

All of Who You Are is Sacred. All of Who You Are is Welcome.



Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene
Annual Reports
2018-19 Fiscal Year

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Developmental Minister



I was hired as the Developmental Minister for the Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene to over a period of 4-5 years:

“...Carry out the normal responsibilities of a congregational minister in **service** to the **mission** of UUCE, including **worship, pastoral care, supervision** and training of **interns**, and assistance to the Congregation

in **developing financial stability, growth, multicultural diversity, long range planning** and **community engagement**. Specific goals include:

- 1.1 Build and expand stewardship capacities and fundraising strategies.
- 1.2 In conjunction with the Long-Range Planning Committee, lead the Congregation in a process to identify specific social justice work and whole church projects.
- 1.3 Identify ways to support and ally with marginalized people and communities of color in the Eugene/Springfield area.
- 1.4 Expand UUCE’s culture of welcoming newcomers into membership and congregation life. “

In addition, the Board and I were to, with the assistance of an outside facilitator, “engage in a retreat for the purpose of arriving at specific understandings about the sharing of power and responsibility, goals for the coming year, and a plan for periodic review and renewal of the shared ministry of the Congregation.”

Ministerial Responsibilities

There has been a focus both in committee, task force, staff, and my own work at UUCE on the mission of the church. It is what guides all that we do: *Transform, Love, Serve*.

Worship has been a primary focus. In collaboration with staff, I have tried to continue the professionalism that my predecessor brought to worship here. Each service is crafted as a whole with the intent to provide a “take away” for all who attend. Worship is heart centered and at times fluid to respond to the question, “What does the congregation need?” Services carry an element of the pastoral as well as the prophetic.

Along with Katy Siefert and our intern minister, Sarah Skochko, we have begun to explore what “full community worship” might look like as a regular service woven into the fabric of our worship life.

The use of *Soul Matters* which provides us with themes for the month as well as worship, small group, and faith formation materials has proved to be invaluable. It allows the whole church to have a cohesive focus in its life together.

Pastoral Care

It became clear that pastoral care was not something that the congregation understood. Interpreting what pastoral care is and inviting people to avail themselves of it has been a focus. Our intern minister has picked up the responsibility for Lay Pastoral Associates that partner with her and me to provide pastoral care for congregants.

The hope is to expand the options for pastoral care by offering a “Compassionate Connection Circle” after services where individuals can briefly share the joys and sorrows or other life experiences with Lay Pastoral Associates and/or the Intern Minister or minister.

Staff Supervision

It took some time to work out who was supervising whom and where the ultimate responsibility for staff supervision lies. That had to do with some previous structures that were set in place that were both inappropriate and confusing. At this point, I am the head of staff with direct supervisory responsibility for the Director of Lifespan Religious Education, the Music Director, the Interim Minister, the office Administrator and the Bookkeeper as well as custodial staff. Other staff are directly supervised by the Director of Lifespan Religious Education and the Music Director.

We have weekly staff meetings and at times I have individual “supervisory” meetings with both the intern minister as well as the Director of Lifespan Religious Education.

Specific Board/Congregational Goals

Developing Long Term Financial Stability

From the start, I have talked about what it means to develop the habit of generosity which is more than financial generosity. It has to do with shifting from a mindset of scarcity and to one of abundance. And it has to do with the ways in which we interact with one another: “What is the most generous thing I can say? How can I interact with another person in a generous manner? How can we lead with a holy curiosity as well as an attitude of gratitude?” These questions expand the notion of stewardship to make it more holistic.

One of the first things I did was gather together a team to work on the Annual Budget Drive and to address the \$30,000 deficit. That team eventually became the “Generosity Network” which takes on all things financial with an eye to fiscal responsibility as well fun. Thanks to the challenge donation of \$15,000, the congregation was able to respond by matching that challenge so that we wiped out the deficit for the year 2018-2019. A similar strategy is being used to take on the \$60,000 deficit for the 2019-2020 year’s annual budget. A handful of donors have come together to put forward \$30,000 as a challenge match for the congregation.

What pleases me no end is leadership’s interest and commitment to bringing the conversation about money, stewardship, and generosity out of the closet into the open. I

believe that next year will bring about an opportunity for folks to engage all three as a community and in small groups.

The capitol campaign debt reduction drive that was started in the past years will close having reached the set goal. I have recommended that we hold off for a few years on any further capitol campaign debt reduction efforts so that we may focus on shoring up our operational finances.

Parallel to the effort to bring “generosity” as a focus has been a closer look at our membership role and what constitutes a member. A concerted effort has been put into determining who is a member and who needs to be contacted to see if they want to remain a part of the UUCE community. I would rather winnow our numbers than have “ghost” members who either left us long ago or are no longer engaged. This plays a key part in determining what size church we really are and setting staff salaries appropriately.

Growth

Growth can be measured in many ways, among them, number of members, finances, and spiritual and religious maturity. I believe that UUCE has seen an uptick in all three of these areas. I believe we have taken in nearly 30 new members this year. Our pledges have increased by 14 percent. But more importantly, thanks to the Small Group Ministries and offerings through the Lifespan Religious Education programs, the congregation is truly growing “spiritually.” I believe that UUCE is growing into itself as a religious entity. I am hoping that along with that growth is the understanding that faithfulness asks much of us and, in particular to work for justice.

Multicultural Diversity

I have learned the hard way from past experience that the desire to be multicultural does not always jive with the capacity to be multicultural. What that means is that our majority white church needs to do its homework, its preparation, its awakening, to be able to set a table of multicultural welcome and full inclusion. That work is being done once again primarily through the program offerings of Lifespan Religious Education. It is my hope that leadership and staff will begin to apply a multicultural lens to everything we do at UUCE to understand where we are acting from old, white supremacy models and to work creatively to shift them to ones of multicultural inclusion. I appreciate that the Board and many in the congregation took on the challenge to read, Centering and to discuss it.

We have also begun the work of moving out of a gender binary paradigm. This is a growing edge for many and I am happy that we will be bringing in a speaker for a weekend workshop and worship in the September of 2019. Thanks to the generosity of trans folx in our congregation, we are gently being called in to further our welcome in this arena.

Awareness of disability issues is also new to us but rising to the fore. Re-thinking how we do worship to include persons with a variety of disabilities will enhance the worship experience for all.

In general, I would say we have moved from “multiculturalism” to an understanding of intersectionality and how all the “isms” have diminished our community as a whole.

Long Term Planning

Many disagree with me about this, but I am no longer a fan of long-term plans -which is different from planning for the long term. The long term UUCE needs to contend with is really the short term: preparing for a settled minister. The developmental minister may work with leadership to help it ferret out what this community longs to be and help it strategize for ways to get there. But the real work of living into whatever that desire or vision is the initial task of the settled minister and leadership. For now, the focus may just be on dreaming which is always the first step to making something a reality.

In addition, the other long-term goal that is really a short-term goal is financial stability. That includes working with the entire congregation to understand what it means to be stewards of this faith tradition as well as this particular UU church.

Community Engagement

In many ways, we are still operating out of the “they can come to us model” of community engagement. A lot of our work has been internal. Rightly so in a time of transition. That said, groups like 350Eugene are finding us and using our facility. I believe we are seen as not just a rental space but a place of sanctuary and refuge for a variety of persons, groups, and social justice causes. My hope is to connect us more deeply with existing groups beyond our walls to promote collaboration and cooperation.

Social Justice

The current model of all church social justice projects could use some tweaking. I believe that it is easier to have a congregation respond as a whole to a pressing issue as opposed to long term engagement on an issue. That is not to discount the long-term teams, task forces, and committees that are working hard on justice issues. That work is vital, and I only wish more people were involved to support this work.

On the flip side: I believe that having financial benefits by being an “Earth EqUUity” project singles out and elevates causes and issues and pits the against each other competing for endorsement and monies.

Social Justice has languished and been marginalized via this model in many congregations. I would prefer that the church encourage members who have energy and passion to do the work and offer support to those groups by:

- offering space
- access to church communications
- money when possible

- encouragement to support and participate in one another's work or events

Expanding Our Welcome

This is also a constant issue in UU congregations. We think we are so friendly and welcoming but time and again we get feedback about how folks were not greeted or interacted with or made to feel welcome.

I would like to recommend that we consider hiring a Membership Engagement Coordinator beginning in the budget year 2020-2021. UUCE has reached the size where it is no longer a volunteer job to welcome and track folks and help them get settled into our community. I believe this is a far greater priority at the moment than our being a teaching congregation.

Welcome and hospitality also have to do with our ability to be culturally adaptive and inclusive. That is an ongoing challenge. Over and over again I hear from the circles I sit in that no one has the answer to how to overcome racial and cultural difference. We are all making it up as we go along. So, all of our work in this area is aspirational.

Conclusion

UUCE is on the brink of busting open. Excitement and aliveness are palpable on Sunday mornings. The congregation seems more than willing to try new things and allow themselves to be challenged. Leadership has been open to governance changes that allow for cleaner and more direct communication as well as greater capacity to respond to issues as they arise. This has been a year of "cleaning up." Thanks to the efforts and persistence of our office administrator, Jody Monegan, our IT has been brought into the 21st century. Buildings and Grounds responsiveness to requests both small and large has made numerous changes that have improved the building not only cosmetically but functionally. Staff has functioned well as a unit, allowing us to provide programming and care for the congregation. Lay leadership has been strong and committed.

As we come up on a year of when UUCE and I began talking to one another about partnering in ministry, I am filled with gratitude. And excited about the potential that has yet to be tapped here.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Lois E. Van Leer

Intern Minister Sarah Skochko



This was the second year of my internship at UUCE. I am thankful to have been here for two years instead of one, as we were able to form a longer and more meaningful relationship.

Normally, an intern is not allowed to be hired back by their internship congregation once their internship ends. However, I am pleased to report that this March, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee in Boston granted me special permission to be hired by UUCE for the 2019-2020 church year as your Director of Social Media, Outreach, and Engagement. I am so happy to be continuing our relationship. My duties next year will be largely the same as they are now, and there will not be an intern next year.

This past church year, my duties included (but were not limited to):

- preaching on average once a month;
- participating in three worship services a month, except when traveling for seminary;
- providing pastoral care as needed;
- officiating at one wedding and one funeral;
- representing the church at a number of community functions, including a vigil at the Eugene Islamic Center;
- leading the Lay Pastoral Associates team;
- organizing our second annual Christmas service project;
- serving on the Communications team, as well as interfacing with office staff about church publications;
- managing the church's social media presence and making a number of informative videos for Facebook;
- and organizing the newly-reformed Young Adults Group.

Of all my activities at church, the Lay Pastoral Associates team is the one I hope to grow the most in the coming year. We now have five Lay Pastoral Associates, who have reached out to – and sometimes met with – various church members in crisis to provide support and encouragement. For next year, we are discussing how to reach more people, and how to stay informed about who in the congregation is struggling.

