At a board meeting September 29, 1963, three new possible meeting locations were- considered: Deerfield Beach Chamber of Commerce on Hillsboro Boulevard, north side of the bridge at the Intracoastal, and two buildings without air conditioning - a warehouse behind the Boca Raton Elementary school and the Deerfield Beach Recreation Center. The following Sunday services were held at the Chamber of Commerce, which location was then unanimously chosen.

Ralph Nottingham, research and development engineer with Hoover Electronics, was elected president September 30. The group by now had grown to 34 members. The 1963-64 budget was \$3060 which included \$1512 for a building fund.

The Fellowship's third president and most prolific letter and publicity writer, Herbert Pocklington, manager of Chris Craft in Pompano Beach, was elected May 31, 1964. During this period the board began to consider buying a lot for a future church building and hiring a part-time R.E. director or young minister from an area church. A letterhead and hymnals were acquired, the coffee period format established and a building committee formed. The budget was \$2034 and members totaled 35. From this President Pocklington projected for 1967 a membership of 150 and a \$12,750 budget. .

A perennial subject of divided opinion among UU's is reflected in the following from board minutes of October 15, 1964: "Chairman Pocklington brought up the matter of hymns in the church. It was recognized that a vocal minority doesn't want them but that they should be tolerant of the majority's wish. It was the consensus that we are a church, not a lecture association."

In January of 1965 the Unicorn was born. Its name was the "whimsical brainchild of our President, Herb Pocklington," explained its first editor, Maurice Dufficey. The columns of the early church organ were . largely filled by Editor Dufficey's erudite and witty essays on whatever struck his satirical fancy. In time they gave way to a more informative and functional type of newsletter.

Dorita Dufficey was elected president April 11. She stated her aims for the Fellowship were to acquire a building site, build a church and employ a full-time minister. A budget of \$4290 was adopted, of which \$2,290 was for operating expenses and \$2,000 for a building fund. The definition of member as one who has signed the membership book was established.

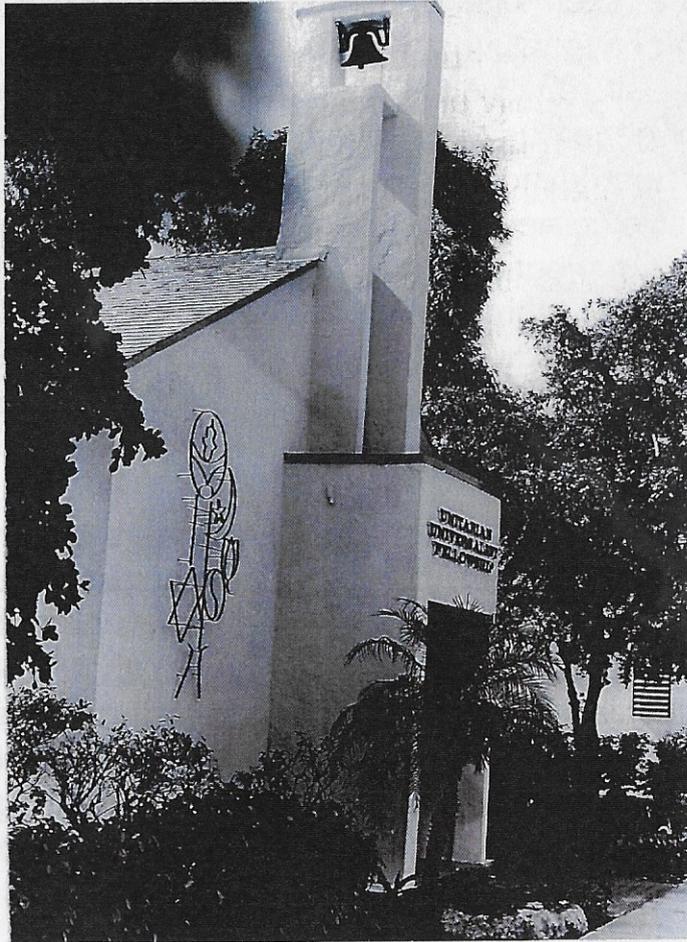
At a board meeting on May 5, Ralph Nottingham noted that in the two previous years expenses had been held to half of income. He suggested establishing a reasonable goal for income and fixing the budget at half of it. However, the board felt that the budget should be established independent of income.

By the May 30 Annual Meeting it had been concluded that no action would be taken toward the purchase of a lot because of the lack of growth and small number of financial contributions during the past year. Only six family units made pledges. It was pointed out that although other generous donations had been made, plans must be based on anticipated income. The practice of placing a collection box in an unobtrusive corner of the room where persons could, if so inclined, place contributions gave way at this meeting to the stern realities of the Fellowship's financial needs. The action followed numerous discussions and letters to the congregation on the subject. "Passing the plate" at the services was voted in as a necessary, if indelicate, evil.

Philosophical differences among members began to surface. One was reflected in a letter to a prospective speaker by the then program chairperson: "We have a problem of sorts in the group you might wish to touch on: some feel our religion should be a looking-out sort of thing, that we should be concerned with moral and spiritual and ethical values whenever and wherever they arise; others feel the church should help us as individuals to be happier, to get along with our friends and family, and that anything smacking of politics should have no place in the pulpit on Sunday morning."

Beginning November 21, services were held in the Deerfield

Beach Women's Club on Hillsboro Boulevard, with R.E. activities continuing in the Chamber of Commerce a few blocks east because of insufficient space in the Club, The congregation voted to keep the name of fellowship rather than church regardless of the size of the group as it was felt the former term carries a stronger feeling of intimacy and friendliness and is free of the negative connotations of the latter.



*UUFBR's First Home*

By the year's end social action, adult education, finance, building and R.E. committees had been formed and after-service talk backs and potluck suppers had become the pattern of church life for the group which was now four years old.

The year 1966-67 was to be a year of giant strides by the Fellowship, a year that would see a church building acquired, a minister hired, and a social action program launched that would be an inspiration and guide to other UU churches in the state and region.

A perennial phenomenon in UU churches, and not confined to them, is reflected in these words by a member in the Unicorn of Jan. 22: "A raw source of irritation concerns those many fine Unitarians we once knew who have drifted away for one silly reason or another. Too many have acted like the little boy who starts the marble game, and is fine as long as things are going his way, but who runs home as soon as a new kid comes along and wants to play by different rules. Too many Unitarians have sullenly taken their marbles and gone home. If Unitarians, who profess such high ideals, cannot adequately overcome their own internal differences, how can they expect any more of the rest of the world?" The writer of these words, however, drifted away himself after a few years.

Dr. Wallace Best was elected president April 17. Total liquid assets reported by Treasurer Harry Olin on May 2 were \$9,592.65. The operating budget was set at \$5,200. Up to this point members had been divided on whether to build a new, modern style church west of town or obtain a building in town that could be used also for community services. When consensus was reached it was on the

side of a town location for which the congregation cast a unanimous vote.

