

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring

**10309 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20903**

Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt, Minister

Marsha Thrall, Interim Director of Religious Education

Michael Holmes, Music Director

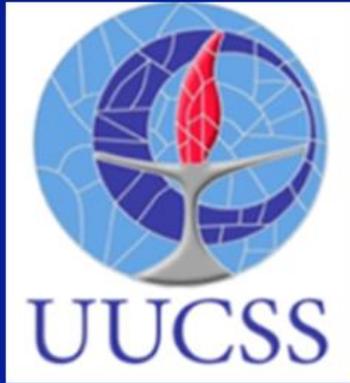
Carl Miller, President, Board of Trustees

Philip Browne, Communications Administrator

June 2021

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MINISTER AND STAFF

MINISTER

Minister's Report 2021

Summary

It's been my privilege to become your minister, and to bear witness to the incredible commitment this congregation and church staff have shown during this unusual and challenging year. While inevitably shaped by the pandemic, our year together has also been defined by exploring the 8th Principle, staffing for church administration in a digital age, planned capital improvements, a great fundraising and stewardship, discernment about the future of Religious Education, and how to safely and intentionally make the transition from all-virtual to hybrid ministry.

Administration and Operations

It became clear early in my ministry here how important skilled administrative staff support would be in sustaining the largely digital ministry the pandemic forced upon us. We were lucky that Lindsay Cowett, who had recently been hired as our RE Assistant, was willing and able to provide temporary administrative coverage. I'm thankful to the members of the Administrator Search Team for helping rework the position into something that should serve the congregation's needs well into the future. I also want to thank Stephanie McConachie for the tremendous support she's provided in her role as VP of Personnel through two staff transitions this year.

In April we welcomed Phil Browne as our new Communications Assistant. Phil brings experience working in other UU congregations, a customer service mindset, and great technical skills to our staff team. Our focus this year has been bringing him up to speed on the responsibilities of this role, and next church year will be focused on improving and unifying our communication strategy as a congregation.

Paint Branch Montessori School will be moving out of the lower level of the Sanctuary building when their lease ends in May of 2021. Our long-term tenant, Silver Spring Nursery School, is scheduled to move into some of that space while construction to improve their current space in the Community Building takes place. We plan to find a new tenant so that our rental income will rebound once Phase II of the Capital Improvements is completed.

Board Leadership and Visioning

Your Board has led this congregation through one of the most challenging years in living memory, and they've done it with compassion, good humor, and always a steadfast commitment to our Unitarian Universalist values. It's been an honor to serve together with such dedicated people in leading UUCSS through this strange time and into the transition out of the pandemic. I'm especially proud of how the Board made everyone's safety the number one priority this year, and that as a Board we've committed to taking up the work of the proposed 8th Principle by studying the Widening the Circle report next church year.

The Board also led well this year by delegating some of its work to two task forces:

- Transition to In-Person Task Force - Comprised of public health, medical, and legal professionals this group developed a policy which the Board approved and has revised to help us safely make the transition back to in-person gatherings.
- Hybrid Ministry Task Force – Comprised of staff and members of many different committees, this group is tasked with developing specific plans for how to transition from an all-virtual way of gathering in community to gathering in-person with virtual access. Members will be participating in a June hybrid ministry training and the whole task force is working on the many details involved in transitioning from all pre-recorded worship to livestreaming services led from the Sanctuary to which people can tune in on line.

Connection

It's been my pleasure to serve the pastoral needs of this congregation with our wonderful team of Lay Ministers. I'm proud of the virtual worship service we led together in February about our shared work as a committee and how thoughtful the Committee has been about each need that has arisen in the congregation. In addition to meeting with most church committees and groups at least once this year, I've also met with approximately sixty congregation members one-on-one by phone, Zoom, and two in-person to provide pastoral care or just get to know one another. It's been challenging getting a sense of the congregation through a computer screen, so as we move back to more in-person gatherings I look forward to connecting with those of you I haven't had the pleasure of meeting yet!

The Shared Ministry Launch Team has also helped nurture connection this year, specifically by helping me connect with as many UUCSSers as possible. Their support has been imaginative, focused, and always dedicated to making sure we remembered those for whom our virtual means of connecting wasn't easy. Together with this team I offered several "Share and Support" conversations for people living in similar circumstances. These provided people with an opportunity to connect with others facing similar challenges in the pandemic, and gave me the chance to get to know people on a deeper level early into my ministry. This team also helped organize logistics for in-person Sunday Vespers services.

Religious Education

Virtual religious education classes for children and youth have held steady during a year when many of our kids have had to spend 30 hours a week in virtual school. I appreciated the creativity YRUU brought to the service they led together and the innovative choice the Coming of Age class made to create credo projects and share them each Sunday for several consecutive weeks instead of in just one service. Thanks to everyone – kids, parents, teachers, RE Committee members, Marsha, and Lindsay – for making this year of virtual growth and learning not just possible but rewarding.

I offered two Adult RE classes this year, one focused on going deeper with each month's worship theme and the other which used a sacred reading approach to glean wisdom from authors who lived through challenging times. It is likely that some Adult RE (and many committee meetings), especially those scheduled for weekday evenings, will remain virtual even as we go back to in-person events.

Interim Director of RE, Marsha Thrall, will conclude her interim work with us in June. A search committee convened in May to gather feedback from youth, parents, teachers, and other key leaders and is searching for a Director of Spiritual Growth to begin in August.

Stewardship and Fundraising

The Auction and Annual Budget Drive Committees really hit it out of the park! Both committees figured out how to do their work virtually for the first time and exceeded expectations. I'm thankful to all members of both committees, all of our Stewards, our incredibly generous Matching Donors, and everyone who made a financial pledge or donated/bid on something at the auction for helping UUCSS tap into our abundance and gratitude. I'm especially thankful to Margo Kelly for her collaboration and strong leadership.

I want to say a special thank you to the Property and Capital Improvements Committees for their hard work stewarding our building and grounds this year. With the great leadership of Erik Leaver, the Capital Improvements Committee has overseen Phase I of the improvements and deferred maintenance plan. I know this work has been a long time in coming, and I'm so grateful for the Committee's steady, detail-oriented work.

Worship and Music

Producing a high-quality pre-recorded service each week is a huge undertaking. It would be hard to overestimate the investment of time, talent, and energy our team of volunteers and staff have devoted to Sunday worship this year. I'm thankful to everyone who has contributed to making worship happen this year, and especially to our Worship Associates, Tech Directors, musicians, and Music Director Michael Holmes for their incredible collaboration and follow-through. We have planned a great line-up of summer services including some lay-led and some services from other congregations thanks to collaboration with ministers from around the country. Assuming case numbers continue to fall, we plan to transition from pre-recorded services to streaming worship from the Sanctuary in September, and to begin welcoming the congregation back into the Sanctuary for worship in October.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Annual Report of the Music Program, 2020-2021

This church year was handled nearly completely virtually, and it happened to coincide with our first year under the leadership of our new called senior minister, Rev. Kristin Schmidt. Some new and creative activities emerged from our pandemic challenges. Over the course of the year, our system of creating music for virtual worship became easier for us, due to the generous help of our wonderful volunteer performers, audio, and video editors. Also, we learned an enormous amount of skill in the process.

In order to stave off the continued isolation, I took on the task of offering weekly “Fireside” discussions, where we listened to great masterworks of music, spanning the entire gamut of Western Classical, to Jazz, to pop, to rock, and American hip-hop. This was intended as a form of ingathering as well as a spiritual practice, which proved to be as enriching for the recipients as it was for me and the other speakers.

For our annual music residency, we are confident that we picked just the right person in Lea Morris, who is quite savvy as a music leader and who has a robust presence online. Out of this collaboration, not only were we able to work with her during the residency week, but also on several occasions throughout the year, in numerous creative ways.

I am very tired from the year, though at the same time quite fulfilled and satisfied in my job. I have become much, much closer to the musicians and general members of the church, in ways that I never could have been in person. Nevertheless, I do look forward to the return of normal in-person methods of making music in the church, and the exciting hybrid and live-broadcasted worship services that the leadership has planned. This is something that would have taken many years to devise, had not the necessity of the pandemic opened our eyes to that opportunity.

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Annual Report of the Religious Education Program, 2020-2021

This year, for UUA certification, UUCSS recorded 64 children and youth enrolled in RE programming. Of these 64 recorded registrations, between 32 and 50 children and youth participated in virtual Religious Education programming from the start of the RE program year in September, until May, 2021. Even though all Religious Education programming has been virtual, our children, youth, and RE teachers have been thoughtful and critically engaged in virtual programming at all age levels. In a period of time where I am witnessing many of my colleagues struggle to engage even a tenth of their children and families in Religious Education programming, it is promising that here, at UUCSS, children and families consider Religious Education a critical component of their household faith development.

In August, 2021, the congregation welcomed Lindsay Cowett as their Religious Education Coordinator. Lindsay's impact in this role has been positively immeasurable. Lindsay has effectively translated my ideas and visions for organizing family registrations, volunteers, curriculum and resources into an interactive and engaging format that is easily accessible. This new, cloud-based organizational system for registration, volunteer engagement, curriculum and resource management, will provide the new settled religious educator (to be determined) the ability to walk into their role ready to implement RE for the next church year basically "right out of the box". This organizational system, as well as a new system for organizing classroom supplies, and a purged and organized shared Religious Education/Music office should provide a pleasant work environment for my successor.

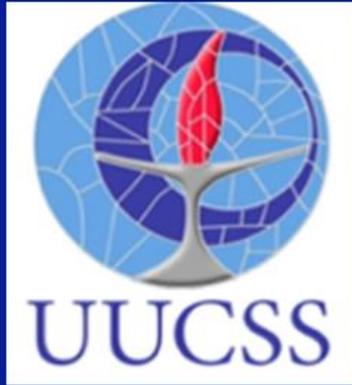
Despite the challenges faced within a global health crisis that prevented us from meeting in person, developing and engaging families within multigenerational worship continued to flourish. Collaborations with Michael Holmes have provided many meaningful musical expressions of faith by our youngest UU's. Children who may have been hesitant to participate within "live" worship services have flourished with the opportunities that virtual service has provided to them. Throughout the year, family engagement within virtual service has evolved and grown, culminating in the April 25, 2021 multi-generational service led by myself, but made beautiful by the family contributions to the service itself. My hope is that this dedication to family and multigenerational worship is not only continued by my successor, but flourishes and grows into something more beautiful than your wildest imaginations can even conceive in this moment.

