

Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation  
of Grand Traverse

6726 Center Road  
Traverse City, MI 49686

Annual Reports

2019 – 2020

**UUCGT Annual Reports  
2019 - 2020**

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## **UUCGT MINSTER Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

As we near the end of our first year of interim ministry, I want to say a big thank you to your 2019-2020 board, the Transition Team, the staff of UUCGT, and all of the committees and the volunteers who have worked hard to make this year a success. It has been a privilege to serve this congregation through this time of transition, and to witness your resiliency and your willingness to work together towards a common goal. It's been an unusual year due to Covid-19, but we have pulled together to stay safe, connected, and to continue working toward accomplishing the tasks and goals of the first year of interim ministry. Bravo!

The Board and the Transition Team have worked diligently to ensure that your voices were included in the selection process of your Search Committee. I hope you are as pleased as I am at the outcome: your Ministerial Search Team is a balanced Committee representing a variety of age groups and congregational engagement. An exorbitant amount of work went into this process in order to have the Search Team in place before the end of June. Thank you, now we are in position to move towards calling your new settled minister! Next year will be a busy and exciting time.

Since early August, I have witnessed how you lovingly say goodbye to beloved members who have passed away, how you care for one another in illness and crisis, how you rally to support one another through challenging times, and how you celebrate the joys of life. There are a multitude of quiet acts of dedication that occur every week at UUCGT, and I want you to know that they don't go unnoticed. From snow shoveling, to weeding and planting, to caring for the Memorial Garden, tending to the enormous hospitality needs, Sunday Services, Music and Choir, Religious Education for children and adults, Congregational Care, Program Council, Membership, Finance, Art, Endowment, Social Justice, Stewardship, Technology, Staff Resources, our longstanding Tuesday Community Lunch, Community Needs, Safe Harbor, Wednesday Night Suppers, the amazing well-loved library, the beautiful grounds adorned with native plants, caring for your building, caring for one another, tending to the website, and tending to our UU faith and its mission to usher in a better world.

The coming year will be a time of discernment and preparation as we work to dismantle racism and the systemic system that has harmed people of color for 400 years. You are ready to meet these challenges, I am certain. I am so grateful to be a part of this beloved community, and to be a Unitarian Universalist during this transformational time. Thank you for being who you are and for striving to become even more than we could have imagined.

In faith and love, Rev. Cathy Harrington

## **UUCGT BOARD PRESIDENT Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

It was not the year we expected for the second year in a row. The Coronavirus Pandemic curtailed our ability to use our facility but did not end our ability to gather electronically and minister to each other. I believe we have adapted well to our unforeseen environment with compelling on-line Sunday Services, led by our excellent Staff, but, as importantly, the ability of groups and committees to continue to meet on-line and maintain that important contact. It is not quite the same, but it may be the norm for the future, at least until an effective vaccine is widely available.

The first highlight of the year was welcoming our new Interim Minister, Rev. Dr. Cathy Harrington. What a joy she has been. Last spring a UUA official told us we had “won the lottery” when we agreed with Rev. Cathy to be our Interim. That may have been an understatement. Rev. Cathy has helped us with our plans to find a long-term Settled Minister, but has been invaluable in leading us into the world of on-line services. She has also been available through on-line office hours and added additional opportunities, like Friday night Vespers to enable us to remain connected.

Our Religious Education program has continued to thrive under the leadership of our RE Director Betsy Hammerberg. We hosted an OWL program for youth with 15 in attendance this Fall and Winter, added two new teachers to our elementary RE program and, this Spring added adult classes to our curriculum. We continue to have Sunday morning RE classes on-line before the Sunday Service. Betsy has also provided her technical expertise to coordinate our on-line Sunday Services.

We were fortunate to add Renee Russell, our Music Director, to our staff this past Fall. Her enthusiasm and talent was evident to all as she led our Vocal Ensemble in the fall and winter. While live choir performances are on temporary hold, Renee has continued to lead the singing in our on-line services and arrange the musical performances for those services.

It is with mixed emotions that we send our Office Administrator, Susan Sherman, off to retirement. We are excited that she will have time to pursue interests in retirement, but her many contributions to this Congregation will be greatly missed. For over five years, Susan has been our rock-star Administrator making so many things happen for us. She has also been a kind ear for many of us when we drop by the office. Someone else may assume her duties but she cannot be replaced.