First recorded mention of the Baptist Church that was to become the Fellowship's home is in the board minutes of June 11. Marian Green, building committee chairperson, reported that it was for sale for \$65,000. Decision was made to ask the congregation for authorization to make a bid of \$52,000 with a mortgage not to exceed \$30,000. Should the church prove to be unavailable, a second choice was the Dorney house at 110 NW 4th A venue. At a congregational meeting on June 12 it was unanimously voted to begin negotiations for the church. A list of the 26 members so voting appears in the Unicorn of September 15. The following week a list of 11 advantages of buying the building was mailed to members. After negotiations with the Baptists, 23 members present and three absentee balloters voted, September 11, for the purchase of \$55,000 with a mortgage up to \$26,000. Those pledging themselves to this step were:

Diana Atkinson  
Wallace Best  
Frank Cieboter  
Nancy Cieboter  
Irene Delmar  
Dorita Dufficey  
Marian Greene  
Diana Gunn  
William Gunn  
Helen Hartley  
Edward Kandel

Edwin Kornblue  
Harry Olin  
Katherine Olin  
Barbara Rice  
Douglas Rice  
Dora Roca  
Ross Snyder  
Maurice Dufficey  
Genevieve Francisco  
Lucy Frantz  
Jean Kornblue  
Charlotte Marina  
William Marina  
Virginia Snyder  
Dolores Sturm

The congregation approved the Articles of Incorporation September 25. It was suggested that the word Universalist be dropped from the Fellowship name but this was defeated.

There was a new twist to the Board meeting on October 30. Members were assembled to participate in a cross-country telephone conversation with President Best, then in California, in order to facilitate the church- buying process now underway. Dr. Best, a professor in FAD's College of Business Administration, advised the Board of the "best" way for handling procurement of the necessary money to complete deposit of \$26,000 by October 31, a requirement of the Fellowship's commitment to the purchase. A \$3,000 loan from the Veatch Committee of the Plandome Church was part of the negotiation.

As a dedication to the new church building, Nell and Ed Kandel commissioned a painting of the Flaming Chalice, a symbol of Unitarian Universalism, and presented it to the Fellowship.

A gala day in the Fellowship's history was dedication of its first home at 162 West Palmetto Park Road on November 13, 1966. Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, president of the UUA, gave the dedication address. Others on the program were the Rev. Clifton o. Hoffman, executive director of the Southeastern District, UUA, and the Rev. Jack Loadman, minister of the First Unitarian Society of Palm Beach.

The first major social concern activity of the Fellowship, the establishment of a day care center in the new building with the support of federal funds, was broached to the Board November 20 by Dr. Henry Scharles, social action chairperson. This followed a request by two members of the black community, Mollie Rich and George Spain, for a meeting with the UU leadership to discuss needs of Pearl City residents. At a meeting at Dr. Best's house three major needs were pinpointed: a day care center, tutorial help for children unable to keep up academically in the newly integrated schools, and low cost housing. The day care center was not to materialize as it was later learned the building was not in condition to pass health and fire department requirements. However, it was the first instance of the Fellowship's role as a catalytic agent in the community. Ferment over the aborted day care center led eventually to establishment of the Florence Fuller Day Care Center under the aegis of the South County Neighborhood Center, a project of the church.

On December 11 the congregation voted to purchase the 25 foot strip of land east of the church for use as a parking lot for \$5,750 "if that sum could be obtained in the form of earmarked special gifts." The sum was obtained.

On December 13 the Board met to "consider the various possible functions our church might perform in the social action field at present and in the future." Selected was the establishment of a tutorial center for the use of young people who need supervised aid to do their school work. The project would be directed by the Social Action Committee whose members would recruit tutorial personnel from area schools and colleges on a non- denominational basis.

A short two months later, February 1967, the program began. Students were mostly black children from Pearl City and Latinos from the garden apartments on Palmetto Park Road opposite City Hall. Tutors were recruited from FAU, Marymount College and the Fellowship. It absorbed and was a continuation of a program begun in 1965 by Fellowship members at FAU and headed by Virginia Snyder.

The first Annual Dinner was held in the new building on March 24 in what was to become known as the Thomas Jefferson Room. It was given in connection with the yearly fund drive.

Dr. William Marina, professor of history of Florida Atlantic University, was elected president April 23. The 1967-68 budget was \$8,390. Dr. Best said he hoped the new president would make progress toward the UU goal of "stamping out tokenism in human affairs." In his statement of June 30, Treasurer William Gunn

reported that \$31,941 had been collected, four times the previous year's receipts. This amount presumably included the building fund.

In the summer, a series of developments began that was to lead to the formation of the South County Neighborhood Center. This organization, sponsored by the Fellowship and eventually released to community management, established the UU Church in the forefront of area groups providing service to the community. A request had been received from the Community Action Council of West Palm Beach to use part of the building as a neighborhood center for the southern part of the county. The Board gave tentative approval, but failure of federal funding ended the project temporarily. Meanwhile, permission was granted to the Boca Raton Welfare Council to operate in the rear of the building, first of a long list of welfare organizations to get their start in Boca Raton through the UU Church.

In September, 1967 the Fellowship took the step of hiring its first minister. Arrangements were made with the Reverend John Papandrew, former minister of the Miami Unitarian Universalist Church, to give two sermons a month and be available for counseling, weddings, funerals and other ministerial duties for a salary of \$2,400. Mr. Papandrew was a graduate of the University of New Hampshire and earned the S.T.B. at Harvard University.

The church school wing was named "The Reverend James Reed Memorial" on October 23 in honor of the UU minister murdered in the civil rights demonstration in Selma, Alabama, March 11, 1965. The upstairs room was designated "The Thomas Jefferson Room."

Board members expressed a preference for the term pastor to minister on October 28.

The belief of members about the place of social action in the church was summed up in the minutes of the Board February 7, 1968: "The thinking of the congregational meeting that incorporated the Social Action Chairman as a member of the Board of Directors was reviewed. There was general agreement that the congregation made clear in the discussion at that time that its action was an affirmation of its conviction that social action is an essential requisite of a UUA church or fellowship and not something that could be done or left undone as the group chose, To implement this congregational intent, the Board instructed the Social Action Committee to function as an autonomous arm of the church, taking such action as the Committee deems appropriate and keeping the Board and the congregation informed of the progress of its activities. It On this date also the Board voted to lower the 18 year age limit upon church membership to 13 years.

