

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville

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Annual Report 2020

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UUCR

I realized how important it is for leadership to listen deeply to people's concerns and inviting them into co-creating the future. The conversations led to a survey, and then a summary of all the messages. The Sunday Schedule Review Team worked faithfully and diligently to help the Board and Lay Ministry discern and respond. Many thanks to that group – **Andrea Hall, Bruce Baskett, David Marks, Michael Mignano, Carla Rodriguez, Emily Untemeyer**. At a January Town Hall, the Board shared the findings, and asked the congregation to once again express their preference.

- **Small Group Ministry** With the caring nurturance of **Bonnie Bloomquist** and the invaluable skills of SGM Administrator **Marsha Luce**, existing small groups received support, and a number of new groups were formed.
- **Pastoral Care** continued strengthening connections, and involved more people than ever in teams to support our ministry, through phone calls to touch base during the coronavirus shut-down, helping with shopping, following up on the prayer requests, and writing notes of sympathy and encouragement.
- **Connections with Larger Community** were lifted up in a multitude of ways – the organizations helped through Share-the-Plate; involvement with advocacy and get-out-the-vote; benefiting from resources and support from the UUA.

Strengthening UUCR is happening all the time, with all the ministry, education, leadership development and connections. And in this interim year several key thresholds were managed successfully, to keep UUCR strong for the future

- **Administrator** We said farewell to **Donna Taylor**, following her 8 years of exemplary service. Thanks to her skill to provide time and resources to training her successor, and to the search committee who found **JeKaren Olaoya**, UUCR remains in great hands for administering UUCR's needs. The search team were **Karen Pittleman, Dan Pierce, Ellen Rohan, Cynthia Shires-Thurston, Martha Taylor**.
- **Finances** UUCR is blessed to have many talented and committed stewards of its finances. A collection of past and current Canvass team members assembled and talked about key elements of a successful campaign, and **Karl Irikura** and **Beth Mellen Harrison** stepped forward to guide the Canvass, "Bold Journey, Safe Harbor." In spite of the extraordinary circumstances of the church closing its building and shifting to being an on-line community during the Covid19 emergency, UUCR members came through with generous pledges to sustain the congregation. Our Finance team also applied for and secured the Payroll Protection loan so that our staff can continue to be paid, even with reduced rental income.
- **Staff** The dedication and skills of UUCR's staff team shone brighter than ever when we were forced to shut down mid-March. Worship and music, programs and classes, pastoral care and administrative support, continued as strong as ever, in spite of major transformations in our methods. My deepest thanks to this team which serves UUCR so very well: **Aiden Chernikoff, Justin Furnia, Adrian Graham, Sarah Jebian, Carla Miller, JeKaren Olaoya, Donna Taylor**. It has been a special joy to work alongside my colleague **Rev. Rebekah Savage**. I am thankful for her graciousness, skills, and partnership.
- **Leaders** The members of the Executive Team – **Mary Carvajal, Elsa Powel Strong, Colleen Dolak** – have been an invaluable gift to UUCR this year. And there is strength among the members of the **Board, the Lay Ministry Council**, and other committee leaders. Conversations about roles and responsibility, governance and ministry, have been rich.
- **Search** A sign of the health and strength of UUCR to move into the future, especially in this time of the Covid19 crisis, is the solid work of the Ministerial Search Team. Many thanks to **Fran Lowe and Karen Pittleman, co-chairs, and Jim Blue, Michael Mignano, Cynthia Shires-Thurston, Nancy Spencer, Mark Stiles**.

In Summary As I prepare to leave UUCR, I can reflect that the future looks bright because of the very good work accomplished by the leaders and members of the congregation. From a beginning of uncertainty, anxiety, and mistrust, people moved into deeper conversations and clearer sense of shared vision. It wasn't always easy, but with authentic engagement, UUCR congregants moved to such a positive place that in spite of the health crisis which moved us to being an on-line community, the momentum continued in good faith: the canvass was a success, the cottage conversations about new ministry were enthusiastic, and there is optimism for the coming church year, even in troubled times. That is the work a whole and healthy religious community should be doing – offering support and hope. Congratulations, and blessings to you all! I have been honored to share this church year with you!

Report from the Associate Minister—*Rev. Dr. Rebekah Ann Savage*

Beloved UUCR Community, I am honored to have completed my third year as your full time Associate Minister and my fifth year serving our congregations. As a part of the ministry team, I serve the Lay Ministry Counsel, the Pastoral Care Committee, Small Group Ministry, Racial Justice Working Group and Adult Faith Formation. Coming into the 2019-2020 congregational year, we knew that we would be facing a time of transitions with Rev. Lynn Strauss' retirement in the Spring of 2019, the arrival of the Interim Senior Minister in the Fall of 2019 and congregational discernment around calling the next Senior Minister. With great change comes uncertainty and an increased need for gracious patience. As such, this year we have been focusing across program areas on Spiritual Practices.

The Adult Faith Formation dedicated each Wisdom Wednesday to one of the eight spheres of spiritual practices (i.e.: body, mind, communal, justice, personal, spiritual partnerships, soul and life) for most of the year. The Lay Ministry Counsel incorporated Soul Matters into each meeting, encouraging spiritual growth and connections. And with gratitude to Marsha Luce and Bonnie Bloomquist, the Small Group Ministry program has seen a significant expansion with more people seeking the spiritual nourishment of smaller community circles. Emerson's Cafe continues to attract a faithful and open group for weekly reflection and conversation, often in conversation with the spiritual theme of the month.

Thankful for the many circles of care and community among UUCR, we come to the close of the congregational year, in a time of personal, communal and broad upheaval. In March, we pivoted to virtual worship and many of our programs online and we relish in our time together. With worship moved online, more youth and children have been able to not only attend worship, but also lead various parts of the service which is so wonderful and good for everyone.

In April, after months of conversations and discernment, the Ministerial Search Team extended the invitation for me to become UUCR's internal candidate for your next Called Minister and on May 3, the members of UUCR voted to call me. With overwhelming joy, I wholeheartedly accepted. I have been truly humbled and blessed by the outpouring of love and service in this surreal and challenging time of embracing that UUCR is not a building, but a Covenanted people who will weather this storm together. I know that this UUCR Beloved Community will continue to hold each other close in care and adapt together when we emerge and reemerge into new normals with hope and grace as our guides.

UUCR GOVERNANCE

Report from the President—*Mary Carvajal*

The Board of Trustees for 2019-20 include Dana Alzouma (General Trustee), Mary Carvajal (President), Colleen Dolak (Immediate Past President, non-voting member), Glenn Griffin (General Trustee), Brian Haugen (General Trustee), Christy Shannon (Treasurer), Peter Shaw (Secretary), Elsa Powel Strong (Vice President), and Interim Rev. Linda Olson Peebles (Minister, non-voting member).

The UUCR Board of Trustees works with the Senior Minister and Lay Ministry Council to integrate governance in ministry at UUCR. The Board of Trustees has a fiduciary duty to the Congregation and shall be responsible for the financial health of the Congregation, discern the Congregation's vision, provide comprehensive long-term planning, and establish policies and procedures to govern personnel and other operating practices of the Congregation consistent with the Bylaws.

The 2019-20 Congregational Year has been a year of much change and reflection. The Board and Lay Ministry Council met in October to discuss goals for the year. According to the Five-Year Strategic Plan, the targets for 2019-2020 include: 1) expand our Pastoral Care team; 2) develop a lay leadership recruitment and development plan, including mentoring; and 3) plan a Capital Campaign to begin implementation of The Comprehensive Facilities Plan (2018-2019). The first two goals have been accomplished, thanks to The Pastoral Care team and the extraordinary efforts by Terri Barr and The Leadership Development Team. We will continue to work toward a Comprehensive Facilities Plan in the 2020-21 year.

At the Fall Town Hall, also in October, the Board proposed steps to assess the two services schedule. To prioritize transparency and communication, the Town Hall was used to get input from the congregation, understand any frustrations, and be transparent about next steps. The Board felt this focus was essential, since there had been negative feelings about how the two services schedule had been established in 2017, and because assessment data had not been shared as expected in the summer of 2018. The Board initiated efforts to get input from as many congregants as possible, with a specific Task Team led by VP Elsa Strong. This team used SurveyMonkey, small group conversations, individual emails and personal interactions to gather input.

Based on input from the congregation, the Board - in consultation with the Lay Ministry Council - decided to revert to a single service, with plans to monitor it and remain flexible about adding another service. The leadership also discussed the possibility of live-streaming one service. As fate would have it, in response to the virus pandemic, the staff has implemented an online service which has added a dimension of connectedness to our community that is especially valuable during this difficult time.

In addition to this schedule change, the Board welcomed our Interim Senior Minister; broadened the scope of input from the congregation with SurveyMonkey; expanded the use of board member announcements and communication; supported the *ArtsConnect* Program initiated by Sarah Jebian; supported and broadened the Buddy System for new members and families (already implemented by RE); formed the Rental and Marketing Committee; resolved the swale issue between the parking lot and playground (special thanks to Steve Eckstrand); supported an AED installation; supported a new landscaping initiative brought by the UUCR Landscaping Group; formed the Minister Selection Team with congregation-nominated members; and finally, the Board enthusiastically supported the creative

and technical efforts of the staff to bring high quality online services to the congregation each week, including music, contributions from individuals and families, and chat time.

This has been an extraordinary year for all of us at UUCR and, of course, the whole world. I hope you have found companionship and comfort in our community. It has been a pleasure and privilege to work with our Board members, who conduct congregational business with thoughtfulness and integrity. In addition, UUCR leaders past and present have lent their ears and their wisdom to help guide us in this year of changes. Many thanks to the members of the Board, Lay Ministers, Committee Chairs, and Staff for their dedication and poise.