As UUCSS has moved through the discernment process of potentially adopting the 8th Principle, Religious Education has worked closely with both the Racial Justice Task Force and the 8th Principle Task Force in providing educational opportunities for children, youth, and adults in order to "arm" our littlest UU's, their families, and wider community with some knowledge that will help make an informed decision. Religious Education's commitment to this process has included integrating curriculum from the King Institute at Stanford University at all learning levels from Kindergarten to YRUU. Also, in December, 2020, Charles Alexander was asked, and accepted a role as a representative from the Racial Justice Task Force within the RE Committee, and Jake Ryder began working with our YRUU group as an ambassador from the Racial Justice Task Force. This integration of Racial Justice Task Force into the life of Religious Education is a positive step in the direction of creating a culture of shared ministry within the congregational space that is UUCSS.

Other notable accomplishments within Religious Education at UUCSS include launching an independent study type curriculum for parents and caregivers of PreK children to participate in at home, at their convenience, an adaptation of the Coming of Age ritual into a meaningful addition to virtual worship, engaging bridging high school senior UU's in the planning of the worship service that will honor them, planning engaging summer Religious Education for our K-8th grade youth, and finally the conceptualization, and (hopefully soon) launch of the Little Free Pantry project – aka Scout's Pantry – at UUCSS. Thanks to a generous grant from No Child Goes Hungry, volunteers Brian Beard and Jim Paoletti have been provided with planning support, as well as financial support to continue working on the finalization of this installation. In March, 2021, we incorporated curriculum provided by No Child Goes Hungry into our weekly RE programming. Children, youth, and volunteers at all RE levels found the curriculum to be informative and engaging and are excited to transfer knowledge into action upon completion of the installation of the LFP. I am pleased that UUCSS is willing to take on this project, and hope that this project can be a small symbol of UUCSS' commitment to community, for years to come.

In conclusion, during my time as your Interim Director of Religious Education, I have been blessed to watch your congregation adapt and grow, while making room for your next settled Religious Education professional. My hope is that the organizational and development work done during the past two years will pave the way for continued growth and meaningful faith formation within the congregation that is the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring.

Submitted by Marsha Thrall, Interim Director of Religious Education



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Report for the Year 2020-2021

What a challenging, unusual, and engaging year this has been for the Board of Trustees. Although much has happened, I would have to say that the year was defined most of all by two things. One was the joyous arrival our new settled minister, the Reverend Kristin Grassel Schmidt. The other was the COVID-19 pandemic which started in March 2020, and which continues to the present day.

The current church year began officially in July 2020. Continuing board members (Colin Riggs, Maggie Hayes, Stephanie McConachie, Doneby Smith, and myself) were joined by newly elected members Robin Moore, Jean Snell, Emily Harris, and Ken Iobst. Rev. Kristin joined us in August 2020. The board has met monthly (always virtually) throughout the year.

A lot of our regular discussions this year have been around the management of COVID-19 policies. Initially the church was in a full state of lockdown — nearly all in-person church activities were suspended, and only staff-approved single individuals were allowed to come on church grounds. (I am grateful to previous leadership, especially our interim minister Rev. Lyn Cox, for navigating the initial transition to the lockdown — it wasn't easy.) Out of concern for our members, we have always been pretty strict in setting COVID-19 policies and have tended towards the side of caution. In early 2021, the board gratefully delegated some of the COVID-19 decision-making to a newly formed Transitioning to In-Person Activities Task Force.

Despite all the restrictions, the community has flourished this year. Online services have been terrific at connecting us all through virtual space. The board worked with the annual church auction organizers last fall to create COVID-19 rules that allowed them to carry off a fun and successful event, raising more than \$20,000 for the church. This spring, we had a great virtual Fellowship Dinner. UUCSS is a creative community, and this is no less evident when we are in the midst of a global crisis. When some of our channels for connection are closed off, others expand.

It was a thrill to welcome Rev. Kristin to UUCSS in August 2020. Among other activities, the church formed a Ministry Launch Team to help Rev. Kristin get to know our body of members, and we held a virtual minister installation for Rev. Kristin in November 2020. In early 2021, we formed a Minister Evaluation Committee which collected feedback from the congregation about this year's ministry (especially in the areas of worship, pastoral care, and administration). The MEC distilled this feedback into a 3-page summary which was shared with Rev. Kristin and the board. All of these activities have helped enhance the symbiotic and spiritual connection that we share with our new minister.

Revision of our church by-laws and policies has continued to be a major focus for the board. I am grateful to Maggie Hayes for leading this effort. Having up-to-date written guidelines is vital to keeping our operations harmonious, streamlined, and consistent with UU principles. The by-laws and policies on our website www.uucss.org (see "Engage" → "Resources") will continue to be updated.

Renovations on UUCSS buildings began this spring. This was the result of years of work by UUCSS members and more than a million dollars in donations. We owe many thanks to the members of the

Capital Improvements Committee for all that they have done to move this project forward. There will be much to see when we physically come back to church.

Finally, and importantly: along with many other UU congregations, UUCSS is considering a proposed 8th principle that would be added to our current seven principles. The 8th principle specifically names "dismantl[ing] racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions" as one of our goals. The proposal is an opportunity for introspection and growth, and I am grateful to our 8th Principle Task Force for bringing it forward for us. The church will vote on the proposal at the Annual Meeting on June 13, 2021. As part of our own anti-racism work, the board has decided to study the "Widening the Circle of Concern" report from the UUA next year.

I am delighted to say that Maggie Hayes has been elected by the board to serve as President during 2021-2022. Maggie has had extensive involvement with UUCSS during the last several years, and she will be a terrific leader. There is much to look forward to. It has been an honor to serve as president this year.

Respectfully submitted,
Carl Miller

VICE PRESIDENT - CORPORATION

UUCSS Strategic Planning Report June 2021

Introduction

This Report reflects an on-going three-year Rolling Strategic Plan of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring. It is an articulation of our collective goals for the next three church years, the actions we will take toward achieving those goals, and the measurable outcomes and other indicators we will use to evaluate our progress.

The intention of the Rolling strategic plan is for each part of the church community to reflect back on what they've achieved in the past year, relative to their stated goals, and to identify their renewed goals/priorities/commitments for the upcoming year and beyond. Each spring, the members of each church committee are asked to formally reassess their goals, move or amend their unfulfilled actions, and add actions for the next year. Nothing is static in this living document, as groups have maintained, revised, dropped, or added goals and actions. Through this annual evaluation and planning process, the leaders and members of our congregation can actively set priorities, focus our collective energy and resources, and strengthen and better coordinate our actions across the many committees and groups which make up our congregation. The hope is that by reassessing and articulating a new three-year plan each year, we will focus on our varied near-term, achievable actions toward our goals, while still engaging in shared longer-term planning and envisioning.

With the onset of Covid19 and the closure of the church building and shift to virtual worship and congregational life, 2020-21 has been an unprecedented year in the history of UUCSS. We moved to virtual services starting on March 15, 2020, and have continued producing virtual Sunday services each week over these past 15 months. We also welcomed a new, called Senior Minister last spring, Rev. Kristin Schmidt, who commenced her ministry with UUCSS in August, 2020, and we said farewell to our interim minister, Rev. Lyn Cox. In so many ways, our church life as we knew it was turned upside down in the 2021-21 church year. Despite these limitations and seeming setbacks, our congregation not only persevered and attended to the maintenance of our many programs and ministries, the staff, leaders, and members of this church also rose to the challenge of remaining connected in beloved community through Covid by adapting and innovating.

This year's Strategic Planning Report will depart from the established format and focus, and will, instead, provide a window into how various sectors of this church community attended to their work and re-cast their priorities in the face of the constraints of our congregational life under the Coronavirus. As was articulated in previous year's reports, the Rolling Strategic Plan has been organized under five themes:

- Communication, Connection, and Caring
- Organizational Infrastructure
- Stewardship of our Physical Property
- Quality Programs
- Engaging with the Larger Community and Issues of Justice

Communication, Connection, and Caring

1) Communication

2020-21 Highlights:

- Communications Committee established and created a Team Mission & Vision
- New congregational volunteers recruited to serve as facilitators/hosts/editors for Uniter, List-serve, and FaceBook
- Transitioned the Yahoo listserve to Groups.io
- New Communications Administrator position created and filled

2022/2023 Goals:

- Streamline the Annual Reporting and Strategic Planning processes (Board)
- Continue to move email groups to “Groups.io” platform (Communications Committee)
- Collect analytics data to determine how the UUCSS Website is being used (Communications Committee)
- Finalize comprehensive plan for website, social media, email communications, and other communication tools (Communications Committee)
- Conduct survey to assess church communication needs, preferences (Communications Committee)
- Move church Wiki beyond beta-phase to more active integration of use with congregation (Board or Communications Coordinator?)