As It had been learned in February that the Office of Economic Opportunity would not provide funds to establish an anti-poverty neighborhood center in the area, the Social Action Committee decided to go ahead without funds and open a center. On March 14 the South County Neighborhood Center opened its doors with offices in the rear of the building; a community, non-profit organization with no church affiliation and operated by volunteers. The Center was open five days a week with representatives of nine state and county agencies holding regular office hours. Virginia Snyder, a leader in promoting the center, was coordinator and there were 76 volunteers the first year. Financial support came from the Fellowship the first

eight months, including free rent, after which the United Fund and other agencies began to offer funding. In time, the Center's Board became dominated by Roman Catholics who felt uncomfortable sharing quarters with pro-abortion groups such as Planned Parenthood and NOW. Friction developed over this and other matters which, together with the need for larger quarters, led the Center, after eight years in the UU building, to move to another location. Around 30 health and welfare agencies and other organizations were provided space from which they took root in the community. A partial list follows:

Mental Health Association  
Project You  
National Organization for Women  
Christ Church of Spiritual Science  
Temple Eternal Light  
Catholic Welfare Bureau  
Florida State Welfare  
Family Service Agency  
United Pentecostal Church  
Migrant Legal Aid  
Weight Loss, Inc.  
Hebrew Congregation  
Planned Parenthood  
SmokEnders  
Palm Beach County Health Dept.  
Palm Beach County Welfare  
Florida State Vocational Rehab  
Palm Beach County Legal Aid  
Project Peace

SkinnyWay  
Han Institute  
Hospice  
Association for Retarded Children  
Women's International League for Peace & Freedom

A spin-off activity of the Center was People Unlimited, a Boca Raton High School teenage club that asked the Center to be its sponsor. With the aim of bridging racial, cultural and generation gaps, the club served also as a junior auxiliary to the Center.

Members of the Social Concerns Committee and of the Board of Directors of the newly established South County Neighborhood Center had continued to feel that a day care center primarily for black parents was a pressing need in the community. After the Fellowship building was disqualified for the purpose, the Center named a committee to raise funds and plan for what would become the Florence Fuller Day Care Center. Dr. John DeGrove and Virginia Snyder were two of the three South County Neighborhood Center board members who persuaded the City Council to provide the land the Fuller Center now occupies.

The congregation voted April 14, 1968 to extend full-time ministry to Mr. Papandrew at a salary of \$9,000 plus \$3,000 in kind, effective June 1. In May, Virginia Snyder, a reporter for the Ft. Lauderdale News, was elected president. It should be noted that throughout the early years of the Fellowship and up until the engagement of its first minister, heavy reliance had been placed on the FAU faculty members for program material. Professors from the various colleges gave generously of their time and knowledge in

filling the pulpit during this time, as well as teaching in the tutorial program and in classes sponsored by the Neighborhood Center. Among these was Dr. Thomas Swann of FAU's English Department who taught creative writing. Dr. Swann was a poet, scholar and author of many books of fantasy in whose memory the Thomas Burnett Swann Foundation was established to finance the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts held annually at FAU.

Treasurer Bill Gunn noted in November, 1968, the South County Neighborhood Center budget was running about double the original estimate. On this date also was reflected a discrepancy that had proven to be a confusing element in the church record-keeping, that between the fiscal year, July 1 to June 30, and the pledge year. The Board took action to continue with the December 1- November 30 pledge year. The budget was \$12,030.

During this period it was the custom of the minister to spend one Sunday a month in the Sunday School.

The seven-page Board minutes of April 8, 1969, mirror the explosion of problems now besetting the Fellowship. Doubts were expressed as to the effectiveness of the recent pledge drive, how the church would get through the summer financially, whether more activities were being promoted than could be supported, whether the minister's salary (\$14,000) was out of line with (exceeded) other area UU ministers' salaries, and whether, indeed, the fellowship could afford a minister at all. Mr. Papandrew's personal problems had become evident by now, and the extent to which they affected the

well-being of the Fellowship was the subject of debate, participated in by the minister, who was present

Gerald Hoppe, a retired businessman, was elected president April 27. Because of failure to meet the year's budget of \$24,045 (\$15,902 raised), the finance committee felt unable to keep Mr. Papandrew full-time. He was offered, and accepted, a twice-a-month proposition, with salary scaled down accordingly. By now the problems with Mr. Papandrew's ministry were out in the open and a frank discussion ensued. The minister declared he would fight for his job.

Matters came to a head in May with the resignation of Mr. Hoppe as president, who said he could no longer work with the minister, and of Virginia Snyder as vice president. On the 28th a called meeting was held to elect a new president and vice president. Virginia Snyder presided at this explosive gathering at which the UU District Executive, Clifton Hoffman, the minister of the Miami church, Fred LeShane, and almost the entire congregation were present. A lawyer and court reporter attended the minister. Ms. Snyder said she believed the Rev. Mr. Papandrew had not carried out his duties and she could no longer work with him, citing an atmosphere of rumors and an anonymous letter and phone call of scurrilous import. Charges and countercharges were made. The meeting continued until after midnight with no action taken. Dr. William' Marina volunteered to serve as acting chairman for the church. .

On August 28, Dr. Marina addressed a letter to the congregation in which he said, "this crisis concerns the very existence of our Fellowship." He presented proposals, based on

suggestions of Mr. Hoffman, for future operation consisting of a planning workshop, appointment of new committees, etc. However, the division of the Fellowship over the retention of Mr. Papandrew as minister caused a rift in the church and the resignation of many members. There was talk of closing down the Fellowship.

On September 23 the offer of a contract with the minister for two sermons a month was withdrawn by congregational vote of 19 to 9. Dr. William Stone was named temporary vice-president by board action. Dr. Cliff Hoffman, who had come frequently from Atlanta to provide guidance and support to the Fellowship throughout its ordeal, summed it up by saying, "This was an agonizing thing to go through and it has caused much alienation ... I hope that those who are hurt will find it possible to again give support to the Fellowship."

Dr. Stone, manager of the Upjohn Experimental Farm in Delray Beach, was elected president April 18, 1970. In June, Project You, a federally funded program for prevention of juvenile delinquency, was rented housing in the building. Sponsored by the Neighborhood Center it - continued in operation for two years.

Arrangements were made with Bill and Dorita (formerly Dufficey) Marina to manage the church the last four months of the year. They were to organize RE programs, provide a schedule of Sunday morning services, and give counseling. (Mrs. Marina was a practicing psychologist.) Compensation was set at \$300 a month.

For a brief time services were held Sunday evenings. At a congregational meeting in the fall, members voted to return to morning services.

December saw the entrance of two persons into the life of the weakened Fellowship who would bring strength and renewal at a time when they were sorely needed. Dr. Robert Weston, retired UU minister; who had filled the pulpit occasionally, was engaged as temporary minister for four months. Dr. Weston had served in many churches in the Northeast, was a veteran of both World Wars, former director of The UUA, and author of books widely used for UU services. Thus began a two-year ministry of healing and reconciliation, equally participated in by his wife Ruth. Their initial remuneration was \$500 per month toward housing plus \$50 transportation.