UUCR has been profoundly fortunate to have an experienced and perceptive Interim Senior Minister, Linda Olson Peebles. Reverend Linda has been instrumental in initiating conversations and asking thought-provoking questions to help the congregation identify its strengths and priorities. We have also had the stability, grace and wisdom of Reverend Rebekah Savage as full-time Associate Minister. Thank you both for your support and guidance to bring us to where we are today.

Report from the Interim Search Team—*Niambi Powell*

The Interim Minister Search Committee was established in February 2019 to interview and select the candidate for the Interim Senior Minister. The committee consisted of Niambi Powell, Glenn Griffin, Nancy Blum, Dana Alzouma, and Jose Clemente. In May 2019 the committee voted to invite Rev. Linda Olson Peebles to serve as the interim for a 1-year term with the option to renew for a second year. Rev. Olson Peebles accepted the position and began her term in August 2019 to serve until the congregation would begin a new ministry after it had called its next settled Senior minister.

Report from the Ministerial Search Team—*Fran Lowe & Karen Pittleman*

The Board of Trustees selected the Senior Ministerial Search Team (MST) from a list of people nominated by the Congregation. Members are: Jim Blue, Fran Lowe, Michael Mignano, Karen Pittleman, Nancy Spencer, Mark Stiles and Cynthia Shires-Thurston. With advice and guidance from Rev Linda and Director of UUA Transitions Office, Rev Keith Kron, we agreed on a covenant, and began the process outlined in the UUA Settlement Handbook for conducting a ministerial search with an inside candidate.

We spent approximately 2 months in discernment with UUCR's Associate Minister, Rev. Rebekah Savage. Using Zoom, we held focus group meetings with the Board, Lay Ministry Council, Staff and Youth. We held 14 cottage meetings with approximately 73 congregants, and posted a survey which 67 congregants completed. Rev Kron conducted a Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) workshop on Apr 6 for which there were about 60 participants.

Following the BCT workshop and after consideration of all the comments received in the cottage meetings and in the survey, the MST voted enthusiastically and unanimously to nominate Reverend Rebekah as our Senior Ministerial Candidate. At the end of the Apr 12th on-line worship service, the MST announced Rev Rebekah's nomination to the Congregation.

At the beginning of the Apr 19th on-line worship service, the MST formally "introduced" Reverend Rebekah to the congregation, beginning the Candidating period. Reverend Rebekah led the worship

service and gave the first of her two candidating sermons. Candidating will take place between Apr 20 and May 1 with Zoom meetings between Rev Rebekah and congregants, committees and interest groups. Following her second candidating sermon and worship service on May 3 a congregational vote will be held to call Reverend Rebekah as our Senior Minister.

Report from the Nominating Committee—*Jon Landenburger*

Mission: Nominate candidates for the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee, for election by the congregation.

Members: Jon Landenburger, chair, Silvia Bolland, Tom Bozzo for Marga Adiego-Blasco, Jaime E. Chao, Sean Hickey, Niambi Powell, Colleen Dolak

Major accomplishments for the year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)

The sole task of the Nominating Committee (NC) is to recruit candidates to fill vacancies on the Board of Trustees and on the NC itself. The By-Laws require that the slate of candidates be published at least 30 days before the election. The candidates are elected by the congregation at the annual congregational meeting in May. Usually the slate of candidates runs unopposed. Six members of the NC are elected by the congregation for staggered, three-year terms. The seventh member is the Board representative, who is a one-year, voting member of the NC and has traditionally been the Immediate Past President.

This year we made nominations for the following positions: Vice President, General Trustee, Treasurer, Nomination Committee (2). Additionally, we have outlined a process for filling Assistant Treasurer Position(s).

STEWARDED UUCR RESOURCES

Report from the Treasurer—*Christy Shannon*

The Treasurer has overall responsibility for the congregation's financial activities and is a voting member of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer verifies that UUCR's financial records are accurate and up to date. UUCR's financial condition is sound overall, but this year the Board budgeted a \$31,700 deficit to cover expenses. The deficit was planned to allow UUCR to hire a second minister in May 2017 with a 3-year contract. Since our congregation's pledge base did not increase to fund it completely within the 3 years, we are planning to a senior minister and an intern minister.

The General Endowment Fund balance is approximately \$354,000. The General Reserve is approximately \$246,000 or 31% of the annual budget. Due to corona virus, we are concerned about lower income in pledges, rental, and fundraising. We have successfully applied for a \$95,800 loan as part of CARES act from M&T Bank to help make up for reduction in income. It is our hope that some or all the loan will be forgiven. In these uncertain times, we do not have a clear picture for the end of this fiscal year, but we are hopeful that we have reserves and committed congregants to weather this new challenge.

UUCR's current operating budget is \$789,343. Payroll costs are the largest expense and will be approximately \$ 511,802 for the current year. Approximately 75% of the operating costs are funded by contributions from members and friends of the congregation, so a successful annual canvass is vital to our financial health. The Treasurer's financial responsibilities are shared with two Assistant Treasurers and a Bookkeeper. Eric Burch is the Assistant Treasurer for Receipts and Barbara Harrison is the Assistant Treasurer for Disbursements. Martha Taylor is our Bookkeeper. The Treasurer, Assistant treasurers, and Bookkeeper work closely with the Finance Committee, chaired by Bill Newhouse, and with JeKaren Olaoya, Congregation Administrator.

Report from the Congregation Administrator—*JeKaren Olaoya*

The past year has been one of significant change, with Donna Taylor's retirement and the onboarding of JeKaren Olaoya as Congregation Administrator. During this past year, Donna worked hard to improve rental income and secured one of the largest long-term rentals UUCR has ever had. Almost every canceled reservation has been rescheduled and we hope to continue renting our space to the larger community.

While COVID-19 has had an impact on the building's usage, we have been able to maintain a consistent maintenance schedule of cleaning and sanitization, have the floors waxed, windows cleaned and lots of updates as needed.

Because of the financial health of the church, all staff members continue to be paid for their work and have worked tirelessly to ensure a smooth transition from in-person to virtual, picking up additional duties and supporting each other as a team.

Report from the Finance Committee—*Bill Newhouse*

The Finance Committee, which includes the elected Treasurer Christy Shannon and two Assistant Treasurers, Eric Burch and Barbara Harrison, oversees the financial affairs of the congregation as an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees. An important function of the Finance Committee is to gather church-wide budget information for the annual canvass and to advise the Board of Trustees in its task to approve an operating budget for the next fiscal year.

The committee also provides financial support to other committees and staff, as needed. Beginning in the fall 2019, the Finance Committee provided our interim minister with contact information for leaders of church committees to allow her to engage spiritually and practically with each group as she requested they submit a budget. The finance committee collected the information from each committee and staff members to assemble the FY 2020-21 draft canvass budget to inform the Canvass leadership and the Board as they discerned. In April 2020, the assistant treasurer worked with the finance committee and with Board approval applied successfully for a payroll protection program loan available to non-profits during the COVID-19 pandemic to help continue to pay staff when income is down. In May 2020, after the spring pledge drive was completed and long term impacts of the pandemic on UUCR's expected income were discussed, the Finance Committee updated the draft canvass budget and advised the Board as they worked to approve the congregation's FY 2020-21 operating budget.

- Inform the Board regarding financial matters at UUCR
 - Maintain fiscal year spreadsheets to allow the Board to track current fiscal year spending (measured against the approved budget)
 - Review monthly Treasurer Reports
 - Review operating income and expenses
 - Provide financial analyses
 - Provide revenue/expense projections
 - Oversee debt management (mortgage)
 - Recommend funding options for emergency/unexpected/unbudgeted expenses
 - Provide financial reporting with banks, UUA, etc.
 - Develop financial policy recommendations for Board approval
 - Create and monitor financial controls
 - Safeguard church assets
 - Provide financial assistance for church leaders/committee chairs
 - Maintain electronic copies of official financial records
- Coordinate with the Board of Trustees, Senior Minister, Church Administrator, and Lay Ministry Council to support the annual canvass budget preparation
 - Maintain spreadsheets that track canvass budget estimates for future year budget planning
- Perform financial reviews of church books – assure generally accepted accounting procedures are followed.

Committee Members: Bill Newhouse (Chair); Christy Shannon (Treasurer); Eric Burch (Assistant Treasurer - Receipts); Barbara Harrison (Assistant Treasurer - Disbursements); Bob Gilfrich; Kent Hancock; Martha Taylor (Bookkeeper); Dave Marks; Jim Rhyne; Bruce Baskett; and Sharon Fitzpatrick.

Special Note for the record: The Finance Committee is grateful to Donna Taylor for her distinguished service to UUCR during her time as our church administrator. She served UUCR well her entire time with us and did a fantastic job preparing our new church administrator JeKaren Olaoya to take her role.

Report of the Personnel Committee – Viki Betancourt

Members of the Committee: Bill Hurlbut (chair), Viki Betancourt (member)

Charge of the Committee: The mission of the Personnel Committee is to provide personnel support for the administration of church employees to the Minister and the Board. This year, we provided professional support for a review of the Personnel Manual (including some suggested changes in accordance with national UU practices), drafting of a position description in advance of the hiring of a new administrator, and review of the contract associated with the new administrator. The Committee also provided support of the Senior Minister’s managerial functions, as requested. The committee is looking for new members.

Report from the Canvass Committee—Karl Irikura & Beth Mellen Harrison

The function of the Canvass committee is to conduct the annual solicitation of pledges to support UUCR’s operation for the coming fiscal year (7/1/20 – 6/30/21). This year’s canvass goal is 220

pledges (an increase of 13 from last year) and \$602,400 (an increase of \$34,700 over last year's pledges but lower than last year's goal). An innovation this year is to solicit pledges of time (attendance as well as service) in addition to money, which includes congregants of all ages. Our major activity before the main pledge drive (Brave Journey, Safe Harbor) was the annual Lead Givers' Event, held on Feb. 8. This was a reception to thank the families (about 50 of them) who pledged the largest amounts last year. It was hosted by Andy and Melissa Moore and all the food (!) was prepared by Emily Untermeyer. One outcome was a discussion about how to acknowledge other gifts besides large monetary gifts. This was a motivation for requesting pledges of time as well as money.