Many people have asked how the Young Adults Group is going. We are still a small cohort, but we're growing, and we held a number of fun events this year: a Valentine's Day Party, a pub theology session, an Easter-egg dyeing night. My hope for next year is to establish a regular meeting time for newcomers to drop in.

I would like to thank the members of my internship committee, Emmet Band, Jon Miller, Carolyn Moss, Robin Schantz-Mulford, and Lesley Rex, for their unfailing support and guidance over these past two years. They have encouraged and advised me at every step of the way.

Also, I have so enjoyed working with our music team, Brad Schulz and Suzanne Giordanno; our religious education professionals, Katy Siepert and Ezra Black; our incredible office staff, Jody Monegan and Jen Dondero; and our custodians Bob Smith and Ghani Jamai. I couldn't ask for a better group of coworkers and religious professionals to collaborate with!

Lastly, I have been blessed to study under not just one but two fantastic mentors, and am so grateful for the guidance of Rev. Lois van Leer.

With optimism for another great year,

Sarah Skochko

Ministerial Intern Committee

Lesley Rex and I co-chair the Intern Committee. There are currently five members of the intern committee. The committee members observe programs and activities lead by the intern and provide feedback. We meet with the intern each month to discuss progress and any areas of concern the intern might have. We complete an annual evaluation in concert with our minister with copies going to the UUA and the interns theological school.

Submitted by Emmet Band.

UUCE Board of Trustees

Your Board of Trustees officers for 2018-2019 are: Barbara Kellogg, President; Poppy Lochridge, Vice-President, Lizzy Utterback, Secretary, and Katy Colburn, Treasurer. The

At-Large members are Daniel Blades, Merri Carlisle, Ryan Doppelmayr, Bob Fraley and Frankie Hill.

In order to plan our work for this year, we held two retreats with Rev. Lo and one workshop with Rev. Sarah Schurr, Congregational Life Staff, Pacific Western Region. Through that process, we identified several areas of focus, including deepening our relationship with each other and our new minister, Rev. Lo, strengthening our organizational structure, and continued work on sustainable funding and budget.

Deepening our relationship with each other: to this end, we have created a second monthly meeting which we call “Going Deeper”. This replaces our old executive committee meetings. No business is conducted at this meeting and no minutes are recorded. This is a forum for the board to build trust and have longer conversations than the business format allows.

Strengthening our governance structure:

- A. Our bylaws are very out of date. These became priorities for us for the 2018-2019 church year. To take on the bylaws, the Board appointed a joint board-congregational task force including Bob Fraley, Merri Carlisle, Phyllis O’Neill, and Rob Barnes, that has been meeting all year to develop a comprehensive list of proposals that will be voted on at our annual meeting.
- B. We have also been working on the new governance structure with the help of Rev. Lo all year, and it will be rolled out at the beginning of the church year in the Fall. Currently we have five ministries that include all groups and activities within our church, but there is not coordination or even awareness that this structure exists. There is no support or coordination built into our current system and the burden then falls to the minister and staff. In addition, each group operates independently with little support between group leaders, the congregation or the board.

Our new structure will create three ministries and three new lay leadership positions to coordinate and support the groups within each of ministries as well as our staff.

It has been a pleasure to serve this congregation and help strengthen our foundation for next year.

Submitted by Barbara Kellogg, President

Membership Committee

The primary role of the Membership Committee is to welcome and inform newcomers and to help members and friends find a home at UUCE. The Faith Forward program and the Welcome Table team have been established to meet these goals. The chair of the committee (currently, Erin Troberg) is appointed by the board.

Membership assisted in the Faith Forward program and presented information every eight weeks on Membership 101 as part of the rotating topics covered in the series. Chair Erin Troberg, Faith Forward leader, Rob Barnes and Rev. Lo met several times throughout the church year and were joined by Welcome Team leader, Patty Holtz.

The membership rolls were reviewed periodically; if necessary, research and corrections were made.

Two New Member Welcome ceremonies were held this year and a total of 26 people signed the Membership book. Our current Membership (as of May 2019) is 261.

Membership retention and engagement remain as growth areas and a new Chair is being sought.

Welcome Table

The Welcome Table has the sole purpose of greeting visitors and helping them feel welcome. We provide information, both verbally and through our Visitor Packets, help new and old members get name badges, and hang around at coffee hour to be a familiar face to those visiting UUCE for the first time.

Faith Forward

In the 35 FFI sessions from 9/9/2018 - 5/5/2019, there have been 299 participants (including facilitators). Attendance averaged 12 per session in 2018 and 5 per session in 2019.

FFI has recently undergone a revision, increasing to nine sessions per cycle rather than eight.

The current FFI program will conclude for summer break after 6/16/2019 and resume in early September 2019. Steve Kuzma is in the process of taking over as FF coordinator.

Religious Education Program

“Empowered by love, we transform ourselves and serve our world”

The 2018-19 church year was our third year using the SpiritJam model. I am happy to report that this program is operating smoothly and drawing a great deal of kid and community interest. Ezra Black, our RE Coordinator, will submit a report detailing some of the highlights of that program.

Some of the RE church events that stand out in the yearly cycle include:

The Halloween Party- with a new twist on an old favorite, this year we created a haunted hallway... about 70 attendees enjoyed dressing up, food, fun, crafts, games and community connection.

A movie night – showing the movie Elf – hosted by the middle school youth as a fund raiser for the church.

A shadow puppet retelling of the birth of Jesus, imagined in a Pacific Northwest setting – the animals drew near to witness the baby, all in shadow form.



This year's newly reimagined **Easter Carnival** during service and all-ages Easter Egg Hunt after service were big hits!

Middle School Retreat at Opal Creek, High School Youth Cons, and a Cluster Con, too!



Middle school and high school benefited from meeting regularly after church with volunteer leaders, building relationships with each other and their leaders through consistent, meaningful activities and conversation. Our approximately 7 middle school youth also provided leadership in Spirit Jam and service projects throughout the year.

The cob house provided a focus for RE over the summer and has been a hub of community building in the RE program with some regular volunteers coming together to build. The roof was completed in summer of 2018, and we look forward to beginning the final building phase with the cobb house this coming summer.



There are currently 135 registered infants, children, and youth in the **RE program**, with a regular attendance each Sunday morning of about 70 young people across the age ranges – infant/toddler, preschool, SpiritJam, middle school, and high school, with regular attendance in SpiritJam of 25-40 people. Ezra has described the new and innovative ways we are expanding SpiritJam to encompass whole church ministry – you can read more about these innovative changes in his report.

Adult RE continues to develop and mature, with a strong emphasis on anti-racism, anti-oppression work, including the Examining Whiteness class, facilitated by Steve Kuzma, and with Dan Goodlett and Ruth Kenney trained and ready to lead another round in the Fall of 2019. This class was the offering of the newly formed Challenging Racism Group, chaired by Frankie Hill and Steve Kuzma. That group also spearheaded a series of book groups reading *The Tears We Cannot Stop*, *The Hate U Give*, and *So You Want to Talk about Race*, organized by Jeanne Marie Stine. Finally, that group has been instrumental in drafting a statement of support for communities of color that is anticipated to be adopted by the board.

In addition to these offerings, this year we also offered Adult OWL, taught by Nadja Sanders, Jon Miller, and myself. The three of us worked as an excellent team, and the 12-week session was attended by 16 participants. We had a lot of fun, and the class reviews bore out our feeling that people enjoyed and learned a lot from the class.

Creative expression has also featured large this year with Soul Collage for the visual arts, and Tai Chi Fusion for movement and strength building. In addition, we have focused on continuing with the Inquirers classes every Sunday after church – these classes continue to draw a solid following. Adult RE classes consistently bring in attendance of anywhere from 3-20 people.

In addition to serving the church in these ways, your DRE serves the region as the PWR LREDA Board Secretary, teaches Renaissance Modules for other DREs across the nation as a contracted employee through the UUA, recently coordinated and oversaw the district

middle school retreat (60+ attendees), and helped to coordinate as well as hosted the recent OWL Facilitator Training (26 attendees) at the church, overseeing making meals and clean-up and all tech and A/V support for that event, as well as planning for an upcoming DRE Retreat focused on trauma-informed crisis response training for religious educators.

Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Katy Siepert

SpiritJam ~ Religious Education Coordinator Report

Moving into our third year with Spirit Jam, Katy entrusted me with taking the lead position. This enabled her to be free to put her focus on overseeing the children's RE on a more macro level, while participating more in service, small groups, and trainings. We started the year off bringing on two talented new Spirit Jam Teachers. Patrick brings fresh energy and an out-of-the-box teaching style that seamlessly fit into our structure. Izzy arrived with a reassuring confidence as well as varied musical talents. Her contributions have helped to define the culture and identity of Spirit Jam.

In addition to our weekly, ever changing jam offerings, Spirit Jam teachers have begun to draw out more anchor points- recurring themes carried out over several weeks, or throughout the year. Concepts like Mystery Pals and reliable yoga sessions create familiarity for the children in our program that helps to relieve anxiety for newcomers and strengthens the sense of community within the group. To balance these regularly scheduled jams, we have begun trying loftier new ideas and finding creative ways to make usual holiday celebrations new again.

Spirit Jam created two "escape room" style jams, leading participants through a series of riddles and clues tying back to past jams. These ended with discovery of the final key, leading to an ice cream party. Our annual Halloween festival featured a new "haunted hallway" that allowed the kids to trick-or-treat at each door, play new games, and learn from the high school group how to make slime. Easter was a hit, as we celebrated with a carnival, complete with face painting, magic, juggling, balloon animals, games, and an obstacle course, through which the kids led visiting donkeys. Preschool was invited along for the fun and they enjoyed getting to participate with Spirit Jam.

The largest shift for SJ this year has been moving out of our own space to share our model with older congregants. Whole Community Spirit Jam has recently been introduced and will be ongoing, occurring one Sunday each month. After the first Whole Community session, the feedback was incredible. The adults love this new, dynamic form of “doing church” and their freedom of choice. Some fan favorites have been learning to make seed bombs, moving meditation, all-comers drumming circle, and free form altar building.

Spirit Jam continues to grow, adapt, and solidify its role in UUCE. We see new families each week and our numbers are rising. Just last Sunday, there were a total of 41 attendees in SJ. As our church year winds down, Spirit Jam teachers are considering the idea of structuring a Summer Spirit Jam. Last year, our attendance held steady through the Summer months, as opposed to dropping off as we’d seen in previous years. We are excited to try new ideas, and continue to explore the possibilities while holding strong in what makes Spirit Jam great.

By Religious Education Coordinator, Ezra Black

Director of Music

Brad Schultz

In September the music department hosted a dedicatory recital for the Walcker pipe organ on loan to us from the University of Oregon. Dr. Barbara Baird, Susanne and I each performed a set on this program, and the Chamber Singers performed two pieces as well. Thanks to Marilyn Milne’s advertising expertise and this concert’s placement on the American Guild of Organists calendar, a good crowd of regular UUs and guests were in attendance. This being the Sunday afternoon closest to the Fall Equinox, we cast this as the first of a series of twice-annual concerts held on the Sunday closest to the first day of Fall and Spring.