Two sentences from the Board minutes of January 10, 1971, foreshadow the next major step of the Fellowship: "An option is to open for 1973 for a young man to follow Dr. Weston. The financial report indicates we are currently in good shape financially"

By February, results of the Westons' efforts were becoming evident. Responses to their contacts by phone and visits had been good and some members who had dropped out had returned. At a Congregational meeting on the 28th their services for the following year - December 1971 through March 1972 - were requested and obtained, with salary set at \$1,000 per month plus car expense. Plans were made for a lunch at Spanish River Park just before their departure at the end of March.

King Stodola, research and development engineer with the Reeves- Relco Company of Delray Beach, was president this year.

Among the many services performed by Mrs. Weston were those of membership chairperson. Her report on February 2, 1972, delineates her work during this period of reconstruction: numerous calls on the sick, arranging coffees for small groups in homes, scheduling of greeters and ushers, and maintenance of attendance records. Membership totaled 88.

The congregation voted February 27 to continue the Weston ministry from May 1972 through April 1973 at a monthly stipend of \$300, noting that this was not salary but a contribution toward housing and utilities. So valued were the services of the Westons' that the congregation went on record as considering them a gift for which the church's remuneration was not deemed adequate compensation.

At this meeting a vote of 32 to 1 was taken to sign a petition for a referendum to mandate a low density population in South Florida by having the governor appoint a committee to study the area's ecology before granting permits for housing developments to encroach further on the Everglades. This action was interpreted as an indication of the need to revive the social action committee which had become a casualty of the Fellowship's recent troubles.

King Stodola was re-elected president in March.

The Board moved on November 3 to ban smoking in the sanctuary, and to replace the wooden pews with comfortable folding chairs.

Howard Lambert, a technical writer for IBM, was elected president December 8 when King Stodola resigned to accept a position in the North.

At a congregational meeting, February 25, Dr. Weston was named minister emeritus. He and Ruth were given a standing ovation.

Howard Lambert was re-elected president on February 17.

The 1973-74 budget had been set at \$21,440 but fell short of this goal, with income proving to be \$15,540. In view of this, the Board discussed the possibility of sharing a new minister with the West Palm Beach UU Church, also suffering a reduced budget.

Dr. and Mrs. Weston were honored May 31 with a farewell dinner and a gift of cash on the occasion of their retirement from full-time ministry and departure from Boca Raton. The Westons, ministry had been a turning point in the life of the Fellowship, marking the end of a period of crisis during which the congregation was divided, steeped in pessimism. Many felt the Fellowship had failed and could not survive. The Weston's healed wounds, smoothed troubled waters and enabled the church to draw together again.

Following a decision to deficit spend in order to get a full-time minister, the congregation voted July 16 to call Morris Hudgins as minister. A young man, Mr. Hudgins was a graduate of Central Methodist College and Duke University Divinity School, where he earned the Master of Divinity degree. He was an ordained Methodist minister and had served as Minister to Youth, Young Adults and

Community Development at Ginter Park United Methodist Church, Richmond, Virginia. He and his wife Sharon had an infant daughter, Cara. His salary was \$10,000 to include two months vacation. Mr. Hudgins preached his first sermon on September 7 and was installed December 8.

A source of great strength to the Fellowship, on the brink of financial disaster much of the time, was the yearly gift of around \$5,000 from Horatio B. Ebert, father of Marian Greene, one of the church's founders. The dependability of this contribution provided a needed security to the struggling group during a precarious period.

By the early 1970s, changes had begun to take place in two areas of the life of the Fellowship: makeup of the membership and direction taken by church action. From predominantly FAU personnel, the membership shifted increasingly into the category of the retired and, in lesser degree, of business and industry. Following its disruption and near demise in the late 1960's, the church entered a period of construction and renewal within. Activities were analyzed, committees reconstituted, programs recharged, and physical facilities repaired and modernized. Hardly a Board report of the early seventies failed to note that the roof leaked. The litany of needs for these years was carpet, door locks, plantings; organ repair, air conditioner, termite control, rental of space, etc. The necessity of looking inward to shore up the institution's weakened walls led inevitably to a decline in concern directed to the community. The housekeeping era had set in and would continue throughout the decade and beyond.

Paul Broer, a computer instructor for Modual Computer Systems, Fort Lauderdale, was elected president The budget was peeled down from \$22,675 to \$18,100.

In the process of setting up strengthening committees - the most of whose work had been carried on by the Westons - the program council came into being. It was the suggestion of Ines Benson who contributed much toward the establishment of this important body.

At this time a policy decision was made by the Board that would be followed for several years. Though lacking approval of all, it indicated a new faith in the growth potential of the Fellowship's future: the conscious decision to spend part of the savings on the operating budget. However, this was made unnecessary largely by the continuing generosity of Mr. Ebert.

The congregation voted to name the sanctuary Weston Hall after the former minister who had brought together a splintered congregation and set the Fellowship on the road to stability. A radically new look was given to the Hall by the replacement of the pews with movable chairs which had been financed by personal contributions.

Much of the Board's action during the post-Weston years concerned the Fellowship's relationship with agencies renting space in the building, and alterations to the facilities necessary to their occupancy.

Don Barovich, manager of a programming group at IBM, was elected president. The annual budget was \$20,000 and the minister's salary was raised to \$13,200.

At the request of the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee, Morris spent the summer participating in a Clinical Pastoral Education training program.

In September the Fellowship hosted a meeting of the South Florida Cluster.

Work parties on Saturdays were by now established as a means of accomplishing much necessary cleaning and refurbishment of the building and grounds.

In October a Knabe baby grand piano was purchased, memorial funds meeting most of the \$1,000 cost.

The custom of hanging paintings by local artists in Weston Hall for several weeks began in the Hall with a display of the work of Richard J. Pfeiffer of Delray Beach.

A son, Darren Scott, was born to Sharon and Morris Hudgins on December 23. In January a part-time R.E. Director was hired at \$120 per month, an arrangement that was not continued. A concert series was sponsored that began in February and included two young pianists, an oboist and pianist, and an electronic musician.

At the annual meeting February 29 Don Barovich announced the membership was 130. Social events now included book

discussions, circle dinners, poetry readings, New Year's Eve party, Thanksgiving dinner and annual picnic. President Barovich was re-elected for a second term on March 10.

The contract negotiated between the minister and the Board in the spring included an agreement by the Fellowship to participate in the Sabbatical Program of the Florida UU Ministers Association. This provided ministers with rotating sabbaticals. Five ministers were ahead of Morris, setting his sabbatical for 1977-78.