Our Fellowship Dinner was March 7, and Canvass Sunday was March 8, four days before the coronavirus halted our normal activities. The canvass has been affected, and as of May 4 we have received 170 pledges for \$ 574,000. This is good considering the circumstances, but still short of our goal by 50 pledges and around \$27,000. We have been pursuing time pledges less actively but have received 62 pledges for 8744 hours.

Rev. Linda Olson Peebles has centered the group by recruiting co-chairs and others, and continues to ensure that major activities are on track. The resulting "committee" is Karl Irikura and Beth Mellen Harrison (co-chairs), Mark Shannon, Emily Untermeyer, Bill Newhouse, Julie Robinson, John Dunbar, Bruce Baskett, Colleen Dolak, Melissa and Andy Moore, Eric Burch, Susie Spangler, Ethel Gilbert, Dick Gilbert, Kent Hancock, Jill Asman, Terrie Barr, Mary Carvajal, Brian Haugen, Elsa Powel Strong, and Glenn Griffin.

Report from the Rental Committee—*Norman Rave*

Members: Norman Rave, Chair; Viki Betancourt; Steve Eckstrand; Terri Fritz; See Lam; Niambi Powell; Mark Shannon

Mission:

1. Develop a marketing plan to increase income from rentals, consistent with UUCR policies and use of the space.
2. In coordination with the Church Administrator, address any issues arising from UUCR's relationship with ECC and RCNS.
3. Review and, as appropriate, recommend changes to UUCR's rental policies.

Accomplishments:

1. Design and construct a walkway/conduit over the swale to facilitate access to the ECC playground. (Special kudos to Steve Eckstrand.)
2. We are investigating how UUCR can attract more rentals for weddings and other events. To date, we have particularly focused on how the rental pages of the UUCR website could be enhanced to address those events.
3. Addressed the nursery schools' need for a Spring 2020 reduction in rent because of closure due to the coronavirus epidemic.
4. Recommended renewal of the nursery school leases with the current rent structure.

Report from the Planned Giving Committee—*Sharrill Dittmann*

The purposes of the Planned Giving Committee are to raise awareness in the congregation of the importance of estate planning and to encourage gifts to UUCR's Endowment Fund through the inclusion of UUCR in those plans and with gifts.

One new member was inducted into the Legacy Society during last year's Legacy Sunday, and Roger Estep, who reinvigorated the Endowment Fund, spoke about his reasons for contributing to the Fund. The Fund currently stands at \$354,000. We maintain a table after services for the three weeks surrounding Legacy Sunday with materials from UUA.

This coming June, we will induct at least two new members into the Legacy Society. Kent Hancock has graciously been working with the Committee on revising its publication. We are always seeking opportunities to talk to friends and members about the importance of estate planning and the joy of including UUCR in those plans.

Committee members: Len Cohen, Sharrill Dittmann (chair), Sue Roth

Report from the Buildings & Grounds Committee—*Narcy Klag*

The mission of the Buildings & Grounds Committee is to maintain the congregation's facility and property in a condition that allows UUCR members and friends, as well as other end-users, to perform the wide variety of activities that take place here. There are basically three types of work undertaken to accomplish this:

First, there are annual service contracts for building systems like the elevator and fire alarm, in addition to the regular service contracts for HVAC, lawn maintenance, and snow removal. These contracts are all managed ably by our Church Administrator.

Second, there are normal maintenance and repairs which are performed by a combination of staff, contractors, the Power Tool Gang (volunteers led by Dan Pierce and Nancy Klag) and the Grounds Group (volunteers led by Mary Lanigan, Sue Hedges, and Jo Wilson).

Third, there are major capital improvements projects, of which funding must be approved by the Board of Directors. These projects are usually contracted out.

Buildings (Narcy Klag, Dan Pierce)

Accomplishments include:

- Installed a locking mailbox in front of the building.
- Replaced cabinet doors in Building 2.
- Installed additional name plates on the remembrance board.
- Installed designated parking signs in lots and reattached parking bumpers
- Ordered and installed an AED unit.
- Repaired rust and repainted door leading to the sanctuary hall stairs
- Contracted for a dirt bridge to the back playground, crossing the drainage swale

The Power Tool Gang gathers on a few Saturdays each year to do necessary work at UUCR. Neither power tools nor experience is necessary. We gather for the fellowship and fun, while helping to

maintain UUCR property. Our work is fueled by doughnuts and coffee in the morning, lunch with beverages, and much camaraderie. Any interested person should feel welcome to join in.

Buildings Committee members: Nancy Klag (Chair), Sue Hedges, Jon Landenburger, Phil Lowe, Dan Pierce, Tim Francis, and José Clemente, Steve Eckstrand.

Grounds (*Irene Eckstrand*)

The Landscaping Group 1) manages routine maintenance of the landscape; and 2) oversees the landscape plan to enhance the beauty and accessibility of the UUCR grounds, implements sustainable solutions where appropriate, and conserves the designated forest conservation areas in accordance with guidelines from the City of Rockville. The group also oversees expenditures from the Site Beautification Fund when funds are available.

Major accomplishments:

- We oversaw repair and remediation of four areas of the UUCR landscape—the circle garden, the old courtyard, the new courtyard, and azalea beds near the parking lot and building 2. Our goal was a beautiful, well-tended, and easily-managed landscape.
- We obtained bids from three companies, presented our report to the UUCR Board for approval, and contracted with Eric Wenger of Complete Plant Health Care, Inc. to complete the work.
- The work proceeded in two phases: (1) removal of diseased, dead, and dying plants and selective pruning, moving, or removal of overgrown plants and (2) development of plans for replanting gardens with sustainable, attractive, and easy-to-maintain plants. Phase 1 was completed in November 2019. We have worked with Mr. Wenger to select plants that will be planted in the spring of 2020.
- We scheduled and supervised weeding and gardening workdays one Saturday morning each month during the growing season to weed and supplement the work of the current landscaping contractor.

Goals for next year:

- Recruit volunteers for weeding and gardening workdays
- Install the plants we have already selected in the circle garden, the old courtyard, and the new courtyard. These will be supplemented with some annuals to add color and beauty.
- The current landscaping contract ends this summer, and we intend to recompetit. We are writing the statement of work and will interview at least three companies.

Grounds Committee members: Irene Eckstrand (chair), Barbara Harrison, Sue Hedges, Mary Lanigan

Report from IT Committee—*Bill Newhouse*

The mission of the Information Technology Committee is to maintain UUCR office IT systems and provide first response when the UUCR staff cannot resolve any IT system problems.

The IT Committee also works with the UUCR Staff, Board of Trustees, and Finance Committee to plan for the introduction of new technologies and to plan for upgrades of systems when necessary.

The IT Committee can also support requests for information technology support for church activities.

IT systems at UUCR include Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) telephones, computers (Windows 10 workstations & laptops), projectors, large screen HDTV's, facsimile, printers, scanners, and networking equipment such as switches, cable modems, and Wi-Fi access points.

Major accomplishments for the year:

- Transitioned to new voice-over-IP phone service and phones from 8x8. We now have 7 staff desktop phones and two phones public spaces (copier room lounge and building 5 lower level hallway).
- Improved Wi-Fi coverage in Founders Hall by moving access point to ceiling in Building 1 foyer
- Continued transition (Aaron Pied - Eric Burch - Adrian Graham) from ChurchDB <https://www.churchdb.com/uucr> to Realm <https://onrealm.org/UUCR>.
- Maintained and started new email mailing lists and aliases
- Established new email accounts for new staff
- Setup workstations for new staff
- Finished migration of all staff to Windows 10
- Updated and patched existing technologies with the latest software and firmware releases.
- Transitioned to QuickBooks online.
- Moved staff to utilize cloud storage (google cloud with shared drives)
- Eliminated server with locally stored shared files by making each staff computer only reliant on a connection to the internet to perform their work
- Upgraded 4 staff computers via donated devices
- Supported two church administrator with the one-month overlap of Donna Taylor with JeKaren Olaoya
- Setup a dedicated number for congregants to call to make a pledge

Next year, goals for the IT Committee include the following:

- Support the staff and congregation's information technology needs

UUCR IT systems are vital to all church functions, supporting our worship, religious education, social justice and fellowship activities and enabling the UUCR staff to communicate with congregants as well as other UU churches and organizations, other faith groups and other community groups.

Committee members: Bill Newhouse, Aaron Pied/Eric Burch for database, Sean Hickey

UUCR MINISTRIES

Report from the Lay Ministry Council—*Terrie Barr and Mark Shannon*

We approved a new LMC Vision, Mission and Approach thanks to Bruce Baskett and Steve Eckstrand. Vision: The Lay Ministry Council faithfully upholds UUCR's mission and values through mindful engagement with leaders and members to encourage, sustain, and coordinate programs and activities that meet our present and future needs.

Mission: to promote inspiring ministry and programs through leadership and support.