The second Equinox Concert took place in March, featuring the Chamber Singers, the pipe organ, Judy and Susanne performing Brahms, and local soprano Alison Kaufman. The music committee prepared a reception for both of these events. Going forward, I think we have created a concert event that can be managed easily as a gift to the community.

The Sanctuary Choir and Chamber Singers continued to make great musical strides this year, each presenting in worship once or twice each month, and both contributing to a

Holiday program in December and Music Sunday in May, which centered around the theme “Laughing, Loving, Living.”

We welcomed UO music student Payton Lommers as our Choral Intern this year. In addition to lending his voice to both choirs, he regularly leads small-group sectionals, and conducts the choirs in worship on occasion. This is an integral part of the music program, not only in what we gain from these interns, but in what we can offer these young conductors and potential new leaders of the church. I reaped the benefits of a similar program in my undergrad years. Though our budget this year did not allow for the intern program to be expanded, I hope that this will continue to be a priority.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the music committee, and especially to our music librarian, Joyce Smith, who manages our assets with great care and professionalism. Susanne Giordano serves as our fine pianist, accompanist, organist, and chief organizer. She is always on the quest to learn new things, and her tireless work in preparing an environment of wonder and awe in worship is an integral part of the Sunday morning experience here.

As I transition to my new role at First Methodist in July, I know the music program at UUCE is in the best of hands. There is a search committee hard at work to ensure that a top-notch musician will be in place in the fall. The music committee will prepare for the fall as always, and the choirs are destined for great things. It has been an honor to be your music director these past two years, and I’m ever grateful for the many lessons I have learned from you.

See you at work in the world,

Brad

Music Committee

The Music Committee supports the Music Program by helping the Music Director coordinate and produce special music events; offering constructive feedback when asked; suggesting ways in which to build on the health and reach of the music program; undertaking special fundraising projects that benefit the musical life of the church; in conjunction with the Music Director, making recommendations to the Board regarding the music program budget; making available to the congregation a brochure providing information about the music program; assisting in the process of hiring music staff.

In FY 2018, the Music Committee supported the efforts of Music Director Brad Schultz to launch the Equinox Concerts. The Fall Equinox Concert introduced our recently acquired pipe organ to Eugene with performances by several local organists, including Brad and UUCE accompanist Susanne Giordano, the UUCE Chamber Choir, and a German-themed reception. The Spring Equinox Concert featured mid-19th century composers in a variety of settings and another successful reception.

Membership on the Music Committee is by invitation or by request on the part of interested congregants. Members are not elected, serve one-year renewable terms, and may leave whenever they wish.

Music Director Brad Schultz has been the committee's guiding force. Brad convenes meetings four times annually or as needed. In 2018-19 the "president" role was shared by Kris Olsen and Judy Shaw, who serve as resources to the Music Director. The "secretary" role is filled by Susanne Giordano, who takes notes at meetings and distributes them to other committee members.

We bid a sad but fond farewell to Brad for two wonderful years. More happily, we have already received applications from appealing candidates for what will now be the Choir Director's job.

The Music Committee adopts the churchwide covenant.

Greeters

Greeters work to establish a strong sense of community within our church, on Sundays and beyond. Greeting is the role of face-to-face and verbal welcoming of each person who walks through the doors, be they first time visitors or longtime members and friends; this includes time before the service and after. Ushering focuses on pre- and post-service setup and cleanup, distribution of hymnals and service materials, gathering of braille hymnals, seating assistance, and the weekly offertory.

Meetings are held approximately quarterly to welcome new volunteers, discuss training and offer direction, and make schedules for Sunday worship services. Any adult is welcome to join in at any time; the primary qualifications are: (1) compassion for all parts of our church community, (2) a willingness to extend into that community, sometimes beyond one's comfort zone, and (3) committing to a slightly earlier Sunday morning.

The focus and efforts of the group are guided by the minister, but often come from meeting the diverse needs of our whole church community. Regular long-time volunteers include John Roy Wilson, Eric Swegles, Marilyn Milne, Scott and Crystal Clack, Phyllis

O'Neill, and Emmet Band, along with a host of others. Many who have volunteered as ushers and greeters tend to stay involved as long as they are physically able.

Submitted by Christina Wagner

Pledge Secretary UUCE

I created the position of Pledge Secretary after I stepped down as Treasurer two years ago. I had seen that staff was doing some of the work I now do, the treasurer was doing some other parts, and no one was doing some of it. Years ago we had had a pledge secretary but the position had not been filled recently.

What do I do?

- I work with our office staff and minister to keep the pledging process and information clear and accurate.
- I ask pledgees questions when the office is not clear of their intention.
- I handle all of our stock donations
- I work on most of our pledge drives to provide information to the group and to collect all pledge commitments.
- I send out statements to donors about four times a year to keep them informed and to meet the church's tax information obligations.

How did we do?

We started Fiscal Year 2018-19 with commitments for about \$395,000 and that included a deficit budget with a hole of \$42,000. By December the deficit appeared to be about \$37,000 because of new members' commitments. To close that gap someone put up a matching grant with a sliding scale match encouraging everyone to pledge additionally. With that matching grant we received pledges and grant totaling about \$61,000. Our budget for the current year looks good and we expect to have no deficit.

Our Annual Budget Drive for Fiscal Year 2019-20 began in February and appeared to be significantly short of our needs, without deep cuts in our proposed budget for next year. Then we asked for additional pledges with another matching program (1 to 1 match this time) to close the \$60,000 gap. And we closed that gap. It appears that our next year budget has pledges behind it to meet our needs. Do not forget to meet your commitment there if possible. Also remember that the church does not want anyone to overextend themselves, if you have financial difficulties please tell the pledge secretary so we can adjust our expectations.

What could we do better?

It would be very nice if congregants could respond to pledge requests in a timely manner. We started in February and ended in May. That was a great deal of volunteer and staff time which could be used for our real intended work, not long pledge drives. Any suggestions for how to speed up pledge drives would be appreciated.

Statements are sent out via email whenever possible. Typically, we will send out 150 email statements and about 35 postal statements, if donors could possibly provide the church with a good email address that they are willing to use, please do. The postal statements now take much more time to send out than the email ones.

David DeCou, UUCE Pledge Secretary.

Capital Campaign

The capital campaign begun in 2016-17 initially received \$561,285 in pledges from 98 pledgers. Adjustments due to changes in donor intent put current pledges at \$550,798.88. A total of 68 donors have completed their pledges, including 23 who paid more than they pledged, some quite significantly. The result is additional payments of \$101,362.22, including the match amount announced last year. Total payments received as of April 30, 2019 are \$624,791.26. The amount of outstanding pledges is \$27,369.84.

The goal of the campaign is to pay down the mortgage so that future annual mortgage payments can be better managed within our annual budget and allow us to better fund our mission, vision and programs. We began the campaign with a mortgage of \$1.34 million. Following paydowns including \$400,000 from the capital campaign, the mortgage is now \$833,188.50, and our annual payment has dropped from over \$100,000 to \$69,888.00. Thanks to the additional gifts, the capital account holds \$225,858.94 that is ready to be paid towards a further reduction in our mortgage principal.

The capital campaign follow-up team (Kay Crider, Dave DeCou, Judy Shaw and John Wagner, not including the many people who helped with the launch and two-month active pledging phase in 2016) have been checking in quarterly to monitor whether people are on track with their payments, and then contacting pledgers at strategic points if they are not. We also reached out to members and friends to clarify pledge amounts and intentions when needed, as a number of changes have been made. Significant time and attention were put towards preparing and sending timely and accurate statements to capital campaign donors showing the amounts of their pledges, the amounts paid to date, and the amounts outstanding. Our goal is for those pledging to the capital campaign to

receive these statements twice during the year – at the end of the church’s fiscal year and the end of the tax year.

As we conclude the third year of the capital campaign, we will continue to monitor incoming pledges and gifts and reach out to those who have pledge amounts remaining.

The capital campaign has been a resounding success! People dug a little deeper to make special gifts that share some of their accumulated assets with our beloved church. We offer profound thanks to all who have contributed such generous gifts of time and treasure to stabilize and strengthen the church’s finances.

Submitted by Judy Shaw & Kay Crider

Generosity Network

The Harvest Auction, our first online auction, offered 26 diverse gatherings (and more than 200 opportunities) to bid on something festive to carry into the new year. In fact, we are still partying our way through that fun, with three more events still to take place.

For our first ever holiday bazaar in this building, the Harvest Holiday Bazaar was made up of something *for* everyone, and *from* everyone. We opened our doors on December 1 for people to enjoy:

- 16 vendors, of whom 9 were church members
- A photo studio
- A craft room with wreathmaking, candlemaking, birdfeeders, cards, and bookmarks for all ages
- An art wall, featuring many UU artists
- A regifting store, with a special Kids Hour on Friday evening
- A “Handmade” crafts table, featuring dozens of UU crafters
- A “Homegrown” table, featuring dozens of UU bakers, as well as their preserved foods, granola, candied nuts and other goodies
- Eight musical acts, all UU’s
- A lovely light lunch of soup, bread, and hot drinks

In addition to all of this UU energy, dozens of UU’s were needed to collect items from dozens of other UU’s, to set up tables, prepare craft materials and create enticing displays, to serve as cashiers, cooks and friendly greeters, to create vivid publicity, and to clean up when it was all over. Believe it or not, the lights were out by 5:30 pm. It’s hard to fathom just how much human energy went into producing this very fun and festive event.

Almost incidental is the fact that we raised \$5,060 at the auction, and (I'm hoping you know this) from the bazaar. The next Holiday Bazaar is already in the planning stages!

We also hosted our annual book sale to great success.

New fundraisers this year included selling Mother's Day flower baskets! In our inaugural year, we sold 25 baskets!

We are also hosting our very first Prom! The prom was free to attend and has a number of fun activities for people to participate in, including a raffle, dancing, dinner, and a silent auction. At the time of this report, we had not yet completed the prom or obtained numbers for the annual report, but we predict a great success!

The generosity network also supported the annual campaign, which kicked off with a potluck for everyone! We had an amazing time with 29 hosts creating a variety of themed tables to host 162 people who learned about our goals and aspirations for the new budget.

We are proudest of the fact that our fundraising this year focused on building community and connecting with one and other.

Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund was established in the 1980s to assure the long-range financial future of UUCE. During the church year of 2018-2019, the Endowment Committee consisted of four Trustees, all appointed by the Board. The terms of service are meant to be staggered, for purposes of continuity. At present, the four Trustees are Marta Powers, Olga Turner, Phyllis O'Neill, and Susan Verner.