The 1976-77 budget was \$28,470. After the fellowship closed for the summer a weekly discussion held at the regular church time provided some continuity in Sunday programs for year round residents. It continued throughout the summer with a modicum of success. Attendance ranged from six to sixteen persons.

In July one of the coconut palms fell victim to the lethal yellowing disease currently rampant throughout South Florida and was removed at a cost of \$40. A second negative event connected with the church's trees was the discovery of the cause of the repeated overflow of the toilets: roots of the ficus trees that had grown into the pipes. October 31 saw the first auction, a lucrative and entertaining event that was to become an annual affair. Ed Optekar was its genial and inimitable instigator and auctioneer. Amount earned from the sale of donated articles was \$227.00.

The electronic age arrived at the Fellowship in November with the installation of a telephone answering machine in the minister's office. A movie projector followed soon after.

There was a brief revival of interest in social concerns. Organized letter-writing to influence state and national legislation flourished for a while, and contributions to local welfare needs were made as they arose. The resurgence would continue into the following year, with interest centered in criminal justice.

The Fellowship by now was reaching out beyond its local perimeters into the life of the denomination. Attendance by members and/or the minister at General Assembly, cluster, district or regional meetings was taking place regularly.

Dr. Roger Messenger, professor of electrical engineering at FAD was elected president March 10. The 1977-78 budget was \$32,135. There is no record of an auction in 1977.

A growing sense of stewardship was indicated by the church's interest in the concept of deferred giving, now being promoted by a chairperson. This concern was manifested on the national level in the Fellowship's contribution of \$1,240 to the UUA Annual Program Fund, which earned it the designation of honor society.

A crisis occurred during the summer when the air conditioning broke down beyond hope of repair. Replacement of this unbudgeted item, to cost \$4,500, was effected by a direct appeal to the congregation. Members contributed \$3,500.

In August the first paid, part-time secretary, Joyce Wimmer, was hired.

At the Board meeting of September 8<sup>th</sup> Morris disclosed that he and his wife Sharon were going to be divorced.

In that month also the treasurer announced that "for the first time we have broken even on our budget, with almost \$1000 to spare ... and still have around \$9000 in the bank," However, by October things were back to normal with the report of a cash-flow problem making payment of bills difficult. The minister decided to defer his sabbatical from the fall of this . year to the fall of 1979 when, he hoped, lithe Fellowship would be on a solid financial basis again." He recommended that large benefactions like the Ebert contribution no longer be budgeted but reserved for such use as endowment, land purchase or building repair.

Neighborhood meetings were held in February to air problems and ascertain the wishes of members in regard to the conduct of the church's affairs. This was to become an annual practice.

In the spring the nominating committee experienced unprecedented . difficulty in obtaining a candidate for president, After failing to obtain one from among long-time members, the committee, headed by Beth Broer, approached Herbert Stats, tax magazine editor who had only recently joined, A Unitarian Universalist of long standing, Mr. Stats accepted the offer and was elected president February 12.

However, concurrently with this resolution, a problem of a different nature reached the point of open discussion. Division of the membership into pro and con factions following Morris's divorce found written expression in the Board minutes of March 9. Morris was

present at the meeting and the negative effects on the church of his domestic situation were discussed.

The auction held February 26 brought in \$1,035. The annual fund drive exceeded the previous year's. The budget, \$30,440, was one of the highest in the Southeast Region for comparable size churches. But by fall the cash flow problem had returned. Board minutes of September 14: "This problem seems to be an annual one. Although expenses run about \$2,200 a month, summer income is nowhere near this amount... We start off in the fall with a deficit which is sometimes not made up until the following June."

A Sunday service in May was devoted to a reading by members under the direction of Jerry Gallon of excerpts from Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town*. Well received, it set a precedent for an annual dramatic presentation by Mr. Gallon and volunteers from the membership.

In the fall Morris made two announcements of importance: he was considering a six-month sabbatical instead of a year, to begin September, 1979, to which the Board gave agreement; and he had decided to seek another ministerial position. He pointed to the fact that ministers often leave after three years or after a divorce.

The Board voted November 10 to call the social room south of Weston Hall the Katherine Olin Room in honor of the bright spirit and unique personality who had been a loyal and generous giver of time, service, and money since 1963 when she and her husband, Harry, first visited the Fellowship. The designation was later amended to become the Olin Room to include the recognition of Mr. Olin's similar

contribution to the growth of the church, including his service as treasure in the crucial year of 1966.

For the second consecutive year the Fellowship earned the designation of honor society by its contribution of more than its suggested share of \$900 to the UUA Annual Program Fund.

The Board voted to renegotiate the mortgage in order to raise \$30,000 needed for repairs and renovations to the building.

Morris was married to Christine Ballangee of St Petersburg in Morikami Park December 3.

The RE Program, after floundering for years, underwent sharp revitalization in all its components: physical facilities, curriculum, teacher involvement and parents' commitment. The rooms were painted, papered and refloored. No longer a one-person show providing baby-sitting service, it saw a growing number of children separated into age-group classes. A fresh and varied curriculum was infused into the program, with news of activities fed regularly to the Unicorn.

In January, Morris told the Board that he hoped to take his sabbatical in June. However, despite the fact that it had voted to confirm the church's commitment to a paid sabbatical as outlined in the bylaws, feeling existed among a few members of the congregation that the Fellowship was - financially unable to provide one.

There was some sentiment against the Board's recent decision to borrow \$30,000 because it included, in a long-term borrowing plan, \$10,000 to cover possible future deficits. This view was expressed in a letter to the congregation from Howard Lambert. It led, at the annual meeting of February 11, to a disavowal of the Board's action. The congregation voted, instead, to borrow needed funds from members.

Also at this emotionally charged meeting Morris read his annual statement which included (1) an examination of customs relative to ministers' sabbatical leaves, specifically, whether a minister should be expected to return to service after a leave, and (2) an airing of the similarly controversial matter of a possible renegeing by the Fellowship on the agreement to grant him a leave. On both issues he said it was important to him that the congregation want him to follow whatever line of action developed in these respects, i.e., going on sabbatical and returning afterward to serve as minister until he obtained another position. There was a heated discussion between those in favor of denying Morris a paid sabbatical and those who maintained the church was morally and legally obligated to grant it. The upshot was a vote to grant the sabbatical from September 1 to December 31, 1979, and to ask the Board to ask him to return January 1, 1980 to serve as minister until June 30, 1980.

Andrew Chansen, attorney, was elected president at this meeting. The auction brought in \$1,330 and its usual quota of fun.

In March the new president appointed a search committee headed by Dorothy Opetekar to find a new minister. There was objection by Howard Lambert to the fact that the committee was

appointed rather than elected by the congregation in accordance with procedure recommended in UUA manuals. The decision was made to continue with the appointed committee. In February, 1981, the bylaws were amended to provide for an elected search committee for subsequent ministers.