Co-Chairs: Terrie Barr and Mark Shannon

Spiritual Leadership: Rev. Rebekah Savage
Adult Faith Formation: Bruce Baskett
Communications & Membership: Marie Vivas
Covenant Groups: Bonnie Bloomquist
Family Faith Development: Eric Strong
Fellowship & Hospitality: Julie Robinson
Leadership Development: Sherry Dittmann, Bonnie Bloomquist, Terrie Barr and Fran Lowe
Pastoral Care: Kent Hancock
Social Justice: Ethel Gilbert
Stewardship: Mark Shannon
Worship & Music Arts: Cynthia Shires-Thurston
Board of Trustees Liaison: Elsa Powel Strong

Accomplishments:

- Bruce Baskett produced a comprehensive document, *Inside UUCR, A Guide for Understanding, Serving, and Receiving in Community* that we believe will be invaluable to those new and those who have been members for many years.
- A team of four lay ministers and Michael Mignano created a new Leadership Development and Recruitment Plan affirmed by the Board of Trustees on February 19, 2020.
- For Stewardship, we supported the establishment of a new Rental committee to add more focus to new potential rental income resources for UUCR, and the initial planning for the 2020 Canvass. In addition, ongoing discussions continue on establishing a more focused small team supporting overall UUCR Stewardship activities.
- Julie Robinson revised UUCR's event planning document. She also reviewed the UUCR website, updating most of the information and links in the Planning and Internal Publicity sections.
- Marie Vivas created social media and electronic communications guidelines.
- We developed a Lay Ministry Council Covenant thanks to Ethel Gilbert's leadership.
- Organized the annual Activities Fair, assisted with the annual calendar, updated the list of committee and group leaders and updated the website.
- We maintained a weekly table between services to answer questions and promote church programs and volunteer opportunities.
- Due to COVID 19, we were unable to sponsor the annual congregational picnic.

Leadership Development and Recruitment Plan Team – Terrie Barr

Purpose: to propose to the Board of Trustees for their action, a leadership recruitment and development plan including mentoring by 2019/20 to be implemented in 2020/21

Group members: Terrie Barr, Bonnie Bloomquist, Sherry Dittmann, Fran Lowe, Michael Mignano

Major accomplishments:

We sponsored a Storytelling class presented by UUCR Board of Trustees Vice President, Elsa Powel Strong on September 15. Thanks to Elsa for this highly effective workshop followed by pizza and potluck. This pilot was to interest emerging leaders to attend. It was well attended and reviewed.

We created a new Leadership Development and Recruitment Plan that was affirmed by the Board of Trustees on February 19, 2020.

The program mission is to provide current and emerging leaders with the opportunity and support to become inspired and skilled spiritually grounded leaders and to form deep(er) relationships within our covenant-driven community.

The target audience is all current leaders of committees, fundraisers, groups and teams and emerging leaders. The Program is open to all who wish to participate. The Program will include mentoring and coaching.

We reviewed and used a wealth of UUA online leadership resources including four online courses, a classroom curriculum, Harvest the Power, and the Mid America and Central East Region's leadership competencies. We identified nine core leadership qualities to form the basis for the Leadership Development curriculum.

We presented the Program and next steps at the Annual Congregational meeting.

The Plan team has fulfilled our charge. The next phase will be led by the Leadership Program Implementation Team (LPIT). The follow-on team will have one member of the Plan Team continuing, Bonnie Bloomquist. There should be 6-10 members on this team. The team will report to the Lay Ministry Council (LMC).

The Council sought nominations including self-nominations for the Implementation Team through May 31. Curriculum development or training/adult education or leadership experience is desirable. We hope to finalize the members of the LPIT by June 15. The Plan team will brief the LPIT to ensure understanding of the Plan and to share all resources by June 30. The Implementation Team will make progress reports every other month to the LMC and the congregation beginning September 2020.

Family Faith Formation Team – *Carla Miller, Director of Religious Education*

The Mission of the Family Faith Formation Team is to give the children, youth and families of UUCR the tools they need to seek answers, nourish their spirits, and build the world they dream about.

The Members of the Team: Sarah Appleby, Tom Bozzo, Virginia Folsom, Chris Julka, Karen Pittleman, and Eric Strong

Staff Liaisons to FFF Team: Carla Miller, DRE and Aiden Chernikoff, RE Assistant

Highlights of the Year in Family Faith Formation:

Data

Total Enrollment (Nursery through 12th grade): 122

Number of Adult Volunteers: 34

Average Attendance: 27

Average Attendance previous to online classes: 32

Average attendance online: 22

*A note on online attendance:

We have had better-than average attendance online in our elementary-aged classes. We have not offered a class for nursery- first grade until the last week of April, due to a lack of teacher availability.

That age group's average attendance in February was 8, so the online attendance number is missing this group. High School youth have had very low participation online.

COVID-19 and Online Religious Education

Social distancing that took our classes off campus and online beginning mid-March. This will be the most memorable, unexpected aspect of the 2019-2020 church-school year! Family Faith Formation staff and volunteers stepped up quickly to meet the social and spiritual needs of our children and youth from a distance; with Sunday classes, a mid-week Chalice Chapel each Wednesday, cards in the mail and an Easter goody bag delivery. Parent conversations were added two weeks later. As of April 19th, we are offering a story time online for the nursery-1st grade age group, who until then had no class.

The unexpected gift we found in this troubling time was the very clear priority of relationship above content as the most essential quality of our ministry to children and youth. Children needed a community of peers and a place to share, have some fun, and feel cared for by adults as well. They showed us this need in their excellent attendance online and the sense of a deeper interconnectedness as they shared their joys, concerns, fears, and coping strategies with each other. May we hold onto this positive realization and the bonds we've formed when we are back to class in person!

Events

Monthly Family Potlucks were held throughout the year, providing laid-back social time for families.

The Halloween Party continues to grow. This year our Middle School youth helped to prepare and lead games and activities, and High School Youth created a Haunted House downstairs.

Highlights from Classes

Our 2nd/3rd grade enjoyed lots of time outside with the World of Wonder curriculum. We brought in two of our Environmental Action Group members to assist in that class in a helpful partnership. We are actively reaching out to connect and partner with the adult committees of the congregation.

The Middle School Youth followed the new Crossing Paths curriculum, engaging in learning about other faith traditions and visits to area faith communities. The three final field trips were unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19 and will need to be rescheduled in the fall. In their place, we "attended" online videos of these faith communities.

High School Youth had increased attendance this year over last- an average of 7 youth as opposed to 4, and much higher attendance for overnights. We had 5 youth advisors in rotation; two of them new to the group. They utilized Soul Matters and other resources to explore topics of their own interest, and planned and led an excellent youth worship. Plans for a beach trip were cancelled due to COVID-19.

Our Whole Lives: OWL for 4th & 5th grade was offered in spring semester, with 9 participants. The class was cut short due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Unfinished sessions will be completed in the fall.

Adult Faith Formation Committee – *John Dunbar*

The mission of the Adult Faith Formation Committee (AFFC) is to offer programs and events that promote and sustain adult faith development; to help UUCR members and friends learn about the history and current issues in Unitarian Universalism; to build a better world by acting on UU values; and to teach the wisdom contained in other world religions.

Emerson's Café

AFFC members continued to facilitate UUCR's weekly spiritual-themed, drop-in discussion group, which averages ~ 16 participants each week. Special thanks to Emily Untermeyer for the frequent provisioning of snacks. In response to "social distancing," Emerson's Café adapted to become "Emerson's Evening Café, Sunsets with Soul," on Zoom, which has been well attended.

Regular attendees of Emerson's Café also sponsored an Action Auction item, Emerson's Sunset Café.

Many thanks for Fran Lowe and Emily Untermeyer for their special efforts in making this event another success. There were over 20 participants. AFF members facilitated the discussions.

Spiritual Practices

The focus for Adult Faith Formation this year was on "Spiritual Practices." Six workshops exploring and learning spiritual practices were conducted throughout the year until in-person gatherings were no longer possible. Attendance varied from 24 to 12 participants.

UUCR Library

Myra Remigio-Leonard continues to maintain the UUCR library and its new children's book section. The AFFC supports other UUCR committees by purchasing books related to their interest or focus.

Looking forward to 2020-2021:

AFFC is considering a focus on expanding use of digital content as a way to reach UUCR members and persons interested in UUCR. This may include a greater use of the UUCR website, Facebook, Instagram, etc.; use of videos to connect ministers and other leaders of UUCR to the congregation; and leveraging existing faith resources available through other providers.

Committee members - John Dunbar (Chair), Rev. Rebekah Savage, Maura Malone, Myra Remigio-Leonard, Bruce Baskett, Dawn Morales, and Curtis Winans.

Literary Fiction Group – *Marialyce Sherr*

THE UUCR LITERARY FICTION GROUP is a monthly gathering of members who like to read and discuss serious literary works, both classic and contemporary. Membership is open. This church year we have met and discussed such books as *Oscar and Lucinda* by Peter Carey; *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison; *And the Mountains Echoed* by Khaled Hosseini. Members rotate the leadership of monthly discussions.

Small Group Ministries – *Bonnie Bloomquist*

THE SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES (SGM) mission is to encourage personal and spiritual growth, fellowship, and enhanced relationships. Participants met monthly at established meeting dates/times in groups of 10-12. Rev Rebekah oversees the UUCR SGM Program; she creates session plans to provide a focus around the spiritual monthly themes; these are used by the facilitators to enrich the gatherings. There were 9 Facilitators with oversight of 5 SGM; 2 new SGM were established, 87 congregants participated in the 5 SGM, 13 congregants were added during this period. Another 13 congregants expressed interest in attending in late 2020.

Select accomplishments include:

- SGM utilized the resource packets from the *UU Soul Matters Sharing Circle*, they were distributed to the SGM participants in advance of SGM meetings for personal spiritual reflection during the month.

- A SGM Administrative Coordinator, Marsha Luce, to manage logistics was added in Jan 2020.
- In response to COVID-19 SGM began meeting remotely in March and bi-monthly check-in meetings were scheduled through June.

Facilitators: Patty Walker, Corinne Ehrlich; Sue Thomas, Sarah Beacom; Sherry Dittman, Meghan Howard; Jill Asman, Ethel Gilbert; Sonja Modric; Rev. Linda. Thanks to ALL!