The UUCE Endowment currently has two accounts, one held at UUCEF Pooled Endowment and a local account at Schwab in which donations are accumulated. The current balances are:

- UUCEF Pooled Fund \$30,304.87
- Schwab \$976.78

The Campbell Endowment was also established years ago to support UUCE. The balance in the Campbell Endowment is \$2,947.12.

The Trustees crafted and submitted to the Board a revised Endowment Fund Policy stipulating its objectives and processes. We expect the Board will review and vote on this policy by the end of this church year.

In addition to monitoring the Endowment Fund, the Endowment Trustees were asked by the Board to follow up on a potential real estate donation, as there is currently no

Planned Giving Committee. That task was completed, and recommendations were sent to the Board. At present, we are consulting with John Hilke, an advisor from Woodinville, WA regarding training for the Board and Endowment Committee on endowments and planned giving. Our goal is to reestablish a Planned Giving Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Verner on behalf of the Endowment Trustees

Financial Oversight & Review (FORC)

Appointed by the Board of Trustees, the FORC meets on the third Monday of each month. Responsibilities include review of the most recent Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, noting substantial variances between actual and budget, discuss reasons for any variances. FORC is also responsible for review of financial policies, and designated donations, and making recommendations to the BOT on financial matters.

We have worked closely with the treasurer to ensure proper coding and projections on income and expenses to ensure accurate information to the board. We have been able to identify areas where labor costs were booked incorrectly and have worked with the treasurer to clarify employee status vs independent contractor. The transfer of reserves to an interest-bearing Money Market fund, which was started in 2017, was completed during this fiscal year. This account provides a clearer picture of budgeted income, as well as a tool to better monitor and manage expenditures.

Year-end close for last fiscal year went much smoother than the previous year, due in part to the experience gained by the bookkeeper this year, and the closing procedures established. We look forward to an even earlier close for this fiscal year, which allows the board to have a more up-to-date look at our financial progress earlier in the year.

We have added two new members to the committee this fiscal year, although one of these members has been unable to attend regularly, due to family health issues. We hope the growth within committee membership will allow more senior members to step down, as new members gain knowledge of our financials and responsibilities of oversight.

Members: Katy Colburn, Treasurer, Phyllis O'Neill, Dave DeCou, David Dessert and Sarah Kordon.

Submitted by Phyllis O'Neill

Office

It's been a busy year in the office, with a lot of change. The Business Administrator position was eliminated at the start of the fiscal year, changing the workflow for the entire office. Office Administrator Jody Monegan took on more hours, taking over many of the tasks previously handled by the Business Administrator, including the website, IT services, weekly e-bulletin, and more. Many challenges in our systems finally came to light and some major resolutions were made. All of our systems have been under review and some of this year's updates include:

- **Calendar.** Our calendar has been working against us for years, making it difficult to schedule and easy to make mistakes. Office Administrator Jody Monegan implemented a new calendar system, CalendarWiz, allowing for more control, more options for displaying/publicizing events, more features for scheduling among staff, more accuracy, increasing ease of use, and ultimately efficiency. The new calendar allows the office staff to do more work with greater accuracy, and in less time, as well as gives the public a better view of what we have to offer.
- **Manuals and Procedures.** We've created a Book of Knowledge, putting together the necessary resources to manage the office and church. We've continued working on detailed procedure manuals for the Office and Bookkeeping positions to help ease future transitions and aide in training. This also offers other staff or volunteers some direction should any of our office staff be out unexpectedly.
- **OOS & Sunday Handout.** Working with Rev. Lois and the Publications team, the OOS and Sunday Handout format and usage were evaluated. A decision was made to reformat, printing a separate OOS and focus more on digital forms of communications for announcements. This has allowed more focus on worship during Church service and a major reduction in paper usage and other resources. These small changes have *lessened our environmental impact by over 10,000 sheets of paper per year!* This has also lowered our printer costs by almost \$1000/year and reduced use of other valuable time and resources.
- **Newsletter.** With Program staff and Publications team, the weekly *CONNECTIONS* Newsletter was created to offer a more interactive and effective means of communication.
- **Website.** There were concerns about how difficult it was for potential visitors to find important information on our website, such as upcoming activities, fundraisers, and social groups. The website was SO big and so detailed, it was a fulltime job to maintain. Much work has gone into analyzing use and revamping the site to make it more interesting, easier to navigate for new visitors looking to participate, more user friendly, and faster and easier to maintain. We haven't made it through the entire site yet, but our work on this will continue and once complete, we should have something that gets more activity and we are able to keep up to date.

- **Email List.** The church email list was analyzed for productivity, and we found that we were paying to serve hundreds of people who were not clicking on our newsletter to view it and weren't interested in receiving the emails. The email list was cleaned up, and only those who wish to receive our emails were kept on the list. After the email list purge, we had approximately 480 subscribers. Our current total of subscribers is 585.
- **Network Performance and Security.** It came to light that our network was not secure, and our systems were failing. A network assessment was done, pointing out any weak areas or areas of immediate concern. A new Firewall and Flowswitch were purchased and installed, improving our network's performance and the security of our information.
- **Wireless Connectivity and Data Security.** There were issues with network connectivity for many staff in certain areas of the building, so new wireless access points were installed creating reliable, secure wireless connectivity for all. A private, password protected staff network was implemented to provide security to our data.
- **Video Surveillance.** Jody Monegan worked with the Buildings and Grounds team to purchase and install a video surveillance doorbell system, *Ring*. It allows staff to see who is at the door from all over the building. This adds an extra measure of security for staff in the building alone. The doorbell itself is also now audible in more areas of the building and provides surveillance of the parking lot and door area at all hours of the night.
- **Phones.** Our phone system and equipment was dated and on its last leg, literally. The system was barely functional and not serviced, causing the phone lines to give out often and costing us support each time we needed assistance. After weighing many options, Bookkeeper and Office Administrator, Jen Dondero found a solution with Nextiva for a VoIP phone system, serviced, with all new, constantly updated technology, for less than our previous provider. This new system will also allow us more access and mobility with our phones, and allow us to consolidate vendors, cancelling our two additional lines with Comcast.
- **Printer.** For next year, we've started the process towards updating our printer and entering a printer contract with a local printer servicing company that would further reduce our printing costs and increase the print speed and quality. We will also implement printer usage codes, to help control printing costs and analyze usage.
- **Rental income is up 13.8% from last year.** We've maintained better means of tracking renters' payments and collecting payment to ensure all rent due is collected. We've continued to fine-tune the contracts and processes to best suit the needs of the church and help us work as effectively as possible. Our previous Childcare renter, Sprouts, moved out and Jody Monegan secured a contract with the Big Little School that will begin in June and raise rental revenue an additional 48%. They've been a valuable, non-profit early learning center in Eugene for over 30 years and we look forward to having them grace our halls.

- **Amazon Smile.** We got the UUCE officially listed in GuideStar as a non-profit and joined Amazon Smile, allowing the public to make purchases through Smile.Amazon.com, which provides nearly the same shopping experience as Amazon, but a part of the proceeds is donated to the church.
- **Payment Processing and Ways to Give.** The Bookkeeper and Office Administrator evaluated the many payment processing companies we were using and decided to eliminate multiple vendors and rely further on our oldest-standing, most trusted vendor, grandfathered in at the lowest processing rate. This eliminated higher processing fees, additional monthly fees, and streamlined the reporting and entry processes, allowing us to access the information and download directly into our database. We also set up additional methods of giving, with **Text-Giving**, and the **Mobile Giving App**, available through the same vendor, for no additional fees, offering more, faster, easier ways to give.
- **Bookkeeping Processes.** We've worked with Treasurer Katy Colburn to clean up any previous issues with the books and worked to create procedures for bookkeeping processes to ensure consistency and ease processes from year-to-year.

The office is constantly evaluating all processes and systems used and are continuing to make improvements to maximize efficiency and effectiveness. We've come a long way this year and look forward to continued improvements next year. We've very much appreciated the impact of Rev. Lois and the program staff this year, as well as the volunteers that worked with us to make the UUCE the special place that it is.

Office Administrator and Rental Manager, Jody Monegan
Office Administrator and Bookkeeper, Jen Dondero

Communications Task Force

The Communications Task Force (CTF) was established in January 2013, and has met intermittently since then, chaired by church member Dick Loescher. The charter (charge, mission statement, or goal) of the CTF is to develop and implement policies and procedures related to communications (electronic, paper, and verbal) within UUCE, and from UUCE to the wider community, in order to support implementing the UUCE Mission Statement. The CTF members are church volunteers who participate according to their interests for as long as they are willing. Existing CTF members recruit others to help as the need arises. In church year 2018-2019, the CTF met intermittently with

participation by church volunteers, Office Administrator Jody Monegan, Minister Rev. Lois Van Leer, and Intern Minister Sarah Skochko.

Church volunteers who participated in the CTF in 2018-2019 include: representatives of the Sunday Handout and Weekly Connections editorial team (currently Dick Loescher as lead editor, with Janet Barnes, Julia McAloon, Frankie Hill, and Sharon Roberts as proofreaders), listserv moderators Nikki Frank and Martha Osgood, monthly Connections newsletter graphics and layout person Nisco Junkins and content editor Maryka Bhattacharyya, website support and social media helpers (Megan Dorrah, Poppy Lochridge, Liam McAloon, and Maria Smithson), and interested person Jean Marie Stine.

Church volunteer members of the CTF collaborate with church office staff (Office Administrators Jody Monegan and Jen Dondero) and professional staff regarding the Sunday Handout, Weekly Connections, and the Weekly Meeting and Event Calendar (which lists all church and rental events). Church volunteer editors submit the Weekly Meeting and Event Calendar to office staff on Thursday for printing and posting.

The church website has been managed by Office Administrator Jody Monegan since July 2018. Prior to that time, the website was managed by Business Manager Wayne Parker, who left UUCE at the end of June 2018. In January 2019, the church web calendar was changed from a Google calendar to CalendarWiz. Currently, the church web calendar is managed by the Office Staff. There have been intermittent challenges with the website and with the church technology infrastructure that are being addressed.

Internet Technology Task Force (ITTF). This group of church volunteers was established to work collaboratively with Office Administrator Jody Monegan on website and other technology matters. Volunteers include Poppy Lochridge, John Wagner, John Needham, Andrew Emmott, and Megan Dorrah.

UUCE has Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube postings. Intern Minister Sarah Skochko and Office Administrator Jody Monegan have been managing those postings, with occasional input from others.

UUCE CONNECTIONS Monthly Newsletter. This document, which had been produced for many years, had its last edition in November 2018. From July through November 2018, graphics and layout were done by UUCE volunteer Nisco Junkins, and content editing was done by a volunteer (Maryka Bhattacharyya) from outside UUCE. The monthly newsletter was discontinued by a decision of the church professional staff.