I also want to thank Glenda Corning, our accountant, for keeping our books, handling your donations and pledges, making sure all the bills are paid and doing all the “behind the scenes” stuff that keep the Congregation humming and our finances in order.

Your Board of Trustees has been meeting twice a month since April to deal with the extra issues around the pandemic. During the year we have approved an enhanced security system, approved a proposal to make our building a “weapons free zone”, established a Healthy Congregations Team, approved a major rework of our website, established a

Transition Team to support Rev. Cathy and identified a Ministerial Search Team with input from the Congregation in addition to attending to on-going business.

Our Congregational Committees continue to meet. Sunday Services has done an excellent job for the second year in a row of adopting to unforeseen circumstances. In addition to Rev. Cathy's great messages we have had some excellent lay-led services. Congregational Care has continued to provide solace and help to those in our Congregation in need. The Membership team has worked with newcomers to integrate them into our Congregation. Our Facilities team has kept our building "ship-shape" even when it has not been used the past few months. The Landscaping team did a spectacular job putting a walking trail in place last spring and summer with many other improvements. Social Justice has done some great work with local immigrants and also kept us well informed on social justice issues. Our Tuesday Lunch continues, now as a "brown-bag" lunch for those in need. For the second year in a row, UUCGT provided volunteer staffing for two weeks at the Safe Harbor homeless shelter. Our Community Needs Committee continues to select organizations in need to receive funds from our "for those in need" fund.

I have not named every Committee and I have likely also failed to recognize many individual contributions to UUCGT in the past year. The good news is that those contributions are too numerous to mention.

While things have changed a lot this year, I think most of us have come to realize that UUCGT is not a building, but the caring, loving people who make up the Congregation. Next month you will have a new Board and a new President. They will, with the help of our Ministerial Search Team, keep UUCGT on an upward path. Our future is in your hands and can be as bright as we want it to be.

Mike McDonald  
UUCGT Board President

## **TUESDAY COMMUNITY LUNCH Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

Every Tuesday for the past 29 years, this congregation has sponsored a free lunch to be served to whoever needs it. This needs 4 volunteers: 1 person to prepare an entrée, 1 person to prepare a salad, 1 person to buy or make a dessert, and one person to buy milk, fruit, bread, whatever is needed. All are reimbursed from funds provided by donations to the community outreach of our congregation. I am there every week, also. We serve from 15 – 50 people. We never know how many will show up. This all takes place at The Friends Meeting House at 5<sup>th</sup> and Oak as it is more centrally located and more easily accessible than our facility.

Unfortunately, due to Covid 19, we discontinued serving this year after March 10. As of May 5, we will resume serving cold lunches in the form of bag lunches. I hope in a few weeks to be able to add some hot foods, but still in the grab and go format. Because of the need of to-go containers, this will increase our costs. This is all new, so I am not sure how things will work out practically or financially.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kiner

**COMMUNITY NEEDS**  
**Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

**POLICY:** The purpose of this committee is to distribute funds collected during Sunday morning services to non-profit agencies, religious organizations, charities and groups within Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Benzie, Kalkaska, and Antrim counties which provide charitable services only. *The Team meets quarterly, doing research in between meetings, to discuss and make decisions about distribution of available funds.*

**Current members:** Shari Cope, David Hassing, Candace Lee, Joan Sheard, Chris Walter (acting Chair); Jane Fochtman was a member and served as Chair until January 2020 when she resigned from the Team.

**Successes:** Thanks to the generosity of our UU Congregation, the Team was able to provide 'on the ground' support to a broad range of organizations that are in constant need of recognition and support. All of this work is thankfully accomplished with support and consultation with office staff at UUCGT.