A budget of \$34,500 was approved by the Board May 6, with the minister's salary set at \$17,200. On May 13 it was voted to offer Morris a contract from July 1, 1979, to February 18, 1980 at a salary of \$11,200.

The Board gave permission for the Association for the Retarded, a current renter, to install and pay for cooking facilities in Room 3.

As part of his sabbatical Morris went to New York August 24 at the request of the UU United Nations Office to monitor the Human Rights Committee activities of the General Assembly. In the same month he was asked to candidate for the position of minister at the Unitarian Church of Delaware County, Media, Pa. In September he was accepted.

For the third year in a row the Fellowship was dubbed Honor Society through its contribution of \$989 (\$389 over its allotment) to the UUA Annual Program Fund.

On November 4 Morris cut short his sabbatical and returned to report to the congregation his experience at the United Nations. A farewell coffee was given and a dictionary was presented to Morris

and Chris who shortly afterward departed to assume his duties in Media November 15.

Under the spur of the anticipated coming of a new minister a spirit of enthusiasm and renewed effort took hold of the Fellowship. Major alteration of the area south of Weston Hall was accomplished. A wall was removed, greatly enlarging the Olin Room which was renovated and decorated. The building's exterior was painted and considerable improvement was made in the landscaping.

Progress was made during this period in revising the bylaws.

Susan Stephens, a toxicologist by training, housewife and mother of two, was elected president February 10.

In March the auction produced \$2,490. For the first time no one could be found who would chair the annual fund drive; three members were appointed to conduct it.

In March the Search Committee nominated Daniel Hotchkiss as minister. After a week-long canidating period the congregation voted April 20 to accept him. Salary plus benefits was set by the Board at \$16,000. He preached his first sermon as minister on September 7, 1980. Mr. Hotchkiss was a graduate of Oberlin College and would receive the Master of Divinity degree from Harvard University a month hence (June). For two years he had served as minister to youth at First Church (Unitarian) in Belmont, Mass. His wife, Frances, was pursuing the Ph.D. in physical oceanography at M.I.T.

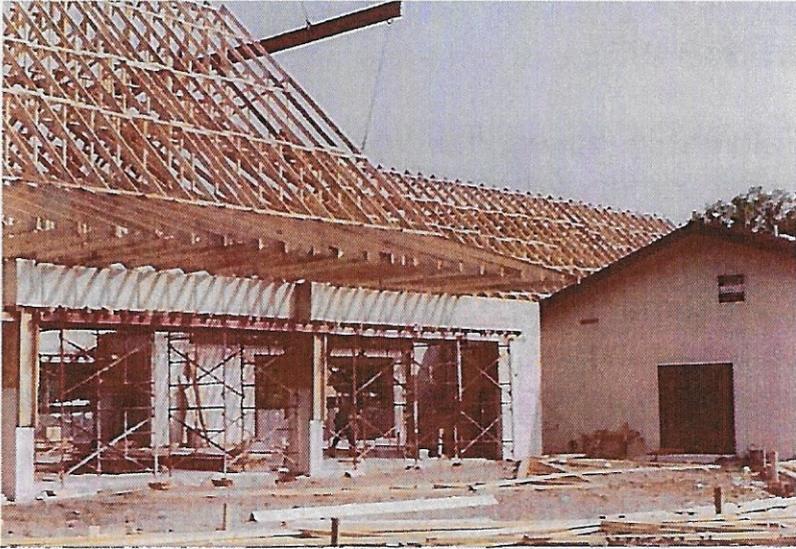
In April the Women's Alliance was formed. The Fellowship budget for 1980-81 was \$39,199.

Ever since the Fellowship moved into the building the apartment in the northeast corner of the second floor had been rented as living quarters to a succession of tenants. They provided a variety of services in lieu of or in addition to rent, and usually brought problems of one kind or another in their train. This year the Board decided to place these rooms in the "shared expense" category with the other rooms made available to agencies and groups for daytime use.

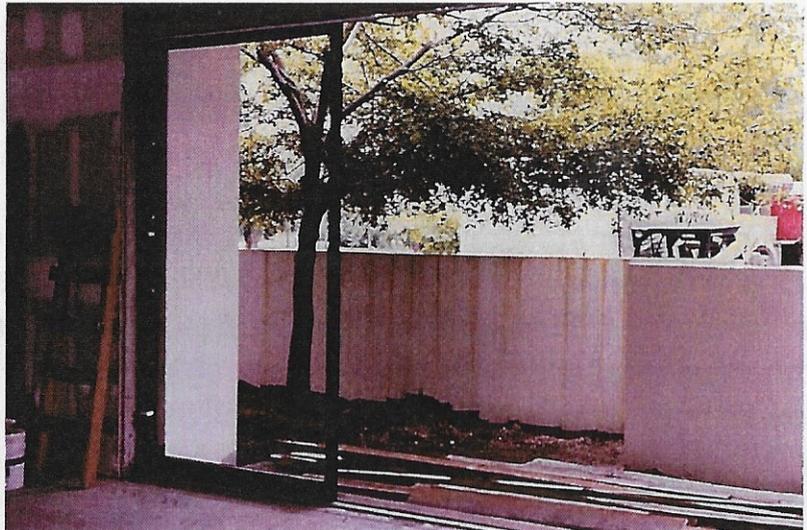
At Dan's request a minister's advisory committee was established. Again the suggestion that the fiscal and pledge years be brought into correspondence with the calendar year was made, and again no action was taken. This had surfaced at Board meetings almost every other year since the Fellowship began.

Members totaled 120. By year's end, R.E. was considered to be in thriving condition with Sunday attendance ranging from 15 to 25.

Dan was installed December 14 at impressive ceremonies in the church attended by 109 persons. William Schulz, executive vice president of the UUA, delivered the sermon, and speeches were made by several area ministers. A milestone in the life of the Fellowship, it was an evening of joy, fulfillment and confidence in the new minister, the church's members and its future. Despite nagging and sometimes near-fatal problems of money, ministers and the roof over its head, the Fellowship had survived its first twenty years and was ready for the second.



*Sanctuary Under Construction at 2601 St. Andrews Blvd*



## Update of Helen's History by Daniel D. Hotchkiss

April 10, 1987 Helen Hartley's history of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Boca Raton ends with what she likes to call my "accession to power." The Search Committee has asked me to bring the story up to date, which I am happy to do.

When I arrived, the Fellowship was recovering from my predecessor's departure. Morris Hudgins, as Helen reports, had been divorced, and the congregation had to some extent taken sides. Attendance and morale had suffered, and the group was in a somewhat touchy state.