Weekly eBulletin. This document, which had been produced for many years by church volunteers and in recent years in collaboration with church staff, was usually sent by email on Friday and posted on the website. In recent years, the format has been that of MailChimp. The final edition of this document was on December 7, 2018. This document was discontinued by decision of church professional staff.

Weekly Connections. This document was initiated on December 5, 2018 and is produced by the church office staff with input from the church volunteer editorial team and from church professional staff. This document is designed to take the place of the previous monthly *Connections* newsletter and the previous Weekly eBulletin. The intent is to send the document by email and post it on the website each week on Wednesday, with articles of interest and the church calendar. The volunteer editorial team sends their suggestions to the office staff each Wednesday morning. Currently, the format used for *Weekly Connections* is MailChimp.

Sunday Handout and Order of Service. Up through Sunday, September 9, 2018, the Sunday Handout that was given to each attendee of the service included a face sheet, the Order of Service, the Weekly Church Calendar, and announcements. Starting on Sunday, September 16, 2018, the Order of Service became a separate document given to each attendee of the Sunday service, and the Sunday Handout with the weekly church calendar and announcements became available as a separate document on a table in the Social Hall for people to pick up if they were interested. Rev. Lois Van Leer said she made the decision to have separate documents in order to have people be able to concentrate more fully on the experience of the Sunday service. Currently, church volunteer editors submit their draft of the Sunday Handout with the weekly church calendar and announcements to church office staff on Thursday for them to do the final production and printing and posting on bulletin boards and the website. The Order of Service is produced by the office staff from input from church professional staff and is not reviewed by the volunteer editorial team.

Other matters considered by the CTF in conjunction with church staff included management of the Information and Fundraising tables, use of the bulletin boards, processes for notification of people about church emergencies, use of Slack (an internal communication tool), processes for editing the UUCE website, and other matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Loescher, Chair, Communications Task Force

IT Task Force

This first, inaugural year for the IT Task Force has created some groundwork for future changes. At the beginning of this year, we were in transition between our Summer Minister Reverend Kimberly Wootan and our Developmental Minister, Rev Lois Van Leer.

Prior to this transition, we had identified with Rev. Kimberly some priorities - complete the transfer of UUCE's web hosting into an account owned and controlled by the church; expand the wireless network to adequately serve all uses of our building; resolve some long-standing email concerns; and identify areas that need future attention.

At the end of this year, large steps have been taken on most of these projects. Our wonderful office manager, Jody Monegan, has led the way on the wireless network expansion, building on our relationship with our external IT support vendor to make sure wireless reaches all of the places it needs to reach. Our task force completed the move of the website into an account paid for and owned by the church mid-year, granting our website security and longevity. And the proposed 2019-2020 budget includes computer upgrades and advance planning to keep the church office running smoothly.

ITTF: John Wagner, Jody Monegan, Andrew Emmott, James Needham, Megan Dorrah, Poppy Lochridge

Building and Grounds Committee

On Tuesday mornings, volunteers tackle maintenance and improvement projects for our building and our landscaping. B&G works on small, on-going projects, such as touch-up painting or replacing light fixtures, as well as large projects, such as refinishing a historic stained-glass window (thank you, John White!) or working with safety and inspection officials.

Our grounds look better and better, with lots of weeding, clipping, mowing and trimming directed by Saro Hendrickson. He coordinates swale maintenance, as required by the city. Recently, traffic signs were added to discourage use of our lot as a shortcut between streets. We marked designated handicapped parking spots with the universally recognized symbol.

Inside the building, we installed a new doorbell with a camera for easier management of visitors. We added angled panels of tongue-and-groove hemlock to the sides of the wood sanctuary wall, which has improved the choir's acoustics. With the guidance of artist Martha Snyder, we installed her carved wood chalice on the sanctuary wall. We prepped Rev. Lo's office before she moved in, assisted in readying the library, repaired the gas stove, added sharps containers in the bathrooms, added T-coil loop signage, added a wood blind to screen the kitchen from visitors, added curtains to cover the table storage area in the

social hall, and cleaned the dust off the air vents in the social hall and sanctuary.

We use our budget to pay for required city inspections, on-going maintenance and one-time expenditures. Our mission is guiding and performing continuing maintenance, upgrades and improvements to the UUCE building and grounds. We accomplish this through the efforts of many volunteers, including Eric Swegles (chair), Saro Hendrickson, Sigrid Jones, Nick Jones, Bill, Vicki, Rick, Ruth Anne Fraley, John White, Dave Fountain, Marilyn Milne, Emmet Band and Gretchen Miller.

Safety Committee

Previously known as Emergency Planning Taskforce

History

The Emergency Planning Taskforce had been a standing committee with the Board of Trustees up to and after the remodel of our new church home, to develop the fire exit maps and emergency procedures manual. The manual is in need of updating. In 2016 the Board, through Rev. Sydney, requested this committee add general church safety to its agenda, and get some volunteers to provide security, especially in light of the fact our new neighborhood provides a lot of drifters and campers. As part of our re-organizing efforts, the committee members decided to re-name the committee to more accurately reflect our newly added task of trying to provide a bit of security at our services and events, and to follow the common verbiage of emergency planning as used by first responders. The common language for first responders is ERT for Emergency Response Team, and EOP for Emergency Operating Procedures for the church's manual. In 2018 a separate group was started and centered around disaster preparedness of the individual.

In 2018-2019

Related to Church Safety: Early in this fiscal year, Bob Fraley and William “Bill” Wiley arranged for a couple of demonstrations of disaster preparedness supplies, and once the City of Eugene disaster team gave a talk. Bill Wiley was instrumental in passing along many informative emails about disaster preparation and likely earthquake events in the Pacific Northwest. Susanne Giordano has kept all of the email documents for future distribution or training as volunteer help and the desires of the church make this more possible. It is mentioned here as an offshoot of the safety of the church.

Safety Accomplishments: Building and Grounds did all the work to install sharps containers in all bathrooms. This will provide diabetics and others needing to inject medicine a place to safely dispose of their needle, protect our custodians from getting accidentally poked when emptying the bathroom garbage and give a place to put them for

anyone finding needles in the parking lot. Susanne Giordano passed along information about needle-handling safety, acquired from HIV Alliance. This information was passed to all custodians, office staff, minister and directors, and worship team (Robin Schantz-Mulford). She still has the information for anyone who requests it.

Emmett Band looked into the possibility of Ring for the north entry door. A doorbell/camera system has now been installed by Building and Grounds which will allow the office staff to preview people standing at the door wanting in.

The fire alarm system was tested this past week, plus the intercom system for it.

No other major initiatives have happened this year.

Currently, the Safety group is now one person only, Susanne Giordano, who is not sure if this is still a Board standing committee.

author: Susanne Giordano

Morning Doves - Birders

We are the Morning Doves. We define ourselves as a breakfast group with a birding problem. Every Tuesday morning at 8am, we gather at a pre-arranged location in the Eugene/Springfield area. We are composed of advanced and novice birders. All of our regular members are happy to share their knowledge with any newcomers. We follow up our birding adventure with breakfast at a restaurant near the birding site. Weather plays a significant role in the length of time that we spend in the field.



Anyone can join our group by emailing: birders@uueugene.org, or by contacting Mike Berg: ph. 541-357-3145. Mike sends out a weekly email and forwards any other correspondence between members. All decisions about birding locations are made by group consensus.

At breakfast, we take up a non-obligatory collection of \$2.00 per person. In the past year we have raised about \$500.00 for the UUCE general fund

We strive to meet with the general mission statement and covenants of the UUCE, but I would add this: We honor nature, we respect each other's abilities and we refuse to take ourselves too seriously.

To answer other questions requested for the annual report. We use no resources from the UUCE, other than the UUCE listserv to distribute our weekly email. Our budget is zero.

Thank You Mike Berg

UUCE Poetry Groups

Groups' Purpose: Spiritual exploration and growth through the creative act of writing poems; sharing, discussing and critiquing each others' poetry in a safe community environment.

We currently have four active poetry groups (about 25 people total) which meet monthly to share, discuss and critique each other's poetry. Three of the groups are currently closed due to size until openings occur; one is an open drop-in group. The 4th group is currently in transition due to the illness of its facilitator. This group may go on hiatus for the summer while we make organizational changes to keep it going, to resume in September 2019.

We publish a poetry journal named *Changes* to which any member or friend of UUCE is invited to submit their original unpublished poems for possible inclusion. (It is not necessary to be in one of the poetry groups to submit.) We published an issue in late July, 2018. Sales generated \$405, so after printing costs of \$318, we were able to give \$87 to the church. We are just beginning to collect poems for the next issue, which we hope to have available for sale in the fall, 2019. All proceeds after costs go to UUCE general fund. As a fund raiser, it is minimal, and increasingly so, because of escalating printing expenses. But we feel it is an activity that brings the UU poets together with the larger church community.

We created a basket from the poetry groups to be auctioned off at the May 2019 church fund raiser. It was full of poetry books and journals, a blank journal, pens, a candle, teas, a teapot, a tea ball, and two teacups and saucers.

Empowered by love, we transform ourselves . . . through creating and sharing our poems. We offer topics to inspire. We offer critique in a caring, positive environment, meant to help us each grow in the depth of our thinking as well as the skillfulness of our writing.

We work to empower individuals, and to make the group a safe place for each person to open their heart.

Because the groups need to be a small size to function so that each person has time to share and receive critiques of their work, the three currently closed groups have been open and closed at various times. We add new members as spaces in current groups became available. As contact person for these three groups, Bonnie Phipps maintains a waiting list of those who requested to join.

We also offer an open group that invites anyone interested in sharing and workshopping their original poetry to drop in; it meets on Saturday and is facilitated by Bob Coleman. It is regularly announced in the Sunday bulletin and the church Newsletter. This group is currently in flux while we seek someone who will take on the leadership.

People leave when they wish – we have in fact had recent departures for health reasons and death. We have invited the next person on the waiting list to fill the available position. If none on the list choose to join, then we'll put a notice in the Newsletter to see if there is interest.

Resources UUCE provides:

- **Budget:** In recent past years we have requested a nominal amount of \$100 - \$200, for help with the printing of our Journal which now runs about \$320. But we've then been cut from the budget. We have accepted that, and no longer request funding. We have one person in our group who can front the cost of the journal, and then we reimburse her from proceeds. After cost, profits go to the church's General Fund.
- **Room Reservations:** Three of the four poetry groups meet at the church for 2 hours once a month.
- Occasionally in the past we have used the church copier for printing inside pages of the Poetry Journal we publish. We are charged for this and pay the church from sale proceeds for the use of the copier and the paper. The Journal publishes poetry by members and friends of UUCE, sells for \$5 each, and all proceeds after printing costs (including the covers and binding done at an outside print shop) go to the church's General Fund.
- **Leadership structure:** Bonnie Phipps serves as the contact person for the groups and serves as facilitator for three of the current groups. This is a de-facto position: no one else wanted the job in any of the groups. Bob Coleman has facilitated the open drop-in group, but due to health issues he is unable to do this at present. We are looking for someone to fill this position, which includes regularly submitting announcements in the order of service and sending email reminders. There are times when others serve as meeting facilitator when asked but no one else has been willing to take on the contact role which involves sending out the suggested assignments, making sure everyone knows when and where to meet, sending reminders to members, maintaining the listservs, keeping member contacts current, maintaining the waiting list for new members, organizing special

events such as presentations and potlucks for the separate groups to come together, organizing the groups' participation in church events. Decisions as to membership, topics of discussion, and group projects are made by each group as a whole together. The facilitator gets input from the group about future topics, and then the group chooses, usually by consensus. Before new members are invited, the group together discusses its functionality relative to size. Each time we have had an opening, we have chosen to add a new person. Each time we have added a new person, the group has been enriched.