**Quarterly Disbursements**

**July-August 2019 - Balance \$3,808.05**

Safe Harbor (UU week/food Dec 2019)	\$700
Reining Liberty Ranch (1 wk camp for 8 kids & Veteran Dads)	800
Food Rescue	500
Women's Resource Center	200
Justice For Our Neighbors	1,000
N Michigan Supportive Housing	<u>300</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3500</b>

**September-November 2019 - Balance \$2508.60**

STEP (Students in Transition Empowerment Program) for gas cards, bus passes, and Meijer gift cards	\$400
Remain in Touch for tapes/books for children to stay connected to incarcerated parents	300
Safe Harbor (UU week/food Feb 2020)	700
Meals on Wheels	<u>500</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1900</b>

## **CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM**

### **Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

Members: Rev. Cathy Harrington Joan Jackson and Pat Light (co-chairs), Don Fraser, Hal Gurian, Judith Briggs, Millie Putz, Carolyn Kelly, Christie McGue and Barb Gibson

Our team meets twice a month to monitor the needs of our congregation. This comes by word of mouth, calls from family members, notes in Joys and Concerns book as well as newspaper articles and obituaries. We provide whatever is needed on a temporary basis such as food, calls, visits, and cards and follow through as long as necessary.

We continue presenting shawls or lap robes to congregants when recovering from illness, surgery or grief. These shawls and lap robes are made by congregants and donated to our team to hold in reserve until the need arises. We have started having them blessed before giving them out.

We notify the congregation through the Flash and also the "All About Us" column for the Beacon.

A CCT point person coordinates Memorial Services with the Memorial Reception Committee. This may include working with the Memorial Garden Committee for the internment of ashes in the Memorial Garden.

The following are deaths of UUCGT members or friends this past year, 2019, and include:

Jane Swanson, Carol Still, Irwin Stoner, Mary Ann Force, Floyd Hammontree, Treva Jaffe, Peg Kauffman, and Joe Fraser. There have been no deaths in 2020 to this point.

A team member wears the CCT stole at Sunday Service and reads the Joys and Concerns each week. He or she may start writing a card from the basket in the social hall which others may add to. Cards are sent to congregants who are unable to attend services or have a reason to be in the Joys and Concerns.

CCT has a discretionary fund which comes from a portion of funds given from the Sunday offertory basket. We have provided gas cards, food gift cards and funds for congregants in need. We also had a bench in memory of Arlene Howe installed on the walking path and completed a brochure explaining our function and who we are. This brochure will be available to our congregation and visitors.

Respectively submitted,

Joan Jackson, Co-chair  
Pat Light, Co-chair

**ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

The UUGTC Endowment Fund concluded its most recent fiscal year on December 31, 2019 with a balance of \$120,467.22, with \$70,278.69 invested Bonds and \$50,188.53 in the Social Index Fund. The Funds have an income of approximately \$150 per month from the Bond Fund and \$170 per quarter from the Social Index Fund.

The Endowment Committee continues to maintain the policy of relatively conservative investment with allocation of 60% in bonds and 40% in a socially responsible index fund with Vanguard Funds

During the fiscal year the Fund received contributions of \$17,667.92 from UUCGT members and friends. \$13,711.24 was from memorial gifts including a generous gift of \$10,000. An insurance policy was cashed in for \$3,956.68.

As required by the Bylaws, the principal of the Fund remains intact and a distribution of up to 90% of dividends and interest is allowed each year for 3 areas of UUCGT programs. In January 2020 the Endowment Committee voted to distribute equally \$2,100, giving \$700 to each of the following: Community Outreach, the UU Greater Mission, and the Physical Plant.

Our suggestion to the UUCGT Board was that the Physical Plant portion be used for landscaping this year, and portion for the UU Greater Mission be put toward the search for a Settled Minister.

The Endowment Committee met several times during the year, including one meeting with interim minister, Rev. Cathy Harrington. Early in the year we worked on putting together an informational letter regarding the many avenues for giving back to UUCGT. Unfortunately, that project has been put on hold because of Covid-19.

We invite Members and Friends to consider bequests or other occasions for giving to the Fund. Questions regarding the Endowment Fund may be directed to any member of the Committee.

Ellie Smith  
Don Pyne  
Nancy Doughty  
Karl Keinath  
Ann Swaney

**FACILITIES TEAM**  
**Annual Report 2019 – 2020**

Members: Dave Halsted, Bernie Hanchett, Karl Keinath, Richard Miller, Bill Scharf, Price Watts

The Facilities Team worked with the Landscape Committee for Spring Clean-Up. We collaborated with a group who made progress with organizing the basement. We met with EPS and purchased cameras to monitor people entering the building and to make the interior and people safer.