But the interim year seems to have been a restoring one. Sue Stephens, the new president appeared to me to be a unifying figure, trusted by both the older and younger groups in the Fellowship and also by those who had most strenuously opposed Morris during his last years. My notes from July, 1981, recall:

When I was a candidate, I remember two themes; first avoidance of open disagreement for fear of reopening the battle over my predecessor's departure, and second, remarkable signs of readiness to move forward after a couple years' wrangling and a year's interim.

On April 20, 1980, I was called by a vote of 66 to 4. Three of the four "nay" votes were by proxy; I gather the fact that I was only 25 years old was of concern. The same day, I became the 115th member.

Worship style became the focus of the first year. On my side, I wrote that

I felt (on the Sundays of) candidating week, and continued to feel, that the Boca congregation was unresponsive. I wondered whether it had to do with the long, skinny room, the acoustics that kept me from hearing reactions very well, the fact that the older people (many of whom sat in front) were too well-behaved to give much visible or audible response, or whether I was myself too worried about performing well to perform well ... Maybe we both needed time to relax.

For many in the congregation, the issue was the sermon "talk-back" which had been frequent during Morris's time and weekly during the interim year. Some liked the opportunity to comment; others disliked being captive while others sounded off. I gradually found I was most comfortable with very infrequent talk-backs, with perhaps a sermon discussion group meeting afterward. I think for some that position was seen as a usurpation of power. Sue Chansen (now Sue Kimball), who had led the Sunday Morning Services Committee through the interim, was a great help moderating the friction over these and other issues in the first year.

I believe that in the first year we held just about even, both in membership and attendance.

In 1981-82 we began to shift attention from getting acquainted to planning for the future. With an anonymous gift of four \$100 bills, I persuaded the Board to engage Sue Chansen as music director. Sue

had been doing most of the music for several years as a volunteer, and there was considerable opposition to hiring her on the ground that if we started paying volunteers, where would it stop? Also, there was the concern that if we were going to hire staff, an RE director ought to come first. But opportunity prevailed over hesitation, and we crossed what, in retrospect, seems an important divide.

John Olson, a product planner at IBM, became our very capable president in 1982.

The Church School did expand, partly as a result of the departure of the Boca Raton Society for the Retarded and the National Organization for Women from the two main-floor classrooms. NOW moved upstairs, and still shares space with us. The 1982-83 budget shows a small salary for an RE director. Dan McGrath was hired for this position.

Also during my second year, we began to wrestle with the great question of "renovate or build." Our building at 162 West Palmetto Park Road, which is now a dentist's office, could seat about 80 comfortably, and had parking for only eight cars. In addition, it had suffered from neglect over the years, and badly needed renovation. In early 1981 a beautification Committee chaired by Shirley Webber began to study possible renovations. In March, 1982, the congregation approved a "minimal" \$16,000 renovation, including a fire escape and air conditioner for the upstairs RE rooms.

Meanwhile the idea of moving began to compete with renovations. A "land" or "space" committee began to work with a realtor to investigate vacant land and suitable buildings. The minutes

do not show this, but I recall a widespread presumption that we would renovate as little as necessary while planning to purchase land for a new church. The Board visited both the Greek Orthodox church on Yamato Road (now an annex to Advent Lutheran) and the Church of the Open Door on 35th Street, which is now a school. The conservative synagogue at the corner of Glades Road and Fourth avenue also came under consideration.

These inquiries became more energetic when, after a committee meeting at her home during the spring of 1982. Gertrude Geary wondered whether it would make a difference if she offered a \$100,000 gift for a new church. The committee (after picking up its silverware and coffee cake) allowed that it just might.

In late summer, 1982, the Woodlands Park Baptist Church came to the attention of some of our members. This unaffiliated right-wing congregation ran an overcrowded "Christian Academy" which it refused on principle, to have inspected. The city took them to court and ultimately won. Rather than relent on the inspection issue, the Woodlands Park Church moved beyond the city limits.

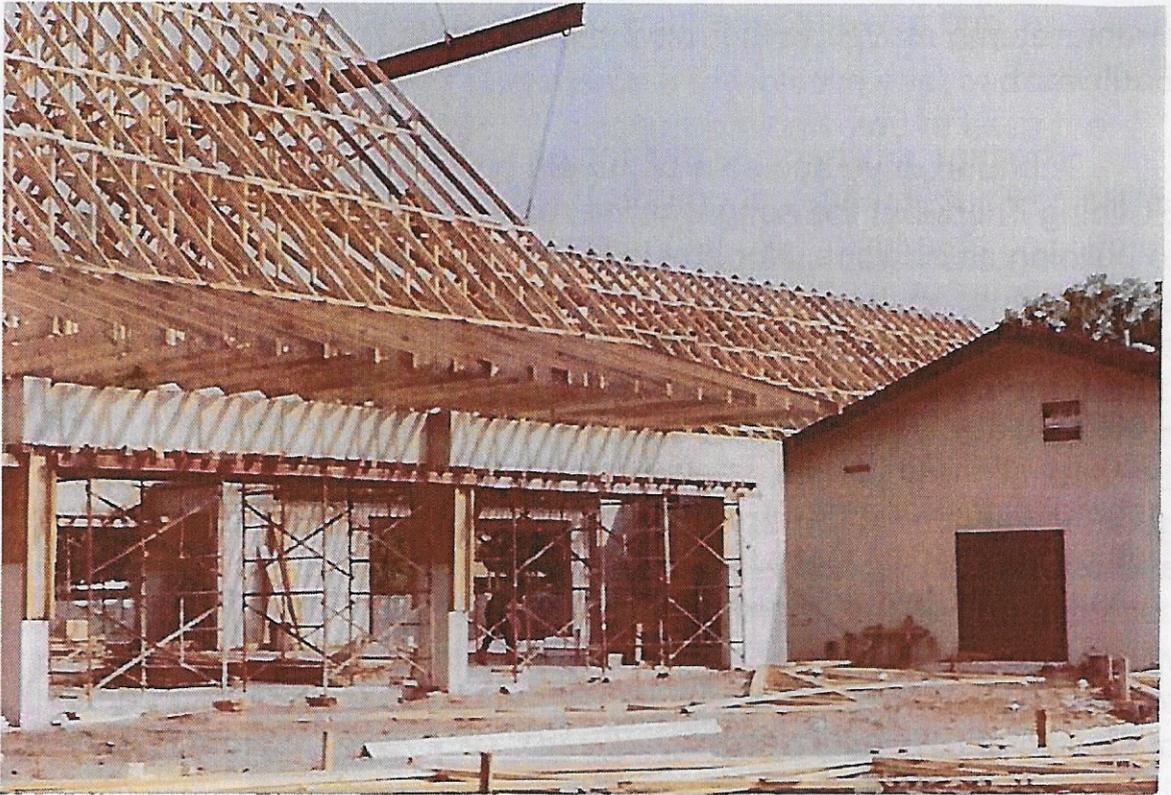
In August, Zack Osias secured the Woodlands property for us at a price of \$410,000 by putting \$10,000 down. In November and December, 1982, the Rev. Roger Cowan came for a seven-week capital funds campaign which easily exceeded its goal of \$300,000, including Gertrude Cleary's gift. The Palmetto Park Road property was sold for \$275,000 to two dentists, Maxine and Larry Sindedecker, who have renovated it for office use. In February, 1983, we bid good-bye to the "old church" (itself, originally a Baptist

structure) and moved to the "new church" at 2601 St. Andrew's Boulevard.