2) Connection

2020-21 Highlights:

- Establishment of Contract Tree in Spring 2020 to provide individualized outreach to all members/friends
- Membership Committee provided an active presence in weekly services (and beyond) to welcome visitors/guests; formally welcomed a new member cohort spring 2020
- All active committees transitioned to virtual meeting format
- Virtual Women’s Retreat organized and offered in June 2020
- Virtual Seder and Fellowship Dinner hosted spring 2021
- UUA Virtual Workshop on Congregational Storytelling December 2020
- Women’s and Men’s Book groups, and in-Reach groups also transitioned to on-line

2022/2023 Goals:

- Develop a Bridge Program for YRUU (Membership Committee)
- Produce an updated Photo Directory (Membership Committee)
- Renew Membership Drive with targeted Outreach Campaign to Friends (Membership Committee)
- Develop new member recruitment/outreach plan (Membership Committee)
- Include a monthly “New Member Spotlight” in the Uniter (Membership Committee)

3) Caring

2020-21 Highlights:

- Active Lay Ministry team transitioned to virtual outreach
- Board welcomed Rev Kristin and provided targeted support for her new ministry, including Shared Ministry Launch Team
- Rev Kristin offered Small Group Ministry to connect with congregants during her first year at UUCSS

2022/2023 Goals:

- Draft a Congregational Policy on Conflict Management/Resolution (Committee on Shared Ministry)

Organizational Infrastructure

2020-21 Highlights:

- Created and filled new Communications Coordinator position
- Completed revisions of Board Policies affected by new Bylaws
- Implemented and Conducted a formal evaluation process of new minister's performance
- Created and recruited for new Tech Team to manage Sunday Worship Service delivery
- Board created a Tenant/Renter subcommittee to oversee church leases and contract renewals

2022/2023 Goals:

- Improve processes for scheduling lay-led or guest hosted worship services, particularly for Summer worship (Worship Committee)
- Improve incorporation of children and youth ministry during services (Worship Committee)
- Assess and Reflect on Minister Evaluation Process and Results (Board)
- Hire a F/T Congregational Administrator (w/financial responsibilities)
- Implement formal review process for UUCSS Board Policies (Board)
- Update storage procedures for historical documents (Admin Committee)
- Identify Framework and Implement process by which to evaluate the value and alignment of current committees/programs to congregational mission (Shared Ministry Committee)

Stewardship of our Physical Property

2020-21 Highlights:

- Contractor finalized for Phase 1 Capital Improvements in Sanctuary Building; HVAC and Roof repairs/replacement underway (Capital Improvements)
- Property Committee led monthly clean-up crews through the Covid shut-down (Property Committee)
- Church Sexton continued oversight of Church grounds through the Covid shut-down
- AV committee purchased new equipment/technology to support virtual Sunday services (AV Committee)
- Established Hybrid Ministry Task Force and Transition Task Force to determine re-opening metrics, guidelines, and operations

2022/2023 Goals:

- Continue making progress on deferred physical plant maintenance/repairs, including drainage, south retaining wall, and sheds (Property Committee)
- Complete Phase 2 of Capital Improvements in Community/Fellowship Hall building (Capital Improvements)
- Purchase technology equipment to support LiveStreaming Sunday Services and Deaf Access interpretation (AV Committee)

Quality Programs

2020-21 Highlights:

- Transition of Choir/weekly music performances to online production
- Music Masterworks classes
- Rev Kristin (and Marsha Thrall?) led virtual Soul Matters and “Reading, Resilience, and Resistance” Adult classes
- Annual Auction delivered virtually
- RJTF and DRE collaborated to lead Adult Anti-racism (book) group
- RJTF facilitated Book discussion series on *Caste*
- Virtual Leadership Retreat, opened to whole congregation
- *Pathways to Membership* program offered virtually
- RE for grades K-YRUU transitioned to virtual delivery

2022/2023 Goals:

- Develop Hybrid Service model and infrastructure (intersection of Worship, Music, Deaf Access, & AV, Sunday Support Committees)
- Expand and diversify Music Committee (Music Committee)
- Add a music component to RE (Music and RE Committees); more youth involvement in music during Sunday services and church events
- Engage more fully with greater community through Music Ministry; Attendance at music events increases to at least 50 people per event (Music Committee)

Engaging with the Larger Community & Issues of Social Justice

2020-21 Highlights:

- All Hearts on Deck “Get out the Vote” Drive (over 2,000 UUCSS postcards!)
- Large attendance at virtual Jubilee Training (25+ participants)
- Preparation of the “Resolution to Adopt the 8th Principle” and UUCSS congregational vote in June
- Successful letter writing campaign in support of MD Climate Bills

2022/2023 Goals:

- Organize annual UUCSS Social Justice Summit (Green Sanctuary, RJTF, Rainbow Alliance, and Defending Democracy)
- Consider creating a “green” information online hub (Green Sanctuary)
- Train facilitators to lead LGBTQ “Listening Sessions” (Rainbow Alliance)
- Build Collaboration w/Casa Ruby (Rainbow Alliance)
- Raise congregational awareness of voter suppression (Defending Democracy)

Submitted by Jean Snell, Vice President - Corporation

Report on Board Policies

Board Policy 1, Policies and Procedures, was adopted February 26, 2020. The Board is now required to include major changes to Board policies during the past year in the Annual Report. That policy also provides for more transparency and congregational involvement in developing or revising policies. The Board followed that process this past year, by communicating with the congregation about revisions being contemplated, consulting with groups that would be directly affected, and inviting comments on drafts. Below is the list of policies revised during church year 2020-2021; the adopted texts may be found at uucss.org/resources/uucss-policies.

Policy 5, Congregational Meetings, was adopted October 28, 2020. This policy outlines procedures for the meetings, since the requirement to use Robert's Rules was deleted from the Bylaws. It includes options for the Board to consider so that the congregation will be well informed about upcoming votes.

Policy 6, Selection of Delegates to Denominational Meetings, was adopted December 16, 2020. The Board made only minor revisions to this policy.

Policy 7, Membership, was adopted January 27, 2021. The Board needed to make revisions due to the overhaul in the Bylaws about membership. The policy defines "financial contribution of record," sets a process for exemptions from the financial requirement, further defines "friends" and their privileges, and adds procedures for resignation or removal of members.

Policy 16.A, Personnel/Responsibilities, was amended July 22, 2020, at the first Board meeting after the new Bylaws took effect. Those had removed from the Board the authority to hire staff members; the revised policy gives the Minister, as chief of staff, the authority to hire and discipline staff members, in consultation with the Vice President for Personnel.

This spring the Board has been working on further revisions, and expects to adopt them by the end of the church year:

Policy 1, Policy on Policies, would delete Section 1.D on church procedures, as there is no single document collecting our procedures. Instead, the proposed revisions of Policies 2 through 4 would address procedures set by the various governing bodies.

Policy 2, Guidance for All UUCSS Groups, would contain general guidance for all UUCSS entities. This is a "shared values" pronouncement, urging all groups to abide by the Community Covenant and to keep in mind the goal of building a Beloved Community. It would include several ways of promoting equity and inclusiveness.

Policy 3, Board of Trustees, would consolidate several parts of the current policies 2-4. It would set out the duties of the various Board members; cover the Board's authorities and responsibilities; and govern the conduct of Board meetings, including new content such as virtual meetings, requirements and procedures for voting, visitors at Board meetings, and executive sessions. It would also add procedures for removal of a Board member.

Policy 4, Councils, Committees, and Other UUCSS-Affiliated Groups, would establish the Program and Operations Councils and set out policies for the councils and their committees to follow. These encourage frequent turn-over of leadership, to prevent volunteer burn-out and to give others

opportunities to serve. The policy would also address the need for other UUCSS entities to abide by our shared values, and add a paragraph on planning events.

Policy 9, Finances, would reduce an 11-page document to a single page. While developing this policy, the Finance Committee adopted details for carrying it out, along with a list of responsibilities for each member of the committee.

Submitted by Maggie Hayes
Member, Board of Trustees

VICE PRESIDENT - FINANCE

FINANCE VICE-PRESIDENT Finance Committee Annual Report 2020 - 2021

General Operations

COVID-19 had a large impact on our rental tenants leading to a decrease in rental income and changes in tenancy. Although operational expenses were lower this did not make up for the decrease in rental income. We anticipate new tenants and increased rental income once the Capital Improvement renovations have been completed and the lingering effects of COVID-19 have dissipated.

The Finance Team had no changes this year. Please thank the members of the Finance Team for their continued hard work and dedication to UUCSS.

The Finance Team is comprised of the following members:

VP of Finance: Colin Riggs

Treasurer: Olivia Pickett

Collector(s): Emily Harris and Rachel Vanarsdall

Payroll: Lisa Schumaker

Bookkeeper: Bruce Marquette

Online Donations and ABD:

The ABD was very successful this year, thank you all for your continued generosity. Special thanks are due to those that increased their pledge to take advantage of the matching funds and the matching fund donors.

Paycheck Protection Program

UUCSS received a Paycheck Protection Loan/Grant from the Small Business Administration for \$53,875. This loan has converted to a grant thanks to the efforts of the finance team and especially Lisa Schumaker. These funds have allowed UUCSS to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis in ways which improve our long-term financial health.

Submitted by Colin Riggs, Vice President for Finance

ANNUAL BUDGET DRIVE

Annual Budget Drive 2021-2022
Margo Kelly, Chair
Jamie Jorgensen and Teresa Meeks, Members

ABD 2021-22 Accomplishments

With support of Rev. Kristen, this Annual Budget Drive was able to reach the ambitious financial target set out by the Board. This was accomplished through a combination of activities and incentives including: a virtual key donor event; matching gifts to any increased pledges over the previous year; raffles to encourage members to pledge in a timely fashion and to set up monthly automatic withdrawal for their annual pledges; and a stewardship outreach plan targeting all pledging members and friends. This all had to be done virtually because of the COVID-19 restrictions. We ended the official ABD campaign in April with 138 people/couples pledging a total of \$403,194. This included increased pledges of **\$44,893**, and with the matching incentive, we reached **\$448,087 in total pledges** which exceeded the \$442,851 target set by the Board. This was worthy accomplishment in a challenging year.

Challenges

The biggest challenge this year was having to shift the ABD campaign to be totally virtual because of the COVID-19 restrictions which did not allow us to meet in-person. The ABD team worked with the IT team to update the on-line pledge form so that it could be the main way to pledge instead of using paper pledge forms which was the standard in the past. After ironing out a few glitches, this on-line pledging system worked quite well and could be updated and continued moving forward.

Future Plans

The Board can build on this year's ABD success and work to keep UUCSS members engaged, supportive and continue to make the ABD process and pledging simpler in future years.