We contracted to have the exterior of the building stained. We were pleased with the work of Aztec Painting. We will probably need to do this again in 5 – 8 years.

We had a roof and water drainage problem. We are observing if similar problems occur this spring.

Mouse control was on-going.

For several weeks we hired the snow plow drivers of The Greener Side to deal with the snow and ice on the sidewalks. They did a good job, and the hours they worked gave us an accounting of their work. We would need this data if we were sued for an accidental fall on the premises.

We assumed the responsibility of conducting an annual review of contents stored in the basement, the Sound Room as well as the other closets, furnace room and storage shed.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Halsted

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Annual Report 2019 -2020**

The Finance Committee continued monthly meetings to review UUCGT's financial performance and to recommend approval of significant non-budgeted expenditures. Several accounting changes were made to functions of ensuring the appropriateness and integrity of our financial systems, including revision of the policy for counting and distributing the offertory funds.

The committee also authorized a positive pay mechanism with our bank to safeguard check forgeries. Development of the 2020-2021 budget has been difficult. Not only will we be engaged in the direct search for our new religious leader the continuing improvement of our programs and technology is important in attracting that new leader. Into the midst of this process came the pandemic and the continuing uncertainty of the needs and resources for the near-term future.

Thanks to efforts of Karl Keinath and Dusty Culton we applied and have received a PPP loan which will be used to cover much of our personnel costs in this period. The main roles of the Finance Committee are to ensure proper financial practices are followed, preparing the budget for the next fiscal year, recommending to the Board where funds for special projects and unexpected expenses are to come from and developing financial policies and ensuring that those policies are followed. The Finance Committee meets monthly to review financial reports, project revenues and expenses to ensure that we are financially sound and discuss any pertinent items regarding financial practices, policies and unusual expenses.

In addition to Karl and Dusty the committee members included Mike McDonald and Price Watts with much ongoing support from our Accountant, Glenda Corning. I was also deeply appreciative of having Susan Sherman's historical perspective nearby.

Jim Walworth, chair

## **HOSPITALITY / KITCHEN COMMITTEE**

### **Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

The hospitality function of this committee is primarily to provide beverages and snacks for the social hour after Sunday Services. Volunteers manage the social hour on a monthly schedule. Help is also provided for other congregational events as needed.

The kitchen committee cares for the kitchen, cleaning and organizing weekly and deep cleaning yearly. Volunteers are scheduled on a monthly basis. The committee also purchases supplies for hospitality and kitchen needs.

We could use more volunteers for both areas of the committee.

Committee:

Sandra McDonald, Chairperson.  
Judith Briggs  
Kathy Carpenter  
Barb Culton  
Bonnie Mathias  
Penny Ort  
Ellie Smith  
Betsy Wacker  
Chris Walter

## **LANDSCAPING TEAM**

### **Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

The UUCGT Landscaping Team was formed in 2017, with a mission to create a comprehensive and holistic plan for our grounds, honoring our tradition of being a welcoming congregation, and our 7<sup>th</sup> UU Principle: “*Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*”

- During the Winter of 2017-18, Planning Meetings took place monthly, with actual work beginning in the Spring of 2018. We determined four focal areas for 2018 [see below].
- Response to this Team’s efforts have been 100% positive to date.

#### **1. The Meandering Pathway**

- An Entryway was designed and built (NW corner of Upper Parking Lot).
- Two raised beds were added and planted with Spring bulbs.
- The start of the Path was planned and marked.
- The first Meditation Station was planned.
  - There will be 7 Meditation Stations in all, one for each of our basic Principles. Signage will explain the donors and/or honoree of a bench and sign.
  - Another Station will be placed under the large white pine at the SW corner of the lower parking lot, at the corner of the Lot and the driveway; at this time, we do not know which Principle this Station will represent.
  - A donation was received for the first Bench at Meditation Station #1: a bench in honor of Arline Howe. Signage will include information and pictures of Arline and her contributions, as well as a statement of the UU First Principle.
- As the end of the Sunday Service June 30, a ribbon cutting ceremony will be held to Open both the Path and Meditation Station #1.
- At the request of the Facilities Committee, the Path will be opened in honor of Clarence Kroupa, with appropriate signage (pending Mr. Kroupa’s approval).
- The Path will continue to be extended throughout the summer and early Fall.
  - The Path will be a multi-year project, as loops will be added to extend it.