The fund drive and sale of the old building left a balance in the BUilding Fund, but the congregation remained formally uncommitted to building an addition. Nonetheless, the Building Committee, chaired by Fran Munson, began planning to expand almost immediately. An architect, Ted Bessette, our treasurer's son-in-law, was engaged to plan some minor renovations in order to correct deficiencies left behind by the previous owners and to secure a Certificate of Occupancy from the city. In November, 1983, Bessette presented general plans for a new sanctuary and social hall, and received authorization to proceed with working drawings. But despite frequent consideration by the Board and congregation, the goal of building was never formally adopted. Many, including president John Olson, remained skeptical both of the plans themselves and of the prudence of moving ahead immediately, John was succeeded in the spring of 1984 by Mary-Lill Lee.

The decision to build was not finally taken till October 28, 1984, almost a year later. By then, plans had been completed and bids received. The estimated cost was \$400,000. By secret ballot, on a vote of 63 to 40, including 21 proxies, most of them opposed, the Board was authorized to begin construction. This the Board did, and a ground breaking ceremony was held the Sunday before Thanksgiving, 1984. A one-day, "Miracle Sunday" fund drive raised an extra \$40,000 for the project.

March 17, 1985 is a Sunday that will be remembered by those who attended church. We met in the sanctuary of the existing



building, while construction on the addition was under way. In the middle of the service (as I was taking a breath before beginning my canvass kickoff sermon) high winds blew down the giant roof trusses which had been tacked up the previous Friday. The service continued, while a few brave souls went out to assess the damage. Miraculously, no one was hurt -- though had the accident occurred half an hour earlier or later, someone would almost certainly have been killed. The damage was insured, thanks to vice-president Gerry Attis, who had seen to this just a week earlier.

Without further incident, the new building was completed in August, 1985, and dedicated that November. William F. Schulz, the president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and 235 others were present.

A less dramatic story is of the work done under J.B. Munson's leadership on the renovation of the existing building into offices, classrooms and a kitchen. Contractors' bids ran as high as \$69,500, but by hiring two carpenters and using hundreds of hours of his own and other volunteers' time, J.B. finished the job for less than \$15,000.

In spite of cramped quarters, 1983-84 and 1984-85 were years of growth for the religious education program. Patty Collins, our longest-tenured DRE to date, increased the number of classes and brought a stable and professional atmosphere to the program. During construction, the city gave permission for us to use a trailer as a temporary classroom, and participation by both children and adults increased. Since Patty resigned to take a teaching job, we have had three short-tenured directors: Rollin Raymond, who served during the summer of 1985; Richard Holdsworth, who began in the fall and continued through June, 1986; and Leslie Brooks, who was DRE in 1986-87. Each director brought a special combination of talents, and each accomplished a great deal, but numerical growth has largely stopped. Average attendance has leveled off at about 35.

The second year of Mary Lill Lee's term was highlighted by good feeling about the new building, and a renewed focus on church programs. Most visible among these is the very popular choir, led since 1983 by Robin Swan. The Social Concerns Committee had a resurgence of activity under Mary Welch's leadership, building

stronger ties to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the Florida District. Ushering and greeting on Sundays, which, in the old cramped quarters was a one or two- person job, required a coterie in the new church. Circle dinners, which had suffered a decline in participation, benefitted from stepped-up recruitment of new members. And the Women's Alliance, which has been a growing force since its founding in 1980, found the comfortable surroundings of the Hospitality Room an added stimulus to growth.

The spring of 1986 saw the doubling of our annual pledge level, from \$52,000 to \$104,000. This feat was accomplished with the leadership of Ed Optekar, who stressed the need for those who had completed pledges to the Building Fund to convert\_ their annual payments on those pledges into operating gifts. An anonymous matching pledge, after the campaign fell short of its \$90,000 goal, caused it to go over the top. Spring, 1986 also saw the receipt of an endowment gift worth over \$100,000 from Gertrude Cleary.

I had decided to defy the conventional wisdom that ,a minister will leave after a building is completed, and to see the Fellowship-into an era of growth and program development. Feeling the need to retool for the new emphasis, and somewhat exhausted by the demands of the construction period, I took a short study leave in addition to my vacation in the summer of 1986. My topic was adult education, and I went with my wife Fran to the University of North Carolina to pursue research and preparation, and to prepare curriculum materials. These were field-tested - both at the UU Fellowship of Durham, N.C., and by a small group led by Linda Pardoe back in Boca. This activity led to a sudden growth in adult RE activity, which continued after my return with several Saturday

Seminars led by me as well as a lay led Adult Sunday School class and study group on Central America and several other short-term offerings.

Meanwhile, the Fellowship endured an unhappy presidency, which ended by resignation just before my return in August. Wayne Ezell, a new member and editor of the Boca Raton News, was persuaded to fill in. Wayne had been preparing, since a lunch meeting with me in May, to launch a lecture series on community concerns under church sponsorship. This idea led in early 1987, to the Progressive Forum, which presented Ellen Goodman and several local speakers during its first season.

Another development in 1986-87 was the creation of a Caring Committee. Originally organized before my absence for the summer, this group has functioned well, if quite informally, to give emotional and practical support to those in difficulty. The sudden death of chairperson Joyce Babkie shocked the committee and the congregation, but the committee's work continues.

At the UUA General Assembly in Rochester, New York, during summer, 1986, I was approached by members of the Ministerial Search Committee from the Unitarian Society of New Haven, Connecticut. Despite my wife's and my resolution to stay on in Boca for another two or three years, the offer was from both our points of view too good to refuse, and so, with great regret we entered the candidating process and, on February 1, I gave my resignation, having told the congregation I would likely do so in November. With a resolution and ambition that have become part of the congregation's personality, the group decided to proceed immediately to elect a

Ministerial Search Committee. The offering salary range was set to match the level I was offered in New Haven, on the theory that the Boca congregation wanted to step forward. After some dissent from those who wanted to accelerate the process, a committee was appointed to search for summer and interim ministers as well. And so when one might have expected a period of relative calm, the UU Fellowship of Boca Raton looks forward to more change and growth.