Submitted by Margo Kelly, Chair, Annual Budget Drive

VICE PRESIDENT - PERSONNEL

Personnel Annual Report 2020-2021

Despite Covid restrictions, the staff, with the leadership of Rev. Kristin, produced engaging and meaningful weekly worship services, music and religious education events, and kept the church campus safe and functioning for the year. Their success was achieved by gifted management, the support of volunteers, virtual connection, and no doubt a lot of imaginative problem solving. Continuing from when the campus first closed in spring 2020, all staff positions have been maintained including the two nursery care staff, sexton, communications administrator, bookkeeper, pianist, director of religious education, music director, and settled minister.

For this coming year, once the proposed church budget is approved, all nine staff members' salaries will again meet the UUA Fair Compensation Guidelines commensurate with their experience. The Guidelines articulate a salary range based on geographic area and congregational size. UUCSS is classified as a midsize congregation with membership currently under 250. The geographic component looks at the salaries in our area (not the cost of living) comparing similar positions. By adhering to the Guidelines for salaries, we can monitor potential implicit bias that the church may be carrying and not unintentionally perpetuating a wage gap based on gender or race. UUCSS also meets the UUA Recommendations for health benefits for those working at least half-time and retirement benefits for all staff. For the next half year, the UUA Health Plan Base Rates will not rise. As reported by the UUA benefits office, rates may be revised upward in January 2022.

The Board once again proposes a small cost-of-living (COLA) increase for hourly staff that aligns with UUA recommendations and a small raise for several staff members. UUCSS is fortunate to have the talented and dedicated staff that we have. The Board and congregation appreciate and value the work they do for our community. Following the June Annual Meeting, staff will receive their annual Compensation and Budget Statements. In December, we were able to provide small bonuses to hourly staff.

Following are staff updates for this church year:

In August 2020, the congregation welcomed Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt as its minister. The Property Committee, Administrative Operations, and the Welcoming Committee, along with other congregants, ensured that the office was newly painted, technology was ready, and support for Rev. Kristin's move with her family was offered. With the Board, a process for evaluating the ministry was established. A summary of the evaluation can be found in this Annual Report. Overwhelmingly, Rev. Kristin's first year has been highly successful despite the challenges of virtual programming and adapting to changing conditions. Won't it be welcome to spend time with Rev. Kristin in person.

Lindsay Cowett was hired in August 2020 as the Religious Education Coordinator to manage the week-to-week coordination of the RE program. Linda Barrett, Gregg Harry, and Stephanie McConachie formed the Search Team and consulted with Marsha Thrall. Parents have been most appreciative of Lindsay's accessibility and timely communications in a totally virtual RE program.

Melinda Yalom, Church Administrator, resigned in November 2020. Melinda welcomed and supported church members' activities and managed the church office and the many rentals capably for 12 years. We are grateful for and appreciative of her many contributions to the success of UUCSS.

Lindsay Cowett stepped in ably as part-time Interim Office Administrator in November 2020. She will depart as administrator in May 2021 but will continue as RE Coordinator.

Philip Browne joined the staff as a half-time Communications Administrator in May 2021. Rev. Kristin Schmidt, Janne Harrelson, Ken Iobst, Scott Sleek, Rachel Vandarsdall, and Stephanie McConachie formed the Search Team. Philip brings to UUCSS his extensive experience supporting technology and communications in other UU churches.

Marsha Thrall, Interim Director of RE, ends her two years as interim Director of Religious Education in late June 2021. During her tenure, she brought dedication and organization to the RE program and commitment to racial justice in programming and RE curricula.

The Search for Director of Spiritual Growth, the new job title for the Director of Religious Education, is ongoing. The plan is to hire a religious education professional to begin in August 2021. Charles Alexander, Erika Anderson, Jenn Kalli, Rev. Kristin Schmidt, and Stephanie McConachie form the search team. Members of the Search Committee have organized feedback sessions for RE teachers, parents, adult members, and children and youth to learn more about each group's views on the experiences and skills they want in a Director of Spiritual Growth.

In support of long-range planning and achieving a UUCSS Strategic Plan goal, leadership will continue to advocate for the resources to hire a full-time Congregational Administrator who would assume many of the responsibilities of personnel and finance consistent with Board policies. These responsibilities are now divided among individual staff, the minister, and volunteers.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie McConachie
VP for Personnel, Board of Trustees

SUMMARY OF MINISTRY EVALUATION RESPONSES – 2020-21 CHURCH YEAR

The Ministry Evaluation Committee created a new process this year to provide thoughtful feedback to our minister, staff, and lay leaders about how members and friends are experiencing the life of our church. Congregants representing the Program and Operations Councils, Lay Ministers, Worship, and the Board of Trustees were invited to answer questions in feedback meetings. Additionally, all members and friends were invited to answer questions on an online Google platform. Questions were drawn from a UUA ministerial assessment tool in the three areas of Worship, Pastoral Care, and Administration. These areas correspond to ones being studied by our minister with UUCSS's larger Shared Ministry team. During March 2021, there were 5 facilitated feedback Zoom meetings attended by 25 church members. In April 2021, 12 church members provided individual, online feedback. The summary which follows is organized into the three areas identified earlier and highlights the positive opportunities as well as the issues and challenges revealed in the responses. Our intention is to use the feedback to strengthen the congregation's ministry and mission.

WORSHIP

Overwhelmingly, church members find Sunday worship services nurturing and emotionally fulfilling. When asked about the flow of the service, members cited positively its familiarity as a "predictable redundancy" "because people like the familiar." Many also saw the flow of the service as "similar to when we were in person" and that this helped their spiritual connection. Most respondents assessed components of the services as "connected." As one surmised, "Services are nicely integrated thematically. Music reflects the readings. Sermons are integrated with other parts of the service, there's a familiar repetition. It's woven together in a way that makes thematic sense. We don't get five or six different strands." One comment reflected several others, "The Sunday worship service has an effective and artful alternation between different formats. The parts of the service that engage me the most are the music, homilies, and the readings. The music is best for me when it's creative and shows me something I've never seen before. I like the homilies and the readings because they make me feel connected to deep values and a larger, global community." As several persons said using different words, the services ground them and by the end of the service, they conclude that their attendance makes them feel more connected to the community; "I always feel better coming out," said two persons. There were several who found focusing fully during online services difficult. Here is a representative comment from the few with this perspective: "Online services are hard to pay attention to." Relatedly, the chat function for the online service is both appreciated, especially during the musical prelude, as well as critiqued as disruptive during the homily and readings. As one of seven who commented on the chat function stated, "The chat: I love it and I hate it. Feel it's a connection, but I find it hugely distracting." Four respondents want the services to be more intellectually stimulating. For example, "I find the services less intellectually stimulating than at other churches. We seem to be more about the 'heart' and less about the 'head' lately."

Most respondents were reluctant to address our church service's inclusivity unless they could speak from their own identities and experiences. Several want the children to be represented in the service more often and a couple cited examples from the early fall when the children were included more. There were several positive comments about Time for all Ages and different services for different groups such as by Rainbow Alliance and YRUU. Several cited the importance of ASL (American Sign Language); a few expressed concerns about ASL being offered in a separate room as an example of "othering that doesn't sit right with me that everyone is not in the same room at the same time." One comment highlighted a strength while also challenging UUCSS inclusivity: "I noticed the intentional effort to

include and reach out to young people, Time for All Ages does keep the interest of our little ones. The music and majority of service are geared to adults. As a person of a minority race, I feel welcome, but don't feel the services are necessarily inclusive, even work with the 8th Principle is speaking to a particular audience and that person is not me. Disability is not included in the planning in a primary way. For instance, deaf access is in a totally separate Zoom room...Folks with disabilities need to feel more included --that we care about you and see you as well."

The emotional connection to the music and its artistry, both during the prelude and the service, were highlighted by many respondents. Rev. Kristin's messages and presence, her sermons, homilies, readings, and prayers also received many positive comments. Responses to the question about the "way Rev. Kristin delivers the sermon were primarily positive. One comment representing a majority response: "Rev. Kristin has a warm, charismatic style in her sermons. She also seems deeply anchored emotionally, which I think is very important for keeping our community in balance during difficult times. I always feel like she's there and that she cares." A few respondents want Rev. Kristin to be more "dynamic." One stated, her "voice is calm and soothing. I find it very monotone...would be helpful for her to be more dynamic, break up the monotony."

PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care section of the survey revealed Rev. Kristin's and the Lay Ministers strengths in reaching out to members and friends needing pastoral care and healing. Several responses cited the "exceptional support" offered to family members and friends grieving a tragic death. Also, members reported how Rev. Kristin "provides her email in her signature line, has a calendar that one can use to schedule a meeting, attends coffee hour, responds in Sunday chat," and uses Facebook information to learn about those in need. Several stated that they "hadn't had to ask for pastoral care, but felt, if needed, they could." Responses to how the minister has addressed trauma in our wider community offered examples of Rev. Kristin's sensitivity to the impact of recent national events including the November Presidential election, the January attack on the Capitol, and several mass shootings. As stated in one answer, "bringing the world into the service in timely ways. I don't know if the balance is quite right, but her fire is connected to what's in the world." Also, "With the Insurrection (at the Capitol), she changed her whole sermon to add that in there. Shooting in Georgia, she put that in there..."

A few found it surprising that Rev. Kristin shares personal, family information on Facebook, noting that it's not "a usual professional presence." However, almost all found, as stated in one answer, that Rev. Kristin "holds a very tight professional boundary that is appropriate." It was noted that Rev. Kristin has used community resources to seek grant funding for additional technology for next church year. Several weren't sure how or if other community resources were being used except for her connections with other churches and the denomination. Referencing the degree of use of community resources, one stated, "Not much, but having the services being virtual mitigates against including these groups (i.e., addiction groups, sexual health, community health and welfare, nursing, etc.)."