#### **2. The Welcoming Entryway**

- In 2018, two beds were added either side (E/W) of our sign, the soil amended, then planted with native perennials and colorful annuals.
- Pruning and removal of Japanese Barberry (an extremely invasive species) were accomplished.
- A raised bed was added on the north side of our sign. Native perennials and spring bulbs were planted, with further plantings in 2019.
- Along the slope leading up to Center Rd., native plants are planned to re-create a prairie feel. In 2019 we’ll plant the area covered by a blue tarp last year to kill off wild growth.

- We are working with 4 Seasons Nursery to ensure a good selection of native plants for this area.
- It will take several years to create this Prairie Slope.

### **3. Area Adopters**

Our property is simply too large for this Team to manage, so we asked our congregation for folks willing to adopt an already-planted area. We created and used an “Adopter’s Guide” to present basic guidelines, including our Planting Policy. The response was amazing. Although we started with only 3 areas, a 4<sup>th</sup> was adopted, with 2 more in the plans for 2019.

#### **South and West Front of Building:** (Rick and Chris Walter, Adopters)

- Much pruning of trees and shrubs which had begun to crowd each other to the point where they could not be seen or grow properly;
- Planting of some new perennials, including early-blooming yellow primroses moved from Rick’s mother’s house.
- Thinning of many perennials to allow more vigorous growth. Removal of much bracken as it threatened to crowd out other plants.
- Plans are being made to create a usable area for taking breaks, having lunch, etc. for office workers, as well as creating a lovely view from the windows.

#### **Harry’s Garden:** (Kim Sibilsky, Pat Light, Adopters)

- circle in the center of the sidewalk at entry to building;
- originally adopted by Kim Sibilsky, followed by Pat Light when Kim moved away.
- Named for the dwarf Harry Lauder Walking Stick tree in the center of the circle (story of tree and name in the Beacon, June 2018).
- Kim: pruned tree , added hardscape of black landscaping cloth and rocks
- Pat: pruned tree again in August (this is required, because all Harry Lauder trees were grafted onto other rootstock until about 2 years ago); kept sedum and lilies looking good!

#### **Parking Lot Oval** (Margaret and Doug Wozniak, Adopters)

- A great deal of pruning in 2018, to reduce congestion and begin to plan for an easy way to walk through;
- Plans call for highlighting the area around the tree planted in honor of Emmy Lou Belcher

#### **East Side Beds** (Ellie Smith, Adopter)

- These beds were previously planted with flats of native plants from the Grand Traverse Conservancy; however, the flats were “general” in nature, and not all plants have thrived in this shady area.
- Beds were cleaned and raked, ongoing weeding was done; plans for filling in the beds as needed were made.

In addition, we had another focus which affected *all* of our areas:

#### **4. Irrigation**

- We knew we would need water to be readily available, if any plans at all were to be successful.
- Two companies were contacted and offered bids; the bids were less than \$300 apart. One company refused to put in a tracer line (which means we can trace the exact path of the hose which feeds areas away from the building – this was seen as needed because there was an earlier irrigation system, but in the Spring of 2018, no one knew where the line was).
- Lautner's was chosen to install a drip-line irrigation. (The cost of a sprinkler system, such as the Memorial Garden has, was prohibitive for the entire property).
- When used with timers, this system is automatic throughout the months it is used.
- We can add to the system, or modify it, as needed.

#### **A Bonus!**

During the winter of 2018-19, it came to our attention that no one had responsibility for the indoor plants graciously donated by many. Landscaping took this on.

- Now, a team of two coordinates efforts and time, trims, waters, feeds, or re-pots plants as needed.
- They also clear dead debris from pots, keeping our Indoors fresh and green while we plan for more ideas outside.