- **Covenant:** We don't have a formal covenant but follow a code of relating to each other as proscribed by UUCE's Covenant of Right Relations. We'd be fine with using that.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Phipps

Small Group Ministry Program

The charter (charge, mission statement, or goal) of the Small Group Ministry (SGM) program is to build community by facilitating connections and understanding among people, to promote personal and spiritual growth, and to provide service to the church or the larger community. These goals are closely aligned with the UUCE Mission Statement. The UUCE Small Group Ministry Covenant of Right Relationship, which describes group agreements and guidelines to meet our needs and support our values, is shown after the end of this report, and is viewable on the UUCE website on the Small Group Ministry web page.

The SGM program has been occurring annually at UUCE since 2003, with approximately 50 to 90 people participating each year in small groups with a trained facilitator. Each year, the groups disband at the end of the church year, and new groups are formed the following year. The program is open to friends and members of UUCE. Each year some people are participating for the first time, and others have participated one or more times previously. Most indicate that their experiences are very rewarding, and they would recommend the program to others. Participants are requested to make a one-time voluntary registration donation to help support the expenses of the program (which include a donation to the Unitarian Universalist SGM Network, expenses related to the SGM facilitator training and materials, and childcare) and the church budget.

The program is planned and implemented by the SGM Steering Committee (whose members are church volunteers), in conjunction with the minister. They select and train the facilitators. Facilitators and steering committee members serve as long as they are interested and willing. At the SGM Facilitator Training in December 2018, participants included the SGM facilitators and steering committee and five people from the Challenging Racism program (Dan Goodlett, Ruth Kenney, Frankie Hill, Jean Marie Stine, and Steve Kuzma).

The regular SGM program series consisted of ten 2-hour sessions from January through May 2019. This church year, 89 people registered. Approximately 74 people, including the facilitators, actually participated in the 10 groups. Approximately one-half of the participants were relatively new friends or members of UUCE, and 58% were participating in the SGM program for the first time. 79% were self-identified as women and 21% were self-identified as men. The overall theme was “Currents of Life,” with the topics of the individual sessions inspired by the monthly church worship themes. The titles of the sessions were: 1. Getting Acquainted, Review of the SGM Program and Covenant, 2. Family, 3. Journey, 4. Curiosity, 5. Tribes, 6. Sanctuary, 7. Trust, 8. Wholeness, 9. Possibility, and 10. Farewell.

The SGM facilitators this year were Nikki Frank, Ed Glennon, Janelle Heidenreich, Dick Loescher, Yvonne Lyles, Gretchen Miller, Susan Oldland, Kris Olsen, Therese Pekala, and Jolene Siemsen. The SGM steering committee members were Dick Loescher (chair), Bonnie Koenig, and Connie Newman.

Each group did a service project, which this year included: helping prepare and deliver sandwiches for the UUCE Earth EqUUity Food Project Community Court Justice Program, helping with Community Supported Shelters fundraising dinner, volunteering at Food for Lane County, helping with the Wildflower Festival at Mt. Pisgah, staining the fence around the UUCE playground, bringing snacks to church for after the Sunday service, playing music for a church service, and painting the UUCE utility room.

We anticipate that the SGM program will continue in a similar manner in church year 2019-2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Loescher, Small Group Ministry Steering Committee chair

Small Group Ministry Covenant of Right Relationship

Group Agreements and Guidelines to Meet Our Needs and Support Our Values

Within the group

Respect, Consideration, and Support

- Begin and end on time.
- Have a strong commitment to attend every session.
- Let the facilitator know when you will not attend.
- Practice respectful listening and sharing of “air time” by listening to each person’s check in and sharing of the topic without interruption or cross talk.
- The facilitator and group members will call the group back to the covenant when needed.
- Respect the right to pass. A person may choose to talk later, or to sit/share in silence.

Empathy and Understanding

- Speak from personal experience and use “I statements.”
- Refrain from giving advice or trying to fix problems, either yours or someone else’s.

Trust and Safety

- Confidentiality: keep what is shared in the group within the group. The facilitator is considered to be a “mandatory reporter” to appropriate authorities for suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable people, or other risks for people’s safety.
- Follow the meeting format. It provides a safe and predictable environment.

Learning and Contribution

- Remember we are all learners and teachers.

From the group to the church

Respect, Consideration, and Support

- Affirm and promote the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the UUCE mission statement.
- Do a service project for the church or the larger community.

From the church to the group

Nurturance and Support

- Provide the organizational and logistical support to maintain the Small Group Ministry program.

[Revised November 20, 2017, by the Small Group Ministry Steering Committee: Dick Loescher (chair), Bonnie Koenig, Connie Newman.]

Sister Circles

As of May, 2019, there are two vibrant, on-going, and open sister circles. Anyone can drop in without prior notice at these meetings, which are well publicized. They are serving well for both longtime UUCE members and newcomers. Smaller groups can form from these groups, which has proven to be of great value.

Beginning this month, I will try a new way to form new groups. I will put an ongoing notice with my phone number in our church publications and ask any self-identified woman church attendee who wants to form/join a new circle to call me. This will mean a continuous “sign-up” period and a better way to go forward all year, hopefully.

It is still true that any member can start a group at any time. That’s easier to do these days with our modern communication devices!

I think our sister circles are an important part of the life of our UUCE family. Those who take part find them meaningful and a special part of their lives.

Katie Clay, Sister Circle Coordinator

Senior Lunch Bunch

Senior Lunch Bunch enjoy a special gathering each month at favorite local restaurants. Contact Ruth Duemler at 541-484-6145 if you can attend this senior event!

Submitted by Ruth Duemler

The Covenantal Conversations Committee

The Covenantal Conversations Committee (CCC) serves the Mission of UUCE by working to Empower congregants to Notice, Engage, and Transform (NET) any non-covenantal

interactions into covenantal ones through trainings, active intervention, and supportive policy recommendations so that we can Transform Ourselves and Serve our World. New committee members are invited by current committee members based on external recommendation, interest, skills, discernment about what covenant means to them, and commitment to at least one year of active participation; Facilitators are recruited to present trainings and may or may not be committee members. Committee members leave the group by not renewing their yearly commitment. Decisions are made by based on consensus of committee members, including our yearly rotating leadership. In addition to adhering to the Covenant of Right Relations, we further covenant to support other congregants (including especially CCC Members, Facilitators, UUCE Lay Leaders, Board Members), Staff and our Minister in Noticing structural and systemic behaviors that are on the edge of covenant or out of covenant in order to Engage directly with all parties concerned, ever mindful of the undertow of microaggressions, triangulation, and dual relationships in order to Transform the culture of UUCE into one that sustains and restores covenantal behavior in all forms.

In this past year we concluded a series of successful workshops entitled “Getting Past Ouch” that was attended by about 25% of the congregation. We are in the process now of reworking the materials so they may be presented in 4, 1-hour segments after services on Sundays next Fall in order to make them accessible to everyone. We will be looking for potential co-facilitators in the next few months and hope those we ask will answer our call to help. We look forward to the opportunity to fully extend our ministry and the ongoing practice of covenant conversations into our community and the interwoven fabric of the world around us.

Community Offering Committee

The Community Offering Committee organizes donations to nonprofits that embody our congregation’s principles and allow us to practice generosity. This year, we celebrated that we have given more than \$200,000 since the program began in mid-2006!

The committee has found that the congregation always gives more to these special offerings than on the other Sundays of the month. Thanks to your support, our donations from May 2018 through April 2019 totaled more than \$15,312, or an average of \$1,276.

We try to match our giving to the monthly worship themes. Recent recipients of our generosity have included Trans*Ponder, Young Center for Immigrant Children’s Rights, Back to Back Program (Community Alliance of Lane County), Square One Villages, First

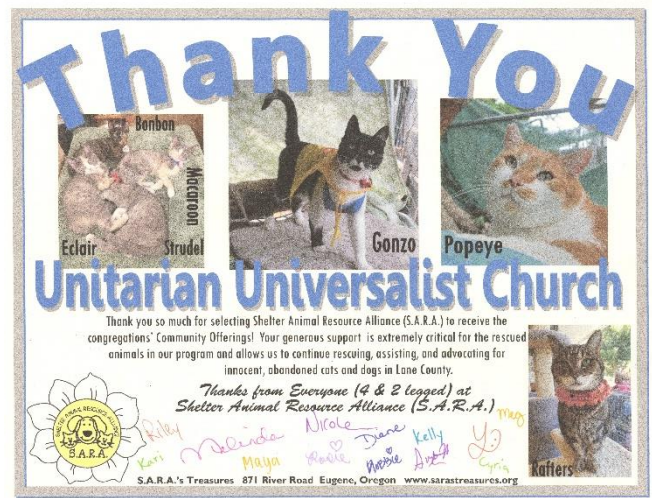
Place Night Shelter Program (St Vincent de Paul), Produce Plus, League of Women Voters of Lane County, School Supply Programs (St Vincent de Paul), Shelter Animal Resource Alliance, Imagination Library (Eugene Library Foundation), Dad's Program (Willamette Family) and Cascadia Wildlands.

Because of our donations, these nonprofits can do more good work. For example, the First Place Night Shelter Program at St Vincent de Paul serves 50-60 people, including children, every day. Our contribution helped to defray its costs. The Dad's Program at Willamette Family helps fathers rebuild their lives in recovery and learn parenting skills while they live with their children, but the families stay in an older home without air conditioning upstairs. Our offering paid for air conditioners in each bedroom. Our contribution to Cascadia Wildlands helped it advocate successfully to keep Oregon's Elliott State Forest in public ownership.

Read more about this year's and past years' offerings at the church's website, uueugene.org, under "Outreach." If you have suggestions for offerings we could give to groups that match our church's principles, please write to community-offering@uueugene.org.

The 2018-19 committee members were Natasha Ashworth, Valerie Elliott, Gretchen Miller, Marilyn Milne, Ron Milton and Phyllis O'Neill.