ADMINISTRATION

Responses to the question on the words used to describe Rev. Kristin's leadership style highlighted her professionalism, collaborative decision-making, and guiding role. One representative comment: "She is comfortable with delegating and provides the appropriate amount of authority with the delegation, not something that all leaders do. That is, give the authority with the delegation." Here is a sampling of other single word responses: "Diplomatic, firm (doesn't give in) energetic, confident, more of a guider, servant leader, passionate, responsible and empathetic." A statement with highlighted words follows: "I believe she aims to professionalize the minister's role and preach to the congregation. She aims to lead

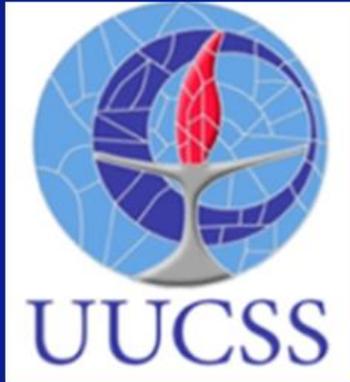
us on a spiritual path as dictated by her profession. I think hierarchy, boundaries, and planning are important to her leadership style.”

When asked about how Rev. Kristin responds to conflict, most found Rev. Kristin “supportive of people in general” and willing to address challenges administratively. Nine responders cited moving to a Communications Administrator position as a positive change. Several saw the departure of the church administrator as a difficult situation that Rev. Kristin did a “very good job of handling.” Another representative commented on the departure: “I commend Rev. Kristin for resolving our church administration issues.” Another stated, “I think the dimension of having a Communications Administrator with a more updated skills set was sorely needed and a wonderful example of positive change for the congregation.” Two responders expressed dissatisfaction with the administrator’s departure and stated that they “did not support moving to a communications administrator” and that the move “represented negative performance in the church’s ministry and Rev. Schmidt’s in particular.” One person stated that Rev. Kristin, “avoids conflict.” Again, however, most responses affirmed that “She made some tough decisions professionally” and that “Rev. Kristin responds carefully and thoughtfully to conflict in writing.”

In considering the question of what changes the minister has made to the operations or programs of the church, most appreciated her problem-solving approach. For example, “I know she started immediately to change the internal schedule for preparing the virtual services, to make it easier for the support staff and volunteers....and she’s been very adaptable.” Also, “Planning ahead. Not doing things last minute. She’s good at delegating. We still have a long way to go. We could do better: What are the roles of various committees and how do we make them better and more efficient. That will come with time. She’s thinking about it. Not always just reacting.” Related to communications improvements, the following is a representative response, “[Rev. Kristin] has been consistent and clear and streamlined the Uniter, all church emails, and weekly reminders of services.” Also, “the move to remote services has been fantastic. The over-reliance on volunteers is troubling. I am glad to see that a virtual services technician is in the works.” A few stated that they didn’t see a lot of changes in communication except for the necessities of working around the pandemic. One suggested that the UUCSS “website could be more dynamic and have content that is updated regularly.”

In response to the question about how welcoming UUCSS is to marginalized groups and how has the minister’s actions as a church leader affected that, two commended Rev. Kristin’s and other church leaders’ goal “to reach out to the deaf community on a national basis” along with “protecting the budget of our Deaf Access program.” Responsiveness to those with physical disabilities came up as it did with an earlier question: “Buildings themselves are not the most accessible” and “if I were in a wheelchair, I wouldn’t feel as welcome.” Several said they weren’t members of a historically marginalized group so were not the right people to be asked this question. However, one responder wondered if “Atheists may feel marginalized due to some of the language and sermon changes, saying only Amen at the end of sermons, the heavy Christian leaning, etc.” According to one responder, “Our committee perceived racial insensitivity in a UUCSS program, and we created guidelines to prevent similar problems in the future. Rev. Kristin endorsed our guidelines and added appropriate introductory language. Her leadership and administration mattered; she facilitated it very well.” Another stated, “We want to be inclusive, but we have a lot of tone deafness. I feel like Rev. Kristin is not tone deaf herself and wants us to move forward. It’s all on us, frankly.”

Submitted by Bonnie Gallion, Stephanie McConachie, Carl Miller, and Rev. Kristin Schmidt
Members of the Ministry Evaluation Committee



BOARD COMMITTEES

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

2021 Capital Improvements Committee Annual Report

Committee Members:

Erik Leaver, Fred Teal, Brian Beard, Doneby Smith, Linda Barrett, Robin Moore Lasky

Background

UUCSS' 2012-2017 Strategic Plan outlined the need for building improvements and a Capital Campaign to support those improvements. The Dreambuilders committee was formed to guide the vision and a Capital Campaign committee was formed to raise the funds. After a successful campaign which raised 4 times our Annual Budget, the Capital Improvements Committee was formed in the Fall of 2018 to guide our work in three main areas: evaluating finances, planning current and future work.

2021 Activities

In the summer of 2020, the Committee continued its evaluation of construction management firms. The Committee evaluated multiple proposals and selected Therrien Waddell. Selection of 33-year-old firm, located in Gaithersburg, was due to their experience with projects similar in size to ours and background in renovating and building churches.

During Fall of 2020, the Committee negotiated the contract and worked closely with Therrien Waddell to select subcontractors and agree on final pricing for the work on the Sanctuary Building. This work included, replacing the entire HVAC system for the Sanctuary Building, adding HVAC to the entry way stairwell, replacing the foyer roof, repairing the roof soffits, adding gutters, repairing masonry cracks in the outside walls, repairing the ceiling in the foyer, replacing multiple doors, replacing the hot water heater, re-tiling the kitchen, painting the exterior and powerwashing the building.

Construction began on March 22 and was slated to conclude on May 26. As the Kitchen tiling was added to the project scope near the end of construction, we are currently waiting on the tile delivery for installation. The Committee expects all of Phase 1 to be completed within the next two weeks.

Future Work

While work was underway on the Sanctuary, the Committee engaged with Therrien Waddell and our architect on improvements to the Community Building ("Phase 2").

The first step for the Committee was to confirm the project budget. As of March 2021, \$203,060 in Capital Campaign Pledges were outstanding. Members of the Committee worked in coordination with the Annual Budget Drive and reached out to 40 members of the congregation who had not yet fulfilled their pledge. We received commitments of \$133,490 to be paid by the end of May. Based on these commitments, the Board increased the budget to \$877,000 in May 2021.

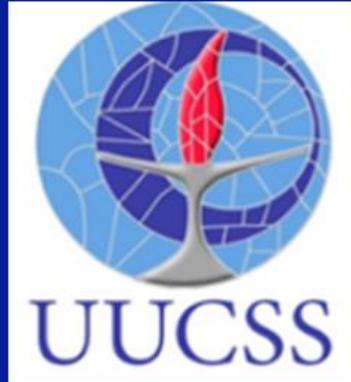
Over the Summer, the Committee will continue working with Therrien Waddell to create a scope of work that fits within our budget. The needs for the Community Building are many and our budget is modest.

Our immediate priorities will be repairing the roof, replacing the heating system and adding cooling, adding a sprinkler system, replacing the existing windows/wall structure and adding additional

enhancements to meet ADA standards. If budget allows, the next priorities include repair/replacement of the pedestrian bridge and stairwell and potential addition/upgrade to the bathrooms. Following the precedent set by the Dream Builders, we will engage with the Congregation in an inclusive and collaborative manner to plan and seek approval for this work.

We currently expect work to start in November of 2021 and be completed in July of 2022.

Submitted by Erik Leaver
Member, Capital Improvements Committee



OPERATIONS COMMITTEES

OPERATIONS COUNCIL

Operations Council

Chair: Robin Moore Lasky, Chair of the Operations Council

Members:

Rob Dahlstrom, Chair of the Administrative Operations Committee, Chair of the Audio Visual Technology Committee

John Henderson, Chair of the Property Committee (part year)

Jim Street, Acting Chair of the Property Committee

Steve Leete, Chair of the Information Technology Committee

Purpose: The Operations Council coordinates the activities of its four member committees, and their interaction with the Board of Trustees:

- This is the third year operating under the Operations Council organizational structure approved at the June 2018 Annual Meeting. The Chair of the Operations Council is held by a board member selected by a board vote for a one year term. The goal of this model was to improve communication and interaction with the board, following the successful model of the Program Council and its chairperson.
- The council met in October, November, and December of 2020, and January, February, March, April, and plans to meet in June of 2021; Agendas were simple and circulated in advance of each meeting, and rough meeting notes were kept by members in a central document. Meeting time was reduced from two hours to one and transitioned to Zoom.
- Operations Council functions experienced a fair amount of disruption because the pandemic interrupted all church operations.
- The council was able to continue to keep managing all functions during an extremely disrupted year. Nearly every aspect of how things worked, and each committee's responsibility and tasks within each functional area, had to change as the pandemic interrupted church operations, closed the campus, and resulted in shifting all programs online. In addition, we onboarded a new minister and transitioned from a church administrator to a communications administrator with vastly different responsibilities. The Communications Administrator position was held by a very capable interim staff member for several months, resulting in this position being transitioned twice. During the church year, all UUCSS tenant programs were interrupted, including one of the two main tenants closing, which involved convoluted negotiations through the entire year. These transitions were generally made calmly and promptly by Operations Council and committee volunteer members -- no small feat.
- As for challenges, it was not easy to keep the throughline of the UUCSS strategic plan in mind.
- As far as the UUCSS wiki (prototype), the several Ops Council committees, the board, the new Communications Committee, and Ken Iobst generally agreed that the wiki should be moved over to the groups.io platform, which could then, if implemented, result in streamlined inter-member and inter-committee communications. One of the chief goals is to have many members

use the wiki, not just a few leaders. The project remains in prototype and has not been migrated.

- In general, it was good to have a board member as chair, to streamline communications and troubleshoot the rapidly changing and complex situations, particularly with regard to property, capital improvements, staff changes, and tenant needs and transitions. There were still gaps. Operations areas, particularly rentals, continue to be a challenge for volunteers to handle, and to coordinate between volunteers and staff in the needed timeframes.
- A key challenge remains a lack of volunteers on several committees, in particular, the leadership of Property.
- Departing chair John Henderson created a thorough description of the “portfolio” or the committee’s responsibilities.