Submitted by Bonnie Bloomquist, LMC/SGM Liaison

Pastoral Care Team—*Jane Klag and Sharon Fitzpatrick*

The purpose of UUCR’s Pastoral Care program is to support the ministers in reaching out to congregants with a wide range of needs. Pastoral Care Team members administer to those undergoing health problems, dealing with grief or other life changes, or are isolated because of age or disability. Assistance can take many forms; transportation to doctor appointments, providing meals, sending cards or visiting in hospitals or at home. Pastoral care team members provide a spiritual presence and a listening ear for those who are no longer able to attend services.

Long-time invaluable Co-Chair, Paulette Campbell, stepped down this year. The team cannot express adequate appreciation for her years of caring. She was the face of Pastoral Care.

Other major functions include:

- Memorial receptions: They are organized to honor the lives of those members and friends who have died during the past year. No fees are asked, but donations are gratefully accepted.
- “Thinking of You” column in Quest: Emily Untermeyer serves as editor having recently assumed the role from Judy Eisenhower who did a great job for several years.
- Greeting cards: Sharon Fitzpatrick, on behalf of the Pastoral Care Team, sends cards to members and friends who celebrate special events, to the families of those who have died and to those who are ill or hospitalized.
- Pastoral Care Team bulletin board located in the Fellowship Hall: The bulletin board includes obituaries, a copy of the current “Thinking of You” column, and area workshop invitations.
- Marianne Miller and Emily Untermeyer have redesigned the Pastoral Care brochures. Due to lack of access to UUCR and hard copy brochures, it will initially be placed only on the website.

This year’s special events and activities:

- Rev. Linda led a well-attended Dealing with Grief discussion on February 29, 2020.
- UUCR held a workshop for congregants on November 23, 2019, during Alzheimer’s month. The film “Alive Inside” was shown followed by a discussion led by a member of Montgomery County Hospice.

Pastoral Care meetings are scheduled the First Friday mornings in October, December, February, April, and June. The Pastoral Care Team established a small Pastoral Care Steering Committee that meets in the months the whole team doesn’t meet. The December meeting is a Christmas open house for the staff and congregation. Our last meeting each year is Volunteer Recognition, honoring those in our congregation who go above and beyond in serving our community.

The first months of 2020 have brought new challenges due to the social isolation mandates required to bring the coronavirus under control. The Pastoral Care Team and Steering Committee are using Zoom

for meetings. We have also established a telephone tree to reach out to members of the congregation who may need an occasional phone call or help with shopping tasks. Several members of the congregation have volunteered to help with shopping. Procedures have been established to keep both recipients and shoppers safe. Jane and Emily have created grief bags for families who have lost a UUCR member. Marianne Miller is also working on a project defining neighborhood groups to keep in touch during this time.

Team members: +Jill Asman, Terrie Barr, Marilyn Briant, Judy Eisenhauer, +Sharon Fitzpatrick (Co-Chair), + Kent Hancock (Lay Minister Liaison), Margie Henry, +Jane Klag (Co-Chair), Susan McCall, +Marianne Miller, Dan Pierce, Marie Reed, Marialyce Sherr, Sue Thomas, Emily Untermeyer and Terry Zetts.

+ indicates members of the Steering Committee

Music & Arts Program – *Sarah Jebian, Director of Music & the ArtsConnect program*

My goal for the UUCR Music & Arts Program this year was to create opportunities for deeper learning and enrichment around community-building and racial justice, fostering a welcoming environment for marginalized voices, skills-based learning for all singers and musicians, and opportunities for more congregants to become involved in the music & arts program.

With the onset of the Coronavirus and the decision to close our doors to in-person worship, my role shifted a bit and I have become the Creative Director for Online Worship. I work with staff and lay leaders to create content for our online weekly worship meeting and then I edit all the content together into a cohesive video production. While I continue discovering and learning the tools that will allow us to continue a virtual music ministry, my music role consists mainly of selecting professionally recorded music that will uplift the message of a given worship service as well as working with Justin (and others) to record hymns and other special pieces of music.

To assist me in this work are current members of the Music & Arts Council: Bronson Hoover, Cynthia Shires-Thurston, Allison Julka, Rebecca Julka, Niambi Powell, Sherry Dittman, and Sanja Modric with thanks to past members Jeremy Schumann, André Enceneat, Josie Stahl, Andy Moore, and Nancy Blum. I'm also privileged to work with the following leaders in our music program: Mike Holmes (Bonfire of the Mannakeys & Tuba Noodle Casserole); Julie Graf (Tuba Noodle Casserole & WildBerry Jam); Cynthia Shires-Thurston (Sonaria & WildBerry Jam); and Justin Furnia (Staff Pianist & Chamber Ensemble).

Accomplishments:

The UUCR Community Choir focused on relationship building, creating a choir covenant, and learning more about the human voice throughout our rehearsal process. The choir was also honored to meet and perform with the choir from UU Cedar Lane during worship at both UUCR and Cedar Lane. The combined choir of nearly 90 singers was impressive!

Through the *ArtsConnect* program, UUCR hosted HALO's *Race & #RealTalk* Workshop series throughout the months of October through December. The workshop culminated in a stand-out concert performance featuring HALO, the workshop participants and several other barbershop groups. The event raised over \$2000 to benefit Direct Support for Immigrants – our *ArtsConnect* community beneficiary for the 2019-2020 season. Additionally, *ArtsConnect* brought in local artist Rosana Azar

who led two visual art workshops, which gave us an opportunity to create visual art alongside the people who are served by the work that Direct Support for Immigrants is doing in our community. It was a deeply moving experience to be able to use art to communicate beyond spoken language.

Sonaria Womens' Ensemble is a part of the Music and Arts Program, and is open to anyone of high school age or older who identifies as female, who enjoys singing with other women, and we aim provide support and inspiration to each other personally and spiritually. New growth and empowerment is fostered by learning to read and perform a variety of kinds of music, solo and part singing, making arrangements of some of our music ourselves, and through consensus decision making. Sonaria enjoyed singing for the congregation during worship services every few months this year and also enjoyed social events such as potlucks, movie nights, and karaoke nights together several times this year. Sonaria membership this year includes Leigh Parrington, Ginny Shires-Thurston, Haley Besner, Joan Keith, Laura Congdon, Martha McClelland, Pamela West, Lisa Reed, Stephanie Kreps, Valerie Haber, Victoria Williamson, and Cynthia Shires-Thurston.

WildBerry Jam is a women's vocal quartet and is a part of the Music and Arts Program. The group performs a variety of music, from traditional folk and spiritual pieces to more challenging, modern arrangements, and sang for the congregation during worship several times last year. For its members, WildBerry Jam is a spiritual practice, a place for deeper connection, communication, witness to the evolution of a rough-hewn piece to harmonious beauty, and hopes to inspire others to share their gifts with the congregation. WildBerry Jam membership is Julie Graf, Kris Butler, Gaynelle Campbell, Cynthia Shires-Thurston, and pianist Richard Gilbert.

Aesthetics Committee – Sharrill Dittmann

The purpose of the Aesthetics Committee is to promote a beautiful and welcoming worship and meeting space at UUCR. The committee members organize several art shows each year and consult with other committee and staff members on color and design as requested.

The committee mounted two shows this year:

- Landscapes: Color and Black and White – Richard Chitty and Sharrill Dittmann, June – September, 2019
- Land Portraits – Leslie M. Kraff and Cecelia M. Laurendeau, October and November, 2019

One photograph was sold, from which UUCR recognized 20% of the sale price. Shows are coordinated with *ArtsConnect* which also organized two shows this year. We continue to look for artist and art that reflect a variety of media and communities for shows that will represent our monthly worship themes and the values of UUCR.

Committee members are Diane Baillie, Liliane Blom (co-chair), Sharrill Dittmann (co-chair) with assistance from Mary Lanigan and Marge Holmes.

Worship Arts Team – Jim Blue

Team members: Jim Blue (Chair), Wayne Crump, Ginny Folsom, Glenn Griffin, Jay Mukherjee, Marie Reed, Scott Reilly, Cynthia Shires-Thurston

The Worship Arts Team is charged with supporting the ministers in planning and creating high-quality worship services. We provide a Worship Steward to prepare the Sanctuary each Sunday and a Worship Associate to assist in the pulpit as needed. We coordinate the lay-led services and the Sunday services with guest speakers as needed. We meet periodically with the ministers for training and planning.

Decorations Committee – *Emily Untermeyer*

The Decorations Committee provided floral decorations in front of the Sanctuary pulpit for all Sunday worship services. The committee also provided table decorations for the Thanksgiving dinner held by congregants in Fellowship Hall and for other special gatherings. This year floral arrangements were contributed by: Diane Baille, Corinne Ehrlich, Teki Fabian, Anne McCaffrey, Norma Noreikis, Lisa Reed, and Emily Untermeyer. Carolyn Randall oversaw the sale of poinsettias that filled the Sanctuary steps during the last two weeks of 2019.

Quilters – *Lisa Reed & Louise Friedenberg*

The mission of the Quilters is to create one quilt each year to be raffled at the Fall Fundraiser. Our group provides the possibility for anyone who practices needlework to experience group participation in the making of a beautiful product while enjoying the warmth and support of friends who share an interest and meet together weekly on Wednesday evenings.

Our group created its 39th annual quilt, called “Summer’s Fire,” which was raffled at the Fall FUUndraiser on Saturday, November 9, 2019. Raffle tickets (927) were sold at \$2 each or 3 for \$5. Net profit was \$1,457.00. Kenneth Davis was the quilt winner.

This quilt was a variation of a very popular quilt designed by Sue Cody of Dragonfly Studio in Australia. It was created by nine members of the UUCR Quilting Group. Each member of the group completed one or two appliqued floral triangular blocks. The pieced triangles were created via a strip technique with a purple batik anchoring each row. The diamond design inside the pieced triangles was echoed in the border sashing and four corner stars. The overall feel was one of intensity and energy, using fabrics of red, orange, yellow, pink, and purple batiks.