Submitted by Marilyn Milne, Chair



Interfaith Earthkeepers

July 2018 thru June 2019 Activities:

- Marched with our banner in Eugene Parade
- Publicized "Oregon EV Tax Credit" to the public
- Free Movie to Public: "Wasted: The Story of Food Waste"
- Interfaith Earthkeepers website comes online - interfaithearthkeepers.org
- First Plastics Collection for Portland Companies, # 2, 4 & 5 thru our churches
- Publicized Eugene's first "Environmental Film Festival" to the public
- EK supported & attended ELAW's Local & Global Climate Solutions Event

- EK's attended CLDC's "Theater of Dissent" fundraiser
- Free Movie to Public: "An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power"
- Fire-Wise information to churches for homeowners to protect their property
- Attended "Clean Energy Bill" day in Salem
- Publicized and attended "Salmon is Everything" at the UO Longhouse
- Sent letter of support to Oregon representatives about "Conservation of Wolves"
- Tabled @ PIELC - video of local conversation & pamphlets - FCF, EK's, ICJC
- Signed "Our Children's Trust - Amici" for the state of Oregon
- Supported Dan Mullholland & HB 2020 (Oregon's carbon reduction bill) to the public
- Presented Our Children's Trust with a Poem
- Second Plastics Collection, # 2, 4 & 5 thru our churches
- Free Movie to Public: "Happening: A Clean Energy Revolution"

Submitted by Phil Bertrand

Oregon UU Voices for Justice

Our annual meeting was held in September, at the Willamette Falls UU in Oregon City.

We had excellent speakers from Our Children's Trust, a "Dreamer" on immigration issues, and a speaker on Gun Control.

We have continued our Environmental Group on Zoom which affords contact with about 10 active Environmental groups in other UU Churches, in Oregon. Several of our group have direct contact with the issues going on at the Capitol, which allows us to share with each other, and with many other groups in our communities.

OOUVfj has continued to provide an Action, at least monthly for all who are in their data base. I have received comments that this has been an appreciated way to participate in OOUVfj while directing energies to the Legislature.

The Annual meeting for 2019 will be held here at UUCE, which is a wonderful opportunity for any and all at UUCE to join us.

We again have requested that UUCE give one collection plate a year to OOUVfj. Unfortunately, we seem unable to accomplish that goal.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Craig

UU Earth Action

In January 2019, nine UUCE Members, met to begin formation of what has become UU Earth Action.

We subsequently had our Charter approved, with our Mission Statement reading: “Empowered by love, we transform ourselves and preserve our world.”

We have worked with other groups in the community to initiate the following;

An Event in our Sanctuary with presentations by Dan Mullholland, Fergus Mclean, Angus Duncan (Chair of the State of Oregon Global warming Commission) and Sandra Clark on the Clean Energy Jobs Bill, HB2020, the Elliott Forest, and the Jordan Cove/LNG pipeline. We gained sponsors for this event. 350 Eugene, Interfaith Earthkeepers, League of Women Voters, Sierra Club, Oregon Wild, and of course UU Earth Action. Two other groups tabled also.

Several of our group participated in the Rally in Salem at the Capitol, for HB2020, and again to Rally against the LNG pipeline.

A concert...Music for Mother Earth with performers from Portland, and Eugene, including Original works by Dan Haufman, Craig Mahaffy, Geoffrey Gordon, and Philip Bayles, all organized by Kristina Jones.

That's My Farmer

Plastics Roundup with Lane County on two Sundays

We have at present, 16 very dedicated members with others expressing interest in joining us.

Ron Hess and Keith Oldham have been establishing connections with Conservative Christian Clergy.

Keith Oldham has now brought into our group our younger UU youth, who are excited to join us in positive action for our earth.

Suzanne Reynolds, Berry Broad bent, and Sharon Roberts have begun to process of helping UUCE become Green Sanctuary Accredited in our new location.

Phil Bertrand is providing for our Congregation, information, on 3 Sundays, concerning energy conservation/weatherization of our residences.

More activities are in the offing, and ALL are welcome to come a participate in this exciting work.

Submitted by Sue Craig

Conestoga Huts

In February of 2013, the Social Justice Committee of the church voted to place two conestoga huts in our parking lot under the auspices of the city car camping program overseen by St. Vincent de Paul. The huts were donated by Opportunity Village Eugene. It was late March before we were actually able to get the huts built and residents moved in. Eric de Buhr, who is the designer and builder of the conestoga huts, was wonderful to work with. He made some modifications to suit the residents and checked in on them at the beginning. We formed a small committee at the church to handle the logistics. We call ourselves the Conestoga Wagon Circle. We worked with Keith Heath of SVDP to find two residents. After interviewing Vicky and Vanessa, we agreed to house these two women that Keith had proposed. We supplied both with bus passes.

Annual Report 2019

It seems impossible that we have had conestoga huts on our property for 6 years. Our huts are under the oversight of St. Vincent de Paul as part of the city's car camping program. During this period, we have housed 10 homeless residents. Andy Mather moved in in July, 2018 and has already left us for an apartment in April 2019. We wish him well. Vicky Gageant continues to be a wonderful gardener and also helps out with the Food Project on Tuesday afternoons. Tom Pike, who is our faithful Sunday morning dishwasher, is still with us. As of April 29th, 2019, our third hut is empty. We will be working with Keith Heath to find a new resident. This has been a very successful program, rewarding to our residents and to the congregation.

A small committee, the Conestoga Wagon Circle, oversees the program. Our missions statement is: *In keeping with our faith, we will provide a safe, secure, stable environment for our conestoga residents.*

Barb Prentice

Challenging Racism, Putting Love into Action

We work to help the church to become aware of and dismantle racism and systemic white privilege in our community, our state, our nation and our world.

To this end we have:

1. Held reading group discussions on books of interest dealing with racism and white privilege. These groups met for six weeks to discuss the books.

The books read and discussed were **Tears We Cannot Stop** (2 groups) and **So You Want to talk about Race**

There were a total of 21 participants in these three groups.

There were also two, one-day workshops facilitated by Rev. Lo about the UUA book **Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity and Power in Ministry**.

There were a total of 20 participants in these two groups

2. Held video viewing and discussion events dealing with racism
3. Worked to build a library of books dealing with racism and white privilege and make them available to the congregation through the existing UUCE library.
4. Presented the UUA curriculum **Examining Whiteness** as an eight session SGM style course. There were nine participants for this group.
5. Subscribed to the UUA monthly BLUU Box program, and make it's materials available to the congregation through the UUCE library. (BLUU is Black Lives UU)

The UUA describes the BLUU box in this way

The BLUU Spiritual Subscription Box is a box and community for those seeking to grow and deepen their faith from a Unitarian Universalist perspective. Grounded and informed by Black experiences, this inspiration - focused and action-oriented box is especially for those looking to live out the mandate of justice-making and liberation through our shared faith.

6. We also hope to discuss ways of using BLUU Box materials in activities such as Spirit Jam and youth groups.
7. We are also reaching out to other community organizations to find ways for UUCE to participate in anti-racist activities locally.
8. We are working on obtaining grant monies from the UUA to expand our activities. We would like to bring speakers to UUCE to provide educational opportunities about dismantling systemic racism to the congregation and the larger Eugene community.

This group is open to all. Our meetings are posted in the UUCE calendar.

Quilting for a Cause

Quilting for a Cause continues to be an active and productive group.

Last fall the First Family Shelter was opened by St Vincent DePaul. We decided our goal this year would be to make quilts for those 20 beds. We also decided to expand our repertoire from the original log cabin pattern to a variety of others. Individuals in our group have knowledge and strengths that they can share and teach others. With the variety of patterns everyone (and anyone regardless of their skill) can make a contribution. We have also been making baby quilts for the kiddos in the families to keep. Some of those have ended up on the dining room walls as decorations!

So far, we have completed 3 quilts, 5 more tops, and a couple more in process. It has been a lot of fun learning tricks, skills and working together with others to create something beautiful and needed. We have delivered 5-10 baby quilts. We are saving the twin size quilts until we have 10 to deliver.



We continue to rely on contributions from individuals to make this happen. Some contributions (over 100 4-patch squares and fabric) have come from people outside our group. These are always welcome! We appreciate the room, storage space and the large table surfaces that the church provides. It is definitely a group effort that we are able to create something useful and beautiful for others in our community!

Submitted by Barbara Flitcroft, facilitator of the group.

Kindness Team

How does group serve UUCE's Mission and live into our Aspirations?

- We function under our Mission statement guidance " We serve our world and function under the first UU principal: the inherent dignity and worth of every person as well as to create sanctuary where all hands are held.

- We work in tandem with Lay pastoral Associates and provide concrete assistance to members and friends of the church in the way of durable medical equipment, driving, companionship, short term housekeeping, shopping. We will schedule meal assistance using the take them a meal program. We also help folks to research assistance available in the community such as Ride Source and senior services.

How do people join this group? Folks either seek us out or announce their intention when the annual orientation is announced. All members of this group have to submit security clearance through our church. Leaving the group would occur when person no longer participates or if security clearance is revoked. Folks on the Kindness team participate in an annual orientation. This serves to bring new folks into the group and to review annually trainings in safety, boundaries, community resources. Each person is furnished with a folder with the current information. This intake occurs every Fall. If folks leave this group, it would only be if they no longer wished to participate or if there were a security issue. We currently have 12 members.

Resources currently provided by UUCE

- Budget: 0 for cost of manuals and food for four-hour orientation
- Room reservation for one annual fall meeting
- Office support: Use of Copy machine and paper. Lead person in office will sometimes make team aware of specific congregational need.

What is the leadership structure of this group? Who currently serves in these roles? How are decisions made? Charlotte Writer is current leader of this team. The team members are contacted as needs become evident. Try to keep one person linked to one recipient throughout the time of need and other folks on team will fill in as needed. Charlotte acts as resource when questions arise and makes follow up call to team member to see how things are going. If there are issues, these are discussed with team members, Lay Pastoral Associates and Minister as needed.

Kindness Team Mission: To bring practical comfort to those members and friends in our congregation who need help.

Goals:

- Train and develop the ability of Kindness Team members to assist others in the congregation
- Identify skills and resources within the group
- Build confidence in participants so they are comfortable with their tasks
- Publish and communicate information within congregation
- Celebrate with each other the goodness that comes from serving the congregation

Activities for this past Year:

- Greeting card program. Stamps through donation

- One member who is in assisted living is visited weekly by a member who brings her the Sunday service.
- Assistance to a member who broke both arms and was in nursing facility for ten weeks. Transport to PT and medical appts. Cleaning of home for her return. Grocery shopping and companionship. Connected with Ride Share
- Sitting with a person in hospice
- Visiting member in a nursing facility for short term illness and helping family connect with local resources to prepare home for her return.
- Provided meals/companionship for a family member while congregant was out of town.
- Evaluated a complex situation concerning a terminal cancer patient who wanted Kindness team to accompany her on a last-ditch cure. We referred her to other community resources after consultation with Rev. Lo
- I am sure there were other visits and meals also but do not have all respondent's feedback.