Submitted by Robin Moore Lasky, Ops Council chair

ADMINISTRATION OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Administrative Operations (AOC) Committee

Rob Dahlstrom, Chair

Members: Rob Dahlstrom, Nancy Dougherty, Ken Iobst, Staff members as desired

What went well:

We continued to meet virtually and support our staff. We are investigating the use of the Member Portal feature of our membership database and hope to complete that process this year.

The online calendar was modified to schedule Zoom meetings allowing us to better share our Zoom accounts, make it easier to schedule them, and enable the Communications Administrator to manage them.

Challenges:

Sudden staff transitions have been a challenge, particularly during the pandemic. We have worked with new staff members to maintain at least a minimal level of functioning and are rapidly improving beyond that level.

Our goal of scanning our paper records for electronic storage has paused because of the pandemic. We hope to resume that effort soon.

Plans:

Nancy Dougherty will be the committee chair beginning in July. Thanks, Nancy!

Submitted by Rob Dahlstrom, Chair, Administration Operations Committee

AUDIO VISUAL TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Audio Visual Technology (AV) Committee

Rob Dahlstrom, Chair

Members: Rob Dahlstrom, John Sullivan

What went well:

We prepared a 28-minute prelude for virtual services each Sunday from recordings of performances during services that were done in the sanctuary before the pandemic.

We purchased a new digital wireless microphone system at a reduced price to use for Joys and Sorrows and will still have the old ones for times when more than one is needed and for backup.

We made a plan for our return to on-site worship services and small-group meetings to include cameras for live streaming our events and displays for video presentations and to help include those viewing our services remotely in our on-site service.

Challenges:

Some of our committee members asked to be inactive during the pandemic.

Plans for next year:

We look forward to implementing our plan for support of our worship services and other events as we return to our buildings. We will be inviting our inactive committee members to return and recruiting additional members.

Submitted by Rob Dahlstrom, Chair, Audio Visual Technology Committee

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Communications Committee Annual Report

Members, 2020/2021:

Scott Sleek (Chair)

Members: Jo Paoletti, Andrea Tanner, Janne Harrelson, Steve Leete

Our committee, formed in 2020, encompasses the web team and other volunteers. The committee guides and manages public-facing church communications, primarily the UUCSS website and the UUCSS Facebook page (@UUSilverSpringMD). We also guide many internal member communications platforms, namely the UUCSS membership page on Facebook and the church's Groups.io.

Accomplishments

Our most significant accomplishment during the year was the church's transition—led by Jo Paoletti—from the antiquated Yahoo listserv to Groups.io. This provides us with a more robust and secure platform for communication among members and church leaders. The platform enables the creation of subgroups. Thus far, we have subgroups for the Communications Committee itself and the monitors of the YouTube chat during Sunday services. We encourage other church committees to use the subgroup options on Groups.io to share documents, discuss activities, use calendars, etc.

Challenges

One of our biggest challenges as a committee was simply getting off the ground, with a necessary change in committee leadership delaying us from completing all of our Year 1 strategic plan goals. We have since set a regular monthly meeting schedule and are on track as a committee. Our other challenge is making our role clear to the congregation and lay leadership. That involves setting some boundaries between our own role and that of the Administrative Operations, Audio Visual, and Information Technology committees. Our role is focused mainly on content and our use of third-party social media platforms.

The Year Ahead

As part of our strategic plan, we aim to collect data – through surveys, focus groups, and website analytics — to determine members' communications preferences and how people are arriving at and using the website. This will help inform us about possible updates or a complete overhaul of the church website design to better meet users' needs.

We are also pursuing new and updated policies for the private Facebook page for members and our groups.io platform. This will include proposing eligibility standards for participation in those forums to ensure that they remain private platforms for UUCSS members and friends. We intend to develop a comprehensive plan for church communications and information dissemination to propose to church leadership. We also will be working closely with our new communications administrator as we pursue our goals.

Submitted by Scott Sleek, Chair, Communications Committee

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Annual Report of the Information Technology (IT) Committee

Members of the committee this year have been Steve Leete (chair), Rob Dahlstrom, Ken Iobst, Andrea Tanner, Jake Ryder, Tamara Bowman.

The committee has maintained the hosting of our church website on Pair.com, including making the annual payments. We managed the internet and telephone services for the church, and ensured we got the services at the best price. We trained staff and volunteers on use of the computers, computer networks, and phones. This included onboarding our new settled minister and other staff transitions.

The committee took on the management of the church Zoom video-conferencing systems, including adding this to our financial responsibilities. We advocated for finding a lower cost approach, which led to obtaining our Zoom accounts through the UUA instead of directly through Zoom, with substantial savings. We also established a method for the sharing of four of the accounts, making the accounts reservable through the existing church calendar through the church website.

The committee provided oversight of the tech director function, with a rotating schedule between a cadre of tech directors that resulted in a standardized and dependable provision of produced videos on YouTube every week. With our experience, we were able to end the weekly Tech Meetings, saving time for staff and volunteers. Members have also participated in related church groups, such as the Communications Team and Hybrid Ministry, to ensure they are moving toward solutions that can be supported by our IT services.

Sincerely,

Steve Leete

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Property Committee 2020-2021 Annual Report

Members: Brian Beard, Rob Dahlstrom, John Henderson, and Jim Street

Organization

- The Property Committee does not have a Chair. All four members are happy to continue with their current portfolio of duties, but a new Chair needs to be recruited.
- The Portfolio Project Managers system initiated the previous year is working well, with committee members and other volunteers each responsible for an area—such as HVAC, Fire and Alarms, Elevator, Snow Removal, Liaison with other committees, etc.

Buildings and Grounds Repairs and Maintenance

- Worked with our contractors to maintain buildings and systems, including scheduling required inspections to meet licensing requirements and addressing issues, such as replacing the FDC sign, cleaning accumulated oil and water from the well at the base of the elevator shaft, etc.
- Worked with our contractor, Fusion Fire, to resolve issues with our equipment for alerting the fire alarm monitoring company, in the event of an alarm. We continue to have problems with our old fire alarm panels, and will need to replace them before the system fails completely.
- Addressed water seepage issues in the Sanctuary and Admin Bldgs. Installed drainage hose for dehumidifier in Fire Alarm Control Room.
- Consulted with Church Reopening task force and initiated regular flushing of water sources in Sanctuary to maintain safe water supply, and then handed those duties to Sexton.
- Negotiated new trash removal contract to reduce annual cost by \$4800.
- In coordination with Garden Group, organized at least 8 Church Cleanup Days throughout the year. We removed a couple large trees; trimmed, weeded and added mulch around trees and bushes, and along the NH Ave slope; and leveled and re-laid the slate on the diagonal walkway near Oaklawn.

Coordination with other Committees

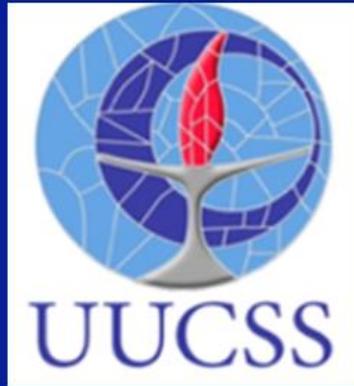
- Coordinated with and provided input to Capital Improvements Committee regarding the work being performed on the Sanctuary Building, as well as planning for Phase II work on the Community Building.
- Assisted Church Reopening task force in calculating area, air exchange rate, and maximum seating allowed in Sanctuary, per Covid restrictions.
- Coordinated with Garden Group on: Church Cleanup Days; developing and translating a list of outdoor tasks for sexton; and in exploring potential rain gardens and other water management measures, including research of potential funding sources.

Activities for the upcoming year

- Continue Church Cleanup Days
- Hire a contractor to replace carpet in Sanctuary and Foyer (June 2021).
- With Garden Group, hire a landscape architect to do a complete assessment of water management issues on church grounds and provide recommendations.

- Use professional recommendations to modify new gutters on Sanctuary to carry water away from building and improve landscaping with conservation gardens and other measures to increase water retention and minimize erosion.
- Train staff and church leaders in use of new HVAC system in Sanctuary, including how to maximize air replacement during church events.
- Repair Fellowship House exterior and sheds.
- Develop and implement a prioritized grounds maintenance needs list, in coordination with Garden Group.
- Develop plan for updated physical security, in coordination with the Safety Planning Taskforce.

Submitted by Brian Beard, Property Committee Liaison w CIC and Garden Group - May 29, 2021



**PROGRAM
COUNCIL
COMMITTEES**

DEAF ACCESS COMMITTEE

Deaf Access Committee

Membership:

- Miako Villanueva, principal interpreter
- Deborah Weiner, interpreter coordinator
- Janne Harrelson, administrative/communication support
- Mary Beth Morgan, interpreter

Highlights:

During the 2020-2021 church year, Deaf Access services remain focused on coordinating interpreters for Sunday worship services and other events. Given the global pandemic, all services and events continue online, which requires an ongoing robust effort by our principal interpreter, Miako Villanueva, to ensure that the visual access needs within the congregation are met. Miako works closely with the minister, the music director, and other staff and volunteers to prepare—and often record in advance—artistic ASL interpretations of the music and texts for each week’s service.

While the general UUCSS worship services are viewed via YouTube, the ASL-interpreted services are conducted via Zoom. Miako manages that process and communicates with deaf members and friends each week by sending them the proper links for Sundays. Other DAC members attend the ASL-interpreted services and help facilitate conversation with deaf members and visitors during Zoom coffee hour. Miako also follows up after each service to share the recorded version of the interpreted Zoom service. On weeks when Miako is not available to host the Zoom meeting for Sunday services, volunteers Tina Borrer and Mary Beth Morgan have stepped up to do that in her stead.