We also made many hand-crafted items for this fundraiser, including quilted table runners, pillows, potholders, wall hangings, tree ornaments, crayon and pencil roll-ups, note cards, knit items, and more. A profit of \$578.00 was raised for UUCR from these crafts.

We are currently working on our 2020 Raffle Quilt, our 40th.

Nine quilters contributed to the 2019 raffle quilt, including Carol Dangel, Louise Friedenberg, Christina Ginsberg, Lynne Goss, Louise Lovell, Lisa Reed, Gwen Rowe, Anne Spicknall, and Jo Wilson.

FAITH IN ACTION

UUCR Initiatives

Social Justice Committee – Sean McCarthy

The mission of the Social Justice Committee (SJC) is to lead and engage the congregation on social justice concerns, providing tangible ways to live our Unitarian Universalist principles in the community and the world, financially supporting social justice and human services groups, working in coalition with partner organizations, and encouraging congregational exploration and action on emerging issues. The SJC coordinates the work of the congregation's social justice groups as well as the congregation's support for partner social justice and human services organizations.

Members of the Committee: The following UUCR members met regularly during the past year: Ethel Gilbert (Secretary and Deputy Chair), Mary Hoferek, Jack Taylor, Gayle Boyd, Len Cohen, Terrie Barr, Kay Newhouse, Steve Lapham, Alonzo Smith (deceased), Fran Lowe, Ginger Dixon, Marie Reed, and Sean McCarthy (Chair)

Most of the work of the Social Justice Committee is done by the UUCR social justice groups that the Committee supports and helps coordinate and by the external human and social services organizations that the Committee and the Share the Plate Program support. The activities of all these groups are described in separate reports hereafter for each group or organization.

This year the Committee began to change the way it directs support to human services organizations UUCR supports. Beginning with the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget the Committee is proposing that the Congregation support all human services charities through Share the Plate. The Committee also revised the Share the Plate (STP) program to designate recipients week by week rather than for bi-monthly periods. Please see detailed discussion in the Share the Plate report.

At the suggestion of the Peace Action Group the Committee also started a new program in February of inviting speakers on social issues during the Middle Hour. Originally projected as a once per month event this speakers series had to be suspended in March, when services moved online. The Committee needs to consider whether, how, and in what time slot to resume the speakers series.

Committee member Mary Hoferek continued to advocate with the State government to expand the use of the Medicaid waiver program to enable more seniors to receive home health services. This program has been expanding significantly in Montgomery County.

Lastly, representatives of the Committee and other interested members of the congregation convened a "think" group with Rev. Linda Olson Peebles in the Fall and winter to make recommendations about the organization and purposes of the Committee. This work was also suspended, because of the virus. The Chair of the Committee plans to resume this work with the new Senior Minister and the ad hoc group and present recommendations by the Fall of 2020.

Share the Plate Program

Mission: This Subcommittee of the Social Justice Committee receives nominations and makes recommendations to the Social Justice Committee (which must approve and consult with the Minister) for charities to be designated to share the Sunday collection plate with UUCR. Any member or friend of UUCR and the Minister may nominate a charity. The Subcommittee recommends charities for STP based on a number of criteria, including their impact and ties to the local community and the involvement of UUCR members as volunteers.

Subcommittee Members: Sean McCarthy (Chair), Ethel Gilbert, and Mary Hoferek

This year the Social Justice Committee began to change the way it directs support to human services organizations UUCR supports. Beginning with the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget the Committee is proposing that the Congregation support all non-UU social justice and human services charities through Share the Plate. This change permitted the Committee to reduce its budget and also allows members of the Congregation to express their desired level of support for this human services organization. These include Interfaith Works, Community Reach of Montgomery (formerly Community Ministries of Rockville), Kaseman Clinic, and the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless.

The Social Justice Committee also revised the Share the Plate (STP) program to designate recipients week by week rather than for bi-monthly periods. Some recipients will only be designated STP for one or two weeks, while other charities with greater needs and with whom the congregation has a long-time commitment may be designated for four or more weeks. This change allows the STP program to designate more nominations, to modulate the likely total contribution to fit the size of the charity, and to avoid “donor fatigue” by limiting the number of consecutive weeks a charity is an STP.

Share the Plate recipients in Fiscal Year 2019-20 (through May, 2020) were:

- ❖ Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless
- ❖ Rainbow Women’s Shelter
- ❖ Rebuilding Together
- ❖ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- ❖ UUA *Side with Love* Campaign
- ❖ Hospice of Montgomery
- ❖ Backpacks for immigrant school children
- ❖ Interfaith works
- ❖ Minister’s Discretionary Fund
- ❖ Manna Food Center

Racial Justice Working Group – *Fran Lowe*

Mission: Leads the congregation to study and learn together to create opportunities for personal and systemic transformation toward racial justice.

Members: Fran Lowe, Marie Reed, Julie Robinson, Rev. Rebekah Savage, Nancy Spencer with Patrice Davis as liaison to the Poor People’s Campaign.

This year we focused on a few principal activities:

Building a Coming to the Table Program (CTTT).

The mission of Coming to the Table (CTTT) is to provide a “safe” environment in which members can discuss racism in America and explore their own beliefs and practices. The CTTT format facilitates

deep, respectful conversation. Ultimately, the goal is to heal past and present social wrongs inflicted by systemic racism; thus, affording us all the opportunity to move forward in a more egalitarian society. Fran Lowe and Nancy Spencer are co-facilitators of monthly CTTT sessions which follow a prescribed format of discussion. A day long Facilitator Training session sponsored by CTTT was attended by 48 participants. Monthly CTTT meetings have enjoyed good attendance, covering discussions of Langston Hughes poetry, Netflix documentaries on “White Privilege” and “Ho Opono- the Hawaiian practice of forgiveness and reconciliation.” CTTT participation is strong and growing each month.

Discussion of UUA Common Read: *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*. Two facilitated discussions were held attended by about 30 people. We hope to hold a third discussion in the future.

We also planned a workshop on Bystander Training with the Immigration Action Group.

Poor People’s Campaign:

In 1968 Martin Luther King Jr. started the Poor People’s Campaign for Civil Rights and Economic Justice. Fifty years later, Rev. Drs. William Barber and Liz Theoharis launched The Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, bringing together people impacted by systemic racism and poverty, ecological devastation, war economy/militarism, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism. PPC has the “full support and participation” of the UUA.

The MoCo chapter had a strong bond with UUCR since the late beloved Alonzo Smith was one of its leaders, arranging for UUCR to host the monthly meetings. PPC has led more than 10 voter registration events in the past year. The “Must Do M.O.R.E (Mobilizing, Organizing, Registering, Educating) Tour” in January of 2020 included a demonstration, march, and meeting in D.C., with several of our congregants including Revs. Linda and Rebekah in attendance.

Due to the epidemic, a June 20 mass demonstration in the capital is being planned as an online event. Local listening sessions (to bring people together, let them share their stories, and illuminate the goal (“to fight poverty, not the poor”) had to be cancelled, but an online forum hosted by the national PPC in April was attended by so many thousands that the platform couldn’t handle the traffic!

Unfortunately, the need to social distance curtailed our activities as did the fact that two of our members, Fran Lowe and Nancy Spencer, were honored to be called upon to join the Ministerial Search Committee. We are grateful for their service.

LGBTQ+ Task Group & Rainbow Youth Alliance—Contacts: Stephanie Kreps (RYA); Vacant (LGBTQ+ TG)

LGBTQ+ Task Group’s mission is to support the rights and concerns of LGBTQ+ people in our congregation and in the wider community, and to foster awareness of such concerns among UUCR congregants and friends. The chair of the LGBTQ+ Task Group is vacant, the Task Group itself has not been active this year.

Rainbow Youth Alliance (RYA) is UUCR’s program of outreach and support for LGBTQ+ youth. Stephanie Kreps remains as cofounder and outreach coordinator for RYA and Secretary of the RYA’s Advisory Council. UUCR member Cynthia Shires-Thurston came on the Council this year. RYA

continues to attract new high school attendees, with most meetings seeing 10+ teens attending. RYA provides a unique and much-needed service to local LGBTQIA high school students.

This year we received a grant from Brother Help Thyself of \$3810. An RYA night at Nellie's Sports Bar in DC netted us around \$500. We continue to receive small donations to defray the expenses of paying our Program Coordinator and meeting and outreach supplies. As representative of RYA, Stephanie Kreps continued to visit the district's Genders and Sexualities Alliance student clubs of high and middle schools, until the schools were closed in mid-March for the Covid-19 pandemic. She participated in planning for the second MCCPTA MCPS LGBTQIA Forum, since canceled. Other outreach activities also canceled: the two-day Rockville Hometown Holidays event and all local school and Pride events. We hired Genevieve Diamond as our new Program Director in September. We also hired a Program Assistant, Mia Morris, for 10 hours a month to help with email and other tasks.

After UUCR closed in March, we have instituted virtual meetings with confidentiality. We have identified a former volunteer to help with event planning. Disappointments are: the LGBTQ TG chair vacancy for the second successive FY; the RYA Advisory Council's planned fundraisers did not occur when the Council's main contact for them dropped off the Council for personal reasons. Another plan for a fundraiser was put off until Spring 2021.

Environmental Action Group – *Terrie Barr*

Mission: To raise awareness, improve our congregation's natural environment and encourage sustainability practices for present and future generations.

We seek to do this by a) working with members and the congregation to reduce our negative impact on the Earth as individuals and as a collective and b) by partnering with environmental organizations to combat the impacts of climate change, protect the Chesapeake Bay, reach 100% clean, renewable energy and eliminate waste in Montgomery County.