Earth EqUuity Food

Nourish Others and Ourselves/ Sustain the Earth - End of Year report for Year 4

This project is part of Earth EqUuity

Our first and seventh principles call us to address both “me” and “we” in our work towards social justice. Our aspirations call us to hold all hands as we work towards justice and sustainability. We specifically want to address the misconception that working for environmental justice is only for those who can afford it. For these reasons, we offer a range of activities to involve people of all economic circumstances, as well as people of various interests and experiences, abilities, and ages. We design projects motivated by our faith and the desire to be as inclusive as we know how. The ultimate goal is to show that small actions joined by many will have a positive impact towards justice, healing and sustainability.

Other than the leaders, there is no formal joining or leaving of the project. Everyone is invited to participate at whatever level they desire.

The planning committee consists of Berry Broadbent, Abby Rhoden, Nadja Sanders and Judy Shaw. Other individuals lead specific projects: Barb Prentice led the UU commitment to the Interfaith Night Shelter Program; Valerie Elliot led the Seed to Supper gardening classes for people with low incomes.

Decisions are made through discussion and informal consensus.

The purpose of the group is to provide multiple opportunities to explore the relationship between food, the environment, and social justice.

Highlights of the last year

- **Community Court Lunches.** This restorative justice program is aimed at reducing nuisance complaints and addressing quality of life offenses in the downtown area. Anyone who is either cited into Community Court or who walks in to obtain a needs assessment is eligible to receive a free sack lunch. UUCE has joined with the City of Eugene and other faith-based organizations to provide these lunches; each congregation currently provides 45 lunches on a monthly basis.

Our collaboration with Religious Education Spirit Jam has engaged our kids in a powerful way. Spirit Jam participants decorate lunch bags and assemble many of the food items into the bags. One Small Group Ministries made the lunches for their service project. We recruit volunteers to make sandwiches and deliver lunches the fourth Friday of the month. We have received specific food donations from the UUCE congregation, including peanut butter, jelly, bottled water, chips, string cheese, fruit, and home-made, individually wrapped cookies. All told we provided 450 lunches over the last year. An average of five volunteers help each month. The project requires about 12 hours of combined volunteer time monthly, including coordination and volunteer recruitment.

- **Produce Plus.** Since August of 2017 we have hosted a Produce Plus site, in collaboration with Food for Lane County. The purpose of the program is to provide high quality fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as bread, to people in need. Produce is provided free of charge to individuals and families who have incomes of less than 200% of the poverty level. Produce Plus is offered twice monthly, on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, from 3 to 6pm. The date was chosen to make it possible for people attending the potluck to participate in Produce Plus. From May 1, 2018 through April 1, 2019, we have helped distribute 6,600 pounds of produce and approximately 1,000 loaves of bread. On average, on each Produce Plus date we serve 35 households representing 69 people, an increase of about 33% over last year. Long lines of people wait eagerly for the door to open at 3, and by 3:15 most food is gone. Ten regular volunteers have devoted 224 volunteer hours to this project over this period.
- **Seed to Supper.** Another collaboration with FFLC, Seed to Supper is a 6-week program that teaches gardening on a budget. It covers planting, soil preparation, seeding and weeding, fertilizing, container gardening and enjoying the harvest. This free series also includes a gardening book and seeds for people to take home for planting. The two teachers, both master gardeners and one of them a UUCE member, were trained to lead this class. There are 12 hours of instruction and an untold amount of preparation time for the teachers. The class has attracted eight participants and the time corresponds with Produce Plus dates.

A garden space for Seed to Supper has been established on the church's east side. The harvest will also be used for Produce Plus. Inspirational photos are being sent separately!



- **Touchstone Tuesday Potlucks.** Earth EqUuity Food agreed to supply at least two healthy, hearty main dishes for each monthly potluck. We partnered with potluck organizers to develop a long-term plan to expand potluck participation. As a result, a potluck covenant was written to address issues of safety and hospitality (We covenant to affirm and promote beloved community by creating a safe environment where we uphold each other in practicing generosity and radical hospitality. In this spirit, we covenant to further the mission of the congregation as we come to together for Touchstone Tuesday potlucks.). Attendance has averaged about 40 people, including new families with kids. Progress on the long-term plan stalled over the course of the year and while individuals will continue to participate, the Earth EqUuity Group prefers to discontinue its formal participation.
- **Food Connections Brochure.** We updated our existing brochure that describes all of the food-related activities sponsored at UUCE, including those that pre-dated the establishment of this group.
- **Sponsoring Cooking Classes.** In conjunction with Food for Lane County, the Earth EqUuity Group has sponsored three cooking classes with nonprofit groups seeking safe spaces to offer these skills classes to their members. The six-week classes are geared towards teaching participants nutrition, cooking and food shopping skills. The nonprofit partners are TransPonder and National Alliance on Mental Illness.
- **Interfaith Night Shelter Program for Families.** This St. Vinnie-sponsored program provides temporary housing for families in need while faith-based organizations provide meals for one week at a time. For the second year in a row, UUCE served meals during the second week in January. When no other organization signed up to cover the week following ours, we provided volunteers for an additional night and our leftovers covered much of that week as well.

Next year's possibilities include:

- Continue to strengthen our connection with Food for Lane County, including Produce Plus and Seed to Supper, additional cooking classes, and stay apprised of new opportunities to bring food-related activities to UUCE.
- Continue participation in the Community Court Lunches program. They are now only 9 months a year instead of 12.
- Continue to explore additional ways to engage the UUCE community in projects linking food to social justice and the environment.
- Continue our commitment to provide meals and programming for the Interfaith Night Shelter Program and consider whether we can support a second week.
- Work to establish regular care and maintenance of the garden plot established to support Seed for Supper and Produce Plus.

Touchstone Tuesday Potluck

Submitted in collaboration with Earth Equity Food Group by Lizzy Utterback,
Touchstone Tuesday Potluck Representative

How does this group serve UUCE's Mission and live into our Aspirations?

Those who participate in the potlucks contribute to the warmth of community by Providing mutual support and through actions which embody the spirit of generosity. Personal transformation is encouraged through connections between individuals and witnessed by increased comfort with diversity. We live into our aspirations by creating sanctuary where all hands are held; we work really hard to include everyone who walks through the door, regardless of whether the potluck was their intended destination or not and regardless of their affiliation with UUCE.

How do people join this group? How and when do people leave this group?

This group is open to all. In order to join, all one has to do is arrive on the first Tuesday of the month between 5:30 and 7:00 pm. Leadership roles are filled on a volunteer basis. Collective ownership of the event is encouraged. At the moment, there is no formal process for volunteering. A church representative is required to attend each Tuesday. The representative is responsible to see that the social hall and kitchen are left in good condition, that attendees have vacated the building that the oven is off, and for locking the door.

What is the leadership structure of this group, and who currently serves in those roles? How are decisions made? Touchstone Tuesday Potlucks have been strongly supported by the Earth Equity Food Group leaders. Other leadership roles are still being defined. Church representatives that have been identified thus far are: Bob Cox, Berry

Broadbent, Jon Miller, Nadja Sanders, Judy Shaw, Owen Ott, Susan Verner, and Lizzy Utterback. Significant volunteer contributions have also been made by Tom Pike. Misha Seymour often sets the mood with his brilliant musical gifts by playing the piano. We are pleased to be able to compost and use cloth napkins. This is possible due to the volunteers who are committed to overseeing composting activities and touchstone Tuesday volunteers that take laundry home. Moreover, we appreciate the work of the Buildings and Grounds group who maintains the kitchen appliances and the new “COOK” group that has been systematizing kitchen activities and providing deep clean services.

What is the group’s purpose? The purpose of the Touchstone Tuesday potluck is to provide a community in which connections can be made in a “family” setting. Tables are arranged with six chairs each; in a large church, this weekly event offers a chance to make connections and build community in a smaller group setting.

The committee’s report: This year the group continued to meet on a monthly basis. 11 Touchstone Tuesday Potlucks were offered, with one being cancelled on late notice due to lack of volunteerism. On average, thirty individuals attend each month with attendance topping out at 40. We have needed to use both of the church highchairs to accommodate younger diners. Potlucks continue to be a place for folks that are new to UUCE and also for those that are familiar with UUCE to make connections with one another and with our space. When this happens, people take ownership and become stewards of our building and our faith tradition.

A successful partnership with the Earth EqUUity Food group has resulted in significantly increasing the number of healthy entrees and salads. A side effect of this collaboration is a stronger presence in UUCE outlets (newsletter, Sunday handouts, Facebook events, etc.). Together the two groups have drafted the following covenant: We covenant to affirm and promote beloved community by creating a safe environment where we uphold each other in practicing generosity and radical hospitality. In this spirit we covenant to further the mission of the congregation as we come together for Touchstone Tuesday potlucks.

A continued challenge the group has faced is the need for safety guidelines and kitchen supervision. Explicit standards and kitchen expectations need to be implemented to ensure kitchen safety. The Cook group has undergone the process for implementing systems to address these issues.

UU Refugee Sanctuary Project (Earth EqUUity)

The mission of the Refugee Sanctuary Project is to educate ourselves and the congregation about issues concerning refugees and immigrants; to provide direct aid to refugees in the Eugene-Springfield area; and to combat hate speech and Islamophobia. The Refugee Sanctuary Project is one of UUCE's Earth EqUUity projects, which means that its work represents the whole congregation.

This year we helped the Kurdish refugee family we've been working with to find a house, make repairs on it, and move out of their crowded apartment. We held a housewarming party for them in December. Friendships between the family and our group's members remain strong.

When the Muslim community in Christchurch, New Zealand, was attacked many of us attended a vigil of mourning and support at the local Islamic Center.

The Refugee Sanctuary Project continues to work with other groups and coalitions, including the Refugee Resettlement Coalition, the Oregon Community Asylum Network (OCAN), and IMIrJ: Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice. Individual group members have advocated for asylum seekers, acted as sponsors for newly arriving immigrants, and participated in a day of lobbying Salem officials for immigrant rights. We participated in the successful effort to end Springfield's contract with ICE for jail beds. We held signs on street corners, walked door-to-door, and rallied for the defense of Oregon's Sanctuary State law—a successful electoral campaign.

At UUCE we hosted a "Migrant Caravan" table at the UUCE Annual Giving Drive dinner. We showed films, including Ai Wei Wei's "Human Flow," and we presented speakers including Bob Bussel and Guadalupe Quinn from the Immigration Network, Abby Gershenson reporting on her volunteer work in Tijuana, and Anne Bridgman about her trip to witness the incarceration of migrant children in Florida. We put together packets of hygiene items for asylum seekers waiting in Tijuana. In the sanctuary we staged a read-through of "Bonhoeffer," a play written by member Tomas Romano.

The group meets about twice monthly. Meetings are open and decisions are made democratically.

Connie Newman

UU Refugee Sanctuary Project