DAC members Janne Harrelson and Deborah Weiner schedule and coordinate interpreters for Sunday worship services when Miako is not available, as well as interpreters for other church events, such as the annual meeting, auction, fellowship dinner, Pathways to Membership sessions, personnel interviews, etc. DAC members also field inquiries related to ASL interpretation and other associated discussions related to the access needs for deaf people within the church.

An exciting upside of online worship services is that several new deaf visitors have attended regularly during this time, and some have become members. It is gratifying to know that more people now have access to UUCSS and its broad-reaching message of spirituality, activism, engagement, and community.

Given the clear message that there’s interest within the broader Deaf community for online interpreted UU services, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt, with the support of DAC, applied to the UUA for a grant through the Veatch Fund for Unitarian Universalists. The purpose of the grant is to expand our long-established Deaf ministry in this time of virtual innovation to help UUCSS reach deaf people who do not live near accessible Unitarian Universalist congregations and to help UUCSS continue to deepen our commitment to deaf access and leadership in our congregation.

Submitted by Janne Harrelson, Member, Deaf Access Committee

GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE

UUCSS Green Sanctuary Annual Report for Church Year 2020-2021

Accomplishments

- Addition of two new members to our group: Elizabeth Benefiel and Tina Terrill
- Clean residential electricity promotion-3 members signed up for community solar electricity for total of 76 households (60%)
 - Using renewably-sourced electricity
- Coordination with other UUCSS groups
 - Provided goals for church strategic plan
 - Participated with other church social justice groups in July 2020 summit
 - Worked with Capital Improvements committee to advocate for “green” building and renovation decisions
- Lobbying efforts
 - Provided updates on state climate legislations and urged letter writing and calls in support of critical bills
 - Provided info on Beltway/270 widening proposal and urged letter writing in opposition
 -

Challenges

- Increasing congregational motivation and participation in climate change activism- the committee is considering
 - a shift away from direct efforts to mobilize congregants toward developing an “info hub” for interested congregants
 - a shift away from inward focus on congregation toward outward focus on engaging with outside climate and environmental organizations
- Identifying opportunities for collaboration with other church social action committees and for active work on environmental justice
- Finding energy to collaborate with the minister and worship committee to create an Earth Day/Week service, which didn’t happen this year

Plans

- Identify opportunities for joint environmental justice work
- Connect with local climate/environment organizations such as MC-FACS, 350.org, Sierra Club, etc.
- Work within our committee and with outside groups on state and local legislation and regulations
- Develop an info hub for use by interested congregants
- Conduct annual Earth Day service in April 2022 to lift up our Seventh Principle

Submitted by Doneby Smith, Chair, Green Sanctuary Committee

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee is currently comprised of 7 members: Chair-person Dina Raley, Assistant Chair Mary Beth Lerner, and members Dorothy Hale, Jiwon Kim, Pat Hulsebosch, Jim Street, and Ryan Smith. Although we lost 4 committee members in 2020, we gained 4 new committee members who have been vital to the practices and goals of the committee and essential in maintaining outreach to visitors and new members.

The Membership Committee's primary role is to create opportunities for visitors to engage in our community and learn more about the rights and responsibilities of membership, with the goal of assisting visitors in becoming actively engaged friends or members of UUCSS. The Committee is visible during every service, we attend every coffee hour, we lead the Pathways to Membership class twice a year, and we maintain various brochures and pamphlets with information about how to get connected at UUCSS. We also offer a New Member Recognition ceremony to all new members upon book signing where they are introduced to the entire congregation during a service. We welcomed 9 new members in June 2020 in a socially distanced drive-by parking lot book signing and we anticipate 1 new member to sign the book in June 2021.

The biggest challenge we faced was COVID-19 and no longer having in-person services or coffee hour. Identifying and connecting with visitors in the YouTube chat is particularly challenging as there is no way to know if there are any visitors watching unless a visitor identifies themselves or sends an email to Membership.

The Membership Committee also continued to host events for new members. Although we are not able to have our biannual in-person brunch, we have been able to host two Zoom happy hours that were well attended and fun. We continued to check in and support our newest members through a Mentor Program, we wrote two articles for the Uniter, and conducted a "friends-campaign", where we wrote letters to 17 friends of the church in an effort to remind them of the benefits of changing their status from friend to member.

Going forward, the Membership Committee plans to continue to welcome our visitors and new members into the UUCSS community in the ways described above, albeit virtually. The committee will continue to develop and implement the YRUU bridge program, as well as support other groups in updating the database.

Submitted by Dina Raley, Chair, Membership Committee

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Music Committee

Tina Borrer, Chair

Members: Bob McGaughy, Deborah Thornton, Ron Turner, Michael Holmes (ex officio)

The Music Committee works closely with the Music Director, Michael Holmes, to plan and coordinate the music program at UUCSS. The committee is open to anyone who shares a passion for the musical life of our community, including musicians and non-musicians. The activities of the Music Program contribute to the Strategic Plan theme, "Cultivate a rich spiritual life and build community connections."

Accomplishments:

The Music Program facilitated bringing music to the congregation during the COVID-19 pandemic while remaining safe. Virtual choir and individual and group video recordings have enriched worship and the musicians' creative lives.

Thursday evenings at 7:30pm have been reserved during the pandemic (through May) to discuss and listen to great Masterworks of Music, early and modern, Western and non-Western, along with living traditions such as jazz, folk, rock, R&B, pop, soul, gospel, and many other genres/musical cultures. Led by Michael Holmes with guest presenters, these gatherings aim to stave off pandemic isolation while being together and enriching our lives via exposure to great music. Sessions take place during what would normally be our Thursday choir rehearsals, but it is open to all UUCSS members and friends.

Our successful residency with Lea Morris included three collaborative video recordings and a virtual workshop and concert that attracted participants from UUCSS and across the country.

Challenges:

The committee needs additional members and volunteers to continue to support the musical life of the church and produce high-quality cultural offerings that engage the congregation and the community at large.

Our quarterly jazz series, jazz@uucss has been on hiatus since the pandemic; we hope to restart the series when live events and signing are allowed.

Our Strategic Plan goal to add a music component to RE was largely not realized, due to the complexities of music during the pandemic.

Opportunities:

Leverage the visibility of our Music Program to attract more musicians and more diverse audiences.

Continue discussions with the RE Committee about adding a music component to RE to ensure that our program engages the entire congregation and to help keep our youth musically and spiritually active\

Submitted by Tina Borrer, Chair, Music Committee

RACIAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Annual Report, 2020-2021 Racial Justice Task Force

The Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) has had a very full year! In fact, it's been a full year around the world. The murder of George Floyd re-ignited the Black Lives Matter movement and the global pandemic shined a light on the deep racial inequities in our country. The RJTF has been moved by these events and stands in solidarity with all those around the globe working to build the beloved community.

Our focus this year has been on helping the church explore the 8th Principle in preparation for the congregational vote to adopt it in June.

We welcomed six new people onto the team, bringing our team to 15 active members! This allowed us to break into subgroups, allowing people to focus their work where they felt most called. We met monthly as a full team, with subgroups holding additional meetings as needed. The subgroups are: 8th Principle, external engagement, RE liaison, and events.

The RJTF supported the overall church programming by sending a representative to the monthly Program Council and Religious Education team. We also strove to keep the congregation informed by submitting monthly Uniter articles and sending info via other communication streams.

We planned a lot of activities this year! Here is a sampling of them:

Auction Events: The RJTF supported both the UUCSS budget and our anti-racist work through submitting several offerings to the auction

Movie/video discussions of "Pose" (co-hosted with the Rainbow Alliance) and "I Am Not Your Negro"

Baskets of Books related to racial justice

Excursion to visit the Harriet Tubman Center.

Conferences and workshops attended by RJTF and congregational members:

Jubilee Anti-racism Workshop: hosted one virtual workshop with over 30 UUCSS members participated, including almost all the Board; encouraged attendance at one hosted by All Souls DC

New Day Rising Conference: for congregations engaged in anti-racist work

Revolutionary Love Conference: attended by around 20 UUCSS members.

Book Discussions: *Caste*, *Raising White Kids* (co-hosted with RE), *White Fragility*

8th Principle exploration events:

- Led or supported two services
- Hosted linguistic analysis discussions on the 8th Principle language
- Facilitated ongoing coffee hour discussions.
- Provided testimonials for Sunday services
- Engaged with monthly presentations by the 8th Principle Learning Community
- Reached out for advice from other congregations who have adopted the 8th Principle

- Created RJTF and 8th Principle web pages for the UUCSS website
- Wrote FAQ on the 8th Principle at UUCSS
- Attended Board meetings to plan for resolution vote
- Wrote and submitted the Resolution to Adopt the 8th Principle

The RJTF committed to focusing our external social justice work by engaging with the Silver Spring Justice Coalition (SSJC), with two RJTF members, Mary Beth Lerner and Kathryn Leete, representing us in that group on their Mental Health Committee. They have been very engaged in state and local efforts to get police out of behavioral health crisis response and to fund mobile crisis response units, etc. Kathryn has shared information regarding rallies and events around police shootings in the county, facilitating congregational involvement in these events. Through this work, UUCSS members were engaged in helping pass nationally recognized policing legislation through the Maryland General Assembly.

Finally, we are looking forward to helping the board facilitate the pre-vote discussion of the proposal to adopt the 8th Principle at our annual meeting. After a year of so much involvement by the congregation in our exploration, we anticipate a rich discussion and a vote that reflects the conscience of our membership. We hopefully look forward to continuing our work next year in helping live into our shared commitment to building the beloved community.

We would like to thank the UUCSS staff and board for its ongoing support of our work.