Names of group members: Terrie Barr, Len Cohen, Larissa Johnson, Jon Landenburger, Alex Tucker comprise the planning group. Norman Rave is the liaison to Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions. Carla Miller is the liaison to Children and Youth Programs. We have 40 more UUCR members on our e-mailing list.

Major accomplishments for the year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)

Food: Too Good to Waste, Aug 25. This program included everything about preventing food waste from our homes - strategies for reducing wasted food on the purchasing end and on the throwing-out end. We encouraged food composting with an educational program that showed that food scraps that are composted can fertilize the earth not clog landfills. Some folks committed to composting at home, some signed up for a composting service and we raffled off four home composting bins. 30 folks attended.

Wine and Cheese Open House, September 29, hosted by Len Cohen to brainstorm priorities and to increase participation. 30 folks attended.

On November 22, the EAG sponsored a trip to the Leafgro county leaf waste recycling center. Four of us went: Jon Landenburger, Irene Eckstrand, Mary Caroline Colletti, Terrie Barr and Evelyn Gettys from Cedar Lane. Instead of leaves going to the landfill creating methane gas, ours make a profit and create a 100% organic soil conditioner.

Beginning in December, Norman Rave started attending the meetings of the Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (MC-FACS). They unite people of faith to help solve the climate emergency. Norm reports the highlights for inclusion with monthly EAG meeting emails. They educate us so that we can act in coalition with them to improve the environmental climate in our county and state through advocacy.

The Montgomery County Resource Recovery Facility in Dickerson is a 24-year old trash incinerator and the largest polluter in the County – more than the nearby coal-fired Exelon power plant. The incinerator burns trash turning it into air pollution and 180,000 tons of toxic ash that is dumped in Virginia landfills. This is an environmental justice issue.

Planning for the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day was upended due to coronavirus restrictions. Instead we took these actions:

- Our plans to partner a fund raiser by screening a film turned into publicizing opportunities to view films for free online.
- We recruited 17 people to become members of Community Supported Agriculture with Farm of Peace. Three are UUCR neighbors and two are friends of UUCR members. They will receive organic produce delivered to UUCR beginning in June.
- We collected UUCR digital nature art that was shared during our Earth Day service on April 19.
- We shared virtual environmental programs from MC-FACS, the UU Ministry for the Earth, the Nature Conservancy and Interfaith Power and Light. We offered a discussion of the IPL film the Human Element.

EAG meetings are held virtually, as a conference call, every third Wednesday saving time and involving no burning of fossil fuels.

We send a dozen emails a month to the mailing list encouraging advocacy on local, state and national issues, seeking input, offering opportunities to learn and to take personal action.

Immigration Action Group—*Steve Eckstrand and Gayle Boyd*

The Immigration Action Group works to educate members of our UUCR community about the issues affecting immigrants in Montgomery County and throughout the country and to collaborate with other faith-based and community organizations to advocate for immigrants and to provide direct service to immigrants. Organizations with which we collaborate include:

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, Congregation Action Network, Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church's sanctuary project. Community Reach of Montgomery County, CASA de Maryland, Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition (CAIR), Direct Support for Immigrants, and Justice for Our Neighbors.

2019-2020 Activities

Service

- Sanctuary family at Cedar Lane - Gail Schmitt continues to coordinate IAG volunteers who are assisting with child care, transportation, food and other needs.
- During the early summer of 2019 we collected toiletry items for newly arriving immigrants and organized a "packing party" on July 28 following the worship service to assemble

packs of materials. UUCR youth and adults prepared about 200 packs that were delivered to Direct Support for Immigrants in Silver Spring.

- Dan Pierce coordinated collection of school supplies for immigrant youth at the New Hampshire Estates Elementary School. UUCR members and youth contributed 34 backpacks (our goal was 30) and most of the supplies to fill them. Using funds from a special Share the Plate collection, Dan purchased the remainder of the supplies and delivered everything to the school in time to be given to the students before the shutdown.

Education/Advocacy

- On Saturday November 16 the IAG hosted an educational program on immigration law. “Immigration 101” was presented by the Rockville office of Justice for Our Neighbors and was well attended by both UUCR congregants and participants from other congregations.
- On Sunday, February 16, George Clack presented a seminar entitled “Understanding the Immigration Debate,” which covered current facts about immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees and recent policy changes in U.S. immigration policies.
- We collected twenty-four signatures on a letter to Congressman David Trone requesting that he intervene with ICE on behalf of the sanctuary family at Cedar Lane. Several members delivered the letter to his Rockville office and had an informative meeting with a member of his staff.

Future Plans

Unfortunately, the Bystander Intervention workshop scheduled for March 22 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 quarantine. It will be rescheduled for the fall.

UUtheVote – *Betsy Wilder*

Mission or Purpose: In support of the UU 5th Principle to support democracy, and in response to the UUA-wide call for help in getting out the vote for the 2020 election, our group has organized an effort to contact 10,000 individuals in 10 months and encourage them to make their voices heard in November.

Members of Organizing Team: Betsy Wilder, Marie Reed, Julianne Kapner, Fran Lowe

Major accomplishments for the year: Beginning in the fall of 2019, we began meeting with working groups of the Social Justice Committee to gauge enthusiasm for a get-out-the-vote effort as a way to elect individuals that will influence all areas of social justice. We organized an informal congregational discussion in January on the date of the UUA-wide launch of the UU the Vote campaign. Two weeks later we hosted the first of two potluck letter writing sessions and began putting together packets of letters for people to take home and return. The second potluck was organized with the Family Potluck and enabled us to engage kids and their parents. We set a goal of 10,000 Letters in 10 Months, and as of mid-April, over 60 UUCR members/friends have completed or taken home 3235 letters. Although the COVID-19 isolation slowed us down, we have organized a Zoom letter writing session and have helped several people register with VoteForward.org to download letters at home. We hope to organize a joint letter writing pizza party with the young adults and youth before the fiscal year closes.

Peace Action Group – Steve Lapham and Alonzo Smith (RIP), Co-Chairs

Peace Action Group this year helped the Social Justice Committee establish a “Social Justice Middle Hour” intending to meet once per month. During the SJMH current social justice issues are presented and followed by a moderated Q&A discussion. **Mary Caroline Colletti** spoke (Feb. 2020) about poor maintenance at Town Center Apartments in Rockville, and an UUCR interest group was formed. **Jack Taylor** previewed the 2020 UULM-MD legislative agenda at another SJMH.

Otherwise, the Peace Action Group worked in coalition with other organizations. Answering the Eighth Principle’s call to end racism, **Alonzo Smith**, was present at the Equal Justice Initiative soil collection in Poolesville in November 2019, the site of one of three nineteenth-century lynchings in our county. In April 2019, **Steve Lapham** helped organize a one-year anniversary memorial service at Christ Congregational Church for Robert L. White, a resident of Silver Spring, who was pursued, shot, and killed while walking, unarmed, in his own neighborhood. In November, four members of UUCR attended a Workshop on Police Accountability hosted by the Silver Spring Justice Coalition (SSJC). Steve participated in SSJC meetings with the County Council drafting amendments to the law establishing Montgomery County’s new Policing Advisory Commission.

In June 2019, the SJC co-sponsored a showing at UUCR of the documentary “Imprisoning a Generation” which presaged UUA **President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray**’s endorsement (in December, with 23 other Christian leaders) of the “Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act,” H.R. 2407. The SJC’s 2017 statement in support of the constitutional right to boycott was a stepping stone to an **Action of Immediate Witness (AIW)** at the 2019 UUA General Assembly, which passed overwhelmingly. The PAG made available for signing during the Middle Hour an online petition (addressed to **Rep. Jamie Raskin**) on the right to boycott authored by UUs for Justice in the Middle East. UUA has endorsed the Back from the Brink campaign, which members of UUCR have also signed. Thus, we celebrate the Montgomery County Council approving, in December 2019, a resolution to **prohibit any first use of nuclear weapons** by the United States.

The Peace Action Group looks forward to continued collaboration with related groups at UUCR (e.g., Racial Justice Working Group; Immigration Task Force; UULM-MD; and UUSJ) and in our community to educate and advocate for reforms promoting humane principles in line with our faith.

UUCR Partnerships

Interfaith Works – Kay Newhouse

Interfaith Works’ mission is to bring us together to serve our neighbors in need and advocate for an end to poverty in Montgomery County. Before and during the pandemic which began in the early Spring of 2020, Interfaith works has been serving a key role in maintaining county focus on individuals experiencing homelessness, deploying emergency eviction assistance, and helping those who are under employed to find new or better jobs.

Last year UUCR joined other congregations and groups of various faiths across Montgomery County by supporting IW with pooled donations as well as volunteer work. UUCR members made significant contributions to IW on several Sundays in March, April, and May of 2020, when Interfaith Works was a Share the Plate recipient. UUCR members serve meals at the Interfaith Works Women’s Center for a

week in May each year, donate items to the Interfaith Works Clothing Center, attend regional congregation meetings on the topic of poverty, and engage in other efforts with Interfaith Works.

In addition to serving as SJC liaison to IW, UUCR member Kay Newhouse is Interfaith Works board chair.

Hunger Relief Task Force – *Dolores Barnes*

The Hunger Relief Task Force strives to help alleviate hunger in our community so that all people have access to safe, sufficient, and healthy food.

Members: Dolores Barnes

HRTF continued our ongoing Manna Food Center food collection, and has delivered over 1,000 pounds since September of 2019.

Continued Soup Kitchen participation (serving guests) the third Monday of each month at Epworth Methodist Church in Gaithersburg.

Along with the Community Reach of Montgomery County Task Force leader, assembled twelve (12) complete Thanksgiving baskets, and donated thirty-four (34) additional grocery gift cards to CRMC.

Money allocated from the SJ Committee budget was also donated to Rockville HELP, a volunteer emergency aid service in Montgomery County, in addition to the Gaithersburg Soup Kitchen and Manna Food Center.

Community Reach of Montgomery County – *Betsy Wilder*

Mission: Community Reach of Montgomery County (CRMC) seeks to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable of Montgomery County residents by providing basic services including housing, healthcare, homecare, education, and emergency assistance, with the goal of achieving and maintaining client self-sufficiency, and advocating on their behalf.

Members of Team: Betsy Wilder (liaison); Dolores Barnes also co-organized the Thanksgiving baskets as coordinator of Hunger Relief

Major accomplishments for the year:

CRMC is advised and supported by an interfaith group of 21 congregations, including UUCR. The UUCR Social Justice Committee budget annually provides \$2800 to CRMC to provide support for elders aging in place, English as a Second Language classes to immigrants, housing for formerly homeless individuals, and health care to uninsured and under-insured Montgomery County residents. In addition to financial support, UUCR members and friends support the mission of CRMC in a variety of ways. In 2019, UUCR donated enough food to feed 20 families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, with additional families supported with gift cards. UUCR's partnership with CRMC represents an opportunity for members and friends to grow in community through service to others, and for youth and families to engage in intergenerational service.

Habitat for Humanity – *Karen Pittleman*

This summer marked the eleventh year that UUCR members travelled to Garrett County MD to spend a week building houses with Habitat for Humanity (HFH). From July28-Aug2 our group of eighteen

worked on houses in Hopeland Village, a community of homes built entirely by volunteers and designed to provide safe and affordable housing in western MD.

This year we worked on four houses. Projects included painting; staining porches; installing flooring; blocking walls; insulating a crawlspace; and installing soffits and siding. We enjoyed working side by side and getting to know each other better, as well as getting to know members of the local community and the HFH Board. This year's participants included: Dan Pierce, Nancy Klag, Claudia Chitty, Rich Chitty, John Miles, Thea Miles, Richard Stoltz. Don Hilton, Alex Eisenhauer, Corrine Elrich, John Mornini, Darla Royal, Karla Timmons, Mary Hoferek, Susan Wilson, Jon Landenburger, Karen Pittleman

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland—*Jack Taylor*

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) is a statewide advocacy network of Unitarian Universalists. We work to educate, mobilize, and coordinate UUs on specific issues before the Maryland General Assembly. Working in coalition with established state and national organizations, we as UUs model a reverence for the interdependent web of all existence which fosters justice, health and equity in society. Jack Taylor of UUCR is a member of the board of directors. On January 11, we held our annual legislative kickoff in Annapolis.

For a complete breakout of bills, go www.uulmmd.org. A forum was held in March at UUCR during Middle Hour to discuss the ongoing bills and issues.

The Maryland General Assembly adjourned early on March 16 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving a lot of legislation hanging. However, we did get six of our priority bills passed. In addition, five other positive bills related to our issues passed. Below is the list, sorted by Task Force Issue:

Climate change:

HB 1029/SB 224 - Clean Energy Jobs - Workforce Development: Modifies the requirement that apprenticeship jobs training programs prepare workers for careers in the solar and wind sectors of the clean energy industry by including geothermal and energy efficiency careers.

Criminal Justice:

HB 49 - Criminal Procedure- Pretrial Release- Pretrial Risk Scoring Instruments - requires jurisdictions using a “pretrial risk scoring instrument” to determine the eligibility of a defendant for pretrial release to have an independent validation study of the instrument at least once every five years.

Priority: SB 684 - Correctional Services - Prerelease Unit for Women - Facilities and Services (Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act) - Requires the Division of Correction to operate a comprehensive rehabilitative prerelease unit for women that is a separate structure in which specified services are provided, has security features for specified female inmates, and matches security level on a validated gender-responsive risk measure.

Education:

Priority: HB 1300 - Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Kirwan Commission Report) Implementation - The Blueprint is built on the principle that every child deserves the best education regardless of zip code to compete in a global economy. It invests an additional \$4B in early childhood education, college and career readiness, increasing teacher salaries and providing more support for students who need them (special ed, ESL, at-risk).

Gun Violence:

Priority: [HB 4](#)/SB 208 - Public Safety- Rifles and Shotguns- Sales, Rentals, and Transfers - requires that a licensed firearms dealer facilitate the "transfer" of a rifle or shotgun. "Transfer" means a sale, a rental, a furnishing, a gift, a loan, or any other delivery, with or without consideration. A dealer may charge a reasonable fee.

[HB 1629](#) - Office of the Attorney General - Firearm Crime – Study - Requires the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to study information regarding firearm crimes committed in the State since August 1, 2015.

[SB 708](#) - Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund - Mandates \$3 million in the annual State budget to the Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund.

Health Care:

Priority: [HB 959](#)/SB 872 - Health Insurance - Consumer Protections - establishes the consumer protection provisions of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) that are currently specified through cross-references in Maryland law. It also establishes nondiscrimination provisions. **Priority:** [HB 196](#)/SB 124 - Maryland Health Benefit Exchange- Assessment Applicability and Report on State-Based Individual Market Health Insurance Subsidies.

Priority: [HB 1095](#)/SB 669 - Public Health - Prescription Drug Affordability Board and Fund – the bill requires the board to assess and collect an annual fee on specified entities to fund the newly established Prescription Drug Affordability Fund.

[HB 1100](#) - Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Meetings, Legal Advisor, Reports, and Technical Changes - repeals the requirement that the Prescription Drug Affordability Board hire legal counsel. Instead, the bill specifies that the Attorney General is the legal adviser to the board and must designate an assistant Attorney General as counsel to the board. The bill clarifies that the board may set upper payment limits in accordance with a specified plan of action.

Unfortunately, no bills passed related to Economic Justice, Immigration, or Medical Aid in Dying.

A priority for the UULM-MD for remainder of 2020 will be supporting Get Out The Vote (GOTV).

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice – Sean McCarthy

Mission: UUSJ promotes Unitarian Universalist values through advocacy with the federal government, including Congress, education, training, and witnessing. UUSJ is a membership organization supported UU congregations in the Washington, DC area.

Membership: Sean McCarthy, UUCR liaison and UUSJ Trustee.

In the past year UUSJ has promoted Unitarian Universalist values in four priority areas: Immigration Reform, Economic Justice, Environment and Climate Justice, and Defending our Democracy. As part of a "Write Here, Write Now!" program UUSJ has gathered letters on these issues to Senators and Members of Congress from individual UU's at UU churches in the DC area and other parts of the country. Advocacy is primarily carried out by the UUSJ Advocacy Corps, a group of volunteer UU members and friends who hand deliver to Senators and members of Congress the letters generated through "Write Here, Write Now" efforts at UU congregations. The Advocacy Corps, which operates on the second Tuesday of the month, eleven months a year, also delivers letters and position papers written by UUSJ and confers with Congressional staff about the issues raised in all these letters and position papers.

Highlights of the past year included a three-day conference on Climate Change held on Capitol Hill in September. Participants learned about climate issues and how to advocate with Congress. They then delivered letters and held meetings with congressional staff on climate issues. The Immigration Task

Group of UUSJ was particularly active this year, drafting multiple letters commenting on proposed “public charge” and other immigration regulations and providing support for a number of Advocacy Corps’ Advocacy Days on Capitol Hill on immigration issues. As the coronavirus distancing measures made in person meetings impossible, in April UUSJ organized an Advocacy Day and Write Here! Write Now! Letter writing via Zoom.

With the help of an organizational consultant UUSJ is in the midst of developing a long term strategy, including a new governance structure, to permit it to grow and evolve into an organization with a substantial membership nationwide and not principally in the DC area. In the short-term UUSJ is working to adapt its advocacy with Congress to the social distancing environment.

COMMUNITY

Vital Statistics – as of May 17, 2020

Members: 357

Friends: ~148

Religious Education Enrollment: 122

Religious Education Families: ~100

New members from June 1, 2019 to May 17, 2020: 21

Jennifer Ambrose, Ken Ambrose, Christine “Chris” Black, Christopher Burton, Donnamae Clancy, Patrice Davis, Carol S. Edwards, Annette Emery, Joshua Emery, Sean Hickey, Dennis Jackson, Julianne Kapner, Regina Landor, John Miles, Theodora Miles, Mia Morris, Jennifer O’Boyle, Norman Rave, Alfred Segovia Beltran, Roxana Segovia-Beltran, Duyen “Jen” Truong

Members off the roll from June 1, 2019 to May 17, 2020: 27

Cynthia Bauerle, Claudia Blackburn, Carole Clem, Madeline Cruz, Elaine Diamondidis, John Dickson, Jessica Gardiner, Joseph Gillen, Bob Janowski, Heidi Janowski, Chris Kohout, Nick Kohout, Holly Kylan, Chris McNabb, Samantha McNabb, Maude McGovern, Kenan Pollack, Lane Pollack, Caroline Pettit, David Pettit, Kevin Power, Robbie Reasoner, Sandra Rodriguez, Rachel Shaw, Crispin Taylor, Cynthia Taylor, Judy Toth

Members changed to Friends from June 1, 2019 to May 17, 2020: 2

Bennett Rushkoff, Karen Whitesell

Child Dedications: 2

Putnam Luke Strong

Sumner Vinton Strong

Member Deaths:10

Niki Davis (June 7 2019)

Peggy Jones (December 9, 2019)

Kathy Rupp (July 10, 2019)

Edd Doerr (February 6, 2020)

Branka Kienstra (July 28, 2019)

Alonzo Smith (March 5, 2020)

Jewell Golden (August 11, 2019)

André Enceneat (March 28, 2020)

John McIlwaine (November 27, 2019)

Celia Young (May 3, 2020)

Memberships in Abeyance: 7

Robert Heilman, Karen Knispel Heilman, Jeffrey Lewis, Mary Beth Lewis, David Mayhew, Shannon Mayhew, Elaine Perino