Respectfully and gratefully submitted by the Racial Justice Task Force:

Active RJTF members: Elizabeth Benefiel, Eli Briggs, Catherine Buckler, Jane Jackson, Kathryn Leete, Mary Beth Lerner, Al Nathan, Susannah Numa, Gwendolyn Rhodes, Jake Ryder, Phyllis Ryder, Carolyn Savadkin, Deborah Thornton, Marsha Thrall, Pat Hulsebosch

Friends of the RJTF: Charles Alexander, Michael Blain, Betsy Marks, Linda Markush

RAINBOW ALLIANCE

Co-Chairs: Nora Strauss-Riggs, Alexis Turner, Elise Turner

Year One Goals	Met/ Ongoing	Partially met	Not started	Abandoned as Impossible /Irrelevant /Impractical	Keep as new Year One	Move to new Year Two	Move to new Year Three
Work with Worship Committee and Minister to incorporate welcoming worship services into our annual calendar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiate Days of Observance - Support a Welcoming Project - Host a Welcoming Workshop/Module 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Explore how best to serve the Trans/GNC community by engaging with them directly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Organize a UUCSS potluck for UUs in the local area to bring allies and queer persons together in a social setting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Train facilitators to lead "Listening Sessions"				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Begin engagement and build rapport with Casa Ruby			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Comments/Notes:

Biggest success: Our October 2020 service about Queer History and our Breakout rooms

Biggest surprise: Global pandemic destroying the world

Productive collaborations (within or outside church): We have been ignored or met with resistance whenever we tried to collaborate.

Barriers encountered/biggest challenge: Please see above.

Changes needed: More volunteers need to be willing to step up and people need to be more willing to change.

Other information: No one would take the responsibility of being a chair after Elise apart from Alexis so here we are.

Submitted by Nora Strauss-Riggs, Co-Chair, Rainbow Alliance

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

UUCSS Worship Committee Annual Report, May 2021 Bruce McConachie, Chair

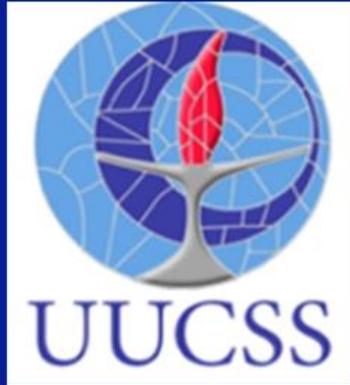
This report is based chiefly on the Worship Committee's Strategic Planning documents, which have been approved by the full committee.

For the church year 2020-21, Worship partially met three of its goals: 1) Better incorporation of children and youth in Sunday services, 2) Improved planning for summer services, and 3) Attracting more church members to join the Committee. We will continue to pursue these goals in the months and years ahead. Our aim for next year is to explore and incorporate hybrid worship – a mix of live and on-line services – as we slowly welcome congregants back into the sanctuary.

Our primary mission over the years has been to provide support for ministers and others in the UUCSS pulpit for meaningful, transformative, and emotionally effective worship services. From our perspective, Rev Kristin worked very effectively with our committee – often under difficult and shifting circumstances – to meet this mission during our past church year. She also assisted members of our Committee when visiting ministers required extra help to put together church services.

In response to a problem of insensitivity to structural racism encountered during the summer of 2020 before Rev Kristin's arrival, the Committee also put together "Worship Committee Guidelines for Visiting and Lay Preachers" this year. The document ensures that all guest ministers and lay leaders follow written Guidelines to guarantee that their worship service works within the seven principles affirmed and promoted by the UUA and UUCSS. In the event that the eighth principle is added to the other seven, the Guidelines require that the guest leaders work within that principle as well.

Submitted by Bruce McConachie, Chair, Worship Committee



**MINUTES FROM
CONGREGATIONAL
MEETINGS**

ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 2020

Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring
Congregational Annual Meeting
June 7, 2020
MINUTES

Allow everyone to gather: Zoom meeting (<https://zoom.us/j/92467123239>)

101 congregants gathered on the Zoom meeting.

Opening Words: The Church Has Left the Building by Margaret Weis

The church is not a place; it is a people.

The church is not only a steeple above the treeline, streets, and cars.
Rather, it is a people proclaiming to the world that
we are here for the work of healing and of justice.

The church is not walls built stone upon stone, held together by mortar
but rather person, linked with person, linked with person:
all ages and genders and abilities—
a community built on the foundation of reason, faith, and love.

The church is not just a set of doors open on Sunday morning,
but the commitment day after day, and moment after moment,
of our hearts creaking open the doors of welcome to the possibility of new experience and
radical welcome.

The church is not simply a building, a steeple, a pew.

The church is the gathering together of all the people, and experiences,
and fear, and love, and hope in our resilient hearts;
gathering, however we can, to say to the world:
welcome, come in, lay down your heartache, and pick up hope and love.

For the church is us—each and every one of us—together,
a beacon of hope to this world that so sorely needs it.

Board President Tamara Bowman called for a moment of silence for all those who have died unjustly,
and all those who are still fighting for justice.

Video and audio were muted except for speakers (Board President and presenters). Roberts Rules of Order were explained. Standing rules for the meeting: congregants are to wait to be recognized before speaking; co-hosts are watching for raised hand in the Zoom "Participant" panel. Board President will recognize speakers. Once you are recognized by the Board President, you may speak (and turn on video); once you sit down, let others speak before you speak again. If you have spoken twice on an issue, you may not speak again unless two-thirds of the congregation votes to allow you to speak a third time. We will use Zoom polling to cast and count votes. Calling the question is not debatable. It requires a two-thirds majority of the congregation. Point of order is called if you feel we have violated procedure or rules. We expect everyone to behave within covenant. If there are personal attacks you will be given one warning; if it persists, you will be removed from the meeting and cannot rejoin. Votes tallied for motions below include those received via absentee ballot, via Zoom poll (with multiple votes per poll for households with more than one member attending through a single log-on), and via Zoom chat messages to the Board Secretary for co-hosts and those who were unable to submit the poll). **Carl Miller moved** that the procedures as presented and explained be accepted for the annual meeting. **Eli Briggs seconded.**

Voting results: 114 voted yes; 1 voted no; 1 abstained. **Motion carried.**

Tamara Bowman reviewed the agenda; **Carl Miller moved** that the agenda as distributed be approved for the annual meeting. **Stephanie McConachie seconded.**

Voting results: 112 voted yes; 1 voted no. **Motion carried.**

Motions on the floor:

1. **BUDGET: Colin Riggs presented the 2020-2021 budget and moved that it be approved. Carl Miller seconded.**

The budget was distributed via email on June 4. There is a great deal of uncertainty about this year's budget and expenses; if we lose rental income or if the auction doesn't bring in as much money as projected, we will need to re-evaluate.

The floor was opened to questions from the congregation; specific points were clarified as follows:

A congregant noted that the budget narrative discusses the Programs budget as having been decreased but the numbers went up, and the Worship budget went up, and asked for clarification. Colin Riggs replied that the Programs budget was decreased from the Annual Budget Drive proposed budget; the Worship budget was increased to accommodate merging of Sunday Support and Worship committee.

A congregant raised a question about the line items for professional expenses: those for the minister went down, but the expenses for the Director of Religious Education doubled. As part of the negotiations in bringing on Rev. Kristen, she requested lower professional expenses as part of her hiring; for DRE, there was a request during contract negotiation for second year of contract. This was negotiated between VP Personnel, VP Finance, and Board President. The new expense amount is in keeping with UUA recommendations.

The increase in the Information Technology (IT) budget was based on a decrease in Administrative budget, and IT costs to outfit Rev Kristen.

The Racial Justice Task Force request for \$700 was cut in half; the budget as requested covered bringing in speakers in support of exploring the 8th Principle and responses to the current situation. The Board doesn't typically fund specific programs but rather funds Program Council as a whole; adjustments can be made there, and if there are new reasons for additional funding we can address those throughout the year. The Board will be reassessing the budget in July.

Moving expenses for settled minister are in this year's budget, not next year's budget.

A congregant questioned reductions in "staff overhead". This is a new budget category to deal with paid leave (for example, hiring cleaners when the sexton is out).

With the impending departure of our current Religious Education Assistant, are there plans to replace him? There are plans to hire a new RE Asst with slightly different roles; that process is ongoing, and we will delay that hiring date until the fall partly to deal with budget issues. Worship Committee is willing to contribute budget excess to Racial Justice Task Force.

The figure for "Other Income" went from \$1,000 to \$10,800 – this is from the Bridge the Gap campaign.

Voting results: 109 voted yes; 0 voted no; 6 abstained. **Motion carried.**

2. **NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD AND NOMINATING/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Phyllis Ryder presented a motion to approve the nominees for the following UUCSS leadership positions:

Board of Trustees (three-year terms)

- Jean Snell – VP Planning
- Emily Harris – Secretary
- Robin Moore-Lasky – 3 year at-large
- Ken lobst – 1 year at-large

Nominating/Leadership Development Committee (two-year terms)

- Carol Hamilton
- Meredith Massey
- Emily Tien

Catherine Buckler seconded.

Voting results: 109 voted yes; 2 voted no; 3 abstained. **Motion carried.**

3. **RESOLUTION TO PREPARE TO ADOPT THE 8TH PRINCIPLE**

On behalf of Racial Justice Task Force and the 8th Principle task force, Al Nathan presented a motion to Investigate the 8th Principle:

We, the members of UUCSS, resolve to engage in deep study and mindful reflection about what adopting the 8th Principle means for our Congregation. We commit to working with the UUCSS 8th Principle Task Force to explore how adopting the 8th Principle could strengthen our unique

church structures, cultures, and processes, with the goal to bring the 8th Principle to a Congregational vote in June 2021.

Robin Moore-Lasky seconded.

Voting results: 115 voted yes; 2 voted no; 1 abstained. **Motion carried.**

4. **CONSTITUTIONAL REVISIONS**

This is the first comprehensive review of our Constitution in 50 years; the board's approval of the "policy on policies" will allow for more transparency going forward.

Maggie Hayes presented a motion to amend the current Constitution by replacing it with proposed Bylaws dated April 20, 2020.

Al Nathan seconded.

Voting results: 110 voted yes; 2 voted no; 4 abstained. **Motion carried.**

The president recognized the Settled Minister Search Committee, 8th principle task force, RevCon committee, and members of the Board of Trustees for their hard work this year.

Al Nathan moved to adjourn; Jim Paoletti seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 1:04 pm.