#### **Other considerations**

- Last August, a representative from the National Invasive Species Network came to look at and talk about our 2 mature **Siberian Elms**. They are an invasive species and are popping up all over the property. She explained what our future would be like if we did nothing.
- We agreed to contract with Eric Helsel's Tree Service (recommended by Chris & Rick Walter) to remove the 2 mature, "parent" trees.
- We learned what to do to prevent regrowth from the stump areas, and how to manage much smaller trees as they appeared.
- Our neighbors at Port of Old Mission have had to remove a number of **Red Oaks** due to Oak Wilt.
- Along with the Memorial Garden folks, we have been learning what to do. We will inoculate the giant red oaks on the northern edge of our property, sharing costs and supplies with Memorial Garden, who will inoculate an oak in their area.
- We will include signs about Oak Wilt on our Pathway, so that anyone who walks the Path might notice and alert us if this dread disease appears among our oaks.

#### **Planned for 2019**

- May and June Work bees: every Sunday in May, first two Saturdays in June: focusing on something different each week.
- Pathway complete and ready up to Meditation Station #1, by June 30 (Grand Opening Celebration).
- Researching irrigation for Parking Lot Oval.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE Annual Report 2019 - 2020

The members this past year are: John Hoffmann, Current chair Chris Lautz, Chris and Rick Walter, Jane Watts and newest member Barb Conley. The Committee meets most months – October, November and December 2019 and January and February 2020. March and April meetings were canceled due to Covid 19.

Working to fulfill our Mission to Welcome, Greet, Facilitate into membership, and Nurture (in Partnership with other groups at UUCGT) prospective, new and current members, the committee organized and sponsored numerous activities and rituals this year:

★ **STAFF the Welcome Table** each Sunday

★ **PROVIDE Greeters** for all Services

★ **ORIENTATION SESSIONS - for Prospective (and current) Members**

History of UUCGT, Getting to know each other, Brief Q/A about UUism;  
Rev. Cathy held Starting Point Classes 4 in January and February. Rev. Cathy and Membership are in discussion on whether to hold a zoom meeting UUCGT orientation or wait until we can do this in person. We have 3 known people interested.

★ **FELLOWSHIP FRIENDS**

No one requested a friend.

★ **NEW MEMBER WELCOME SERVICES**

No new Member Services were performed.

### **MEMBER RESIGNATIONS:**

There were 2 member resignations: Sherry Davis, Barb Bloomer (Barb doesn't have the energy at age 88 to come to church and her life has changed.) All occurred during the past 12 months. Notes are sent to resigning members.

### **Other Membership Activities:**

Jane Watts is facilitating the new 2020 Member and Friend directory to be made available.

**Welcome - Hope to See you Again Soon Postcards** are sent to all visitors who fill out a Welcome Registry at the Welcome Table.

**Outreach** "Missing You" postcards with UUCGT building photo were sent to about 75 folks we haven't seen for a while in December 2019 to let them know about upcoming events such as the Holiday services.

**Articles** in Grand Traverse region publications featuring Members and Friends are posted on the hallway bulletin board.

**Long Term Sustainability Goal** was supported by organizing two tours of the local recycle plant in 2019.

**Goals:** In 2020-2021 the Membership Team will plan and schedule more social / fellowship activities.

Submitted by Chris Lautz, Chair

## MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE Annual Report 2019 - 2020

(Manual: p. 37)

*Composition: minimum of 3 members.*

*Purpose:*

*1. Maintenance of the physical condition of the Memorial Garden, the area just above the Williams Garden and immediately surrounding the oak tree, and the plaques designating those interred within the Garden and elsewhere.*

*2. Designation of Interment sites and provision of memorial markers within the Garden and engraved plates for the memorial boards.*

*3. Administration of records and materials associated with those interred within the Memorial Garden and of expenditures from the Memorial Garden's restricted funds for maintenance and improvement of the Garden. (Note: UU Board approval is required for expenses over \$1,000.)*

*It is understood that regular coordination between the Memorial Garden Committee and the Landscape Committee will occur to assure consistency with the overall landscape concept and site plan of the church.*

Since last year's Annual Report there have been five additional interments bringing the total number presently to forty-four. It appears that, while the garden contains ample space for many years in the future, we're coming close to filling the memorial plaque in the vestibule. Who would have guessed, so soon!

Despite the peculiar challenges this year presents to us, planting and maintenance will most likely have to be solitary efforts rather than communal, and interments may very well be postponed until social distancing is no longer a safety recommendation. But we look forward to a new season of ongoing improvements to the garden with further additions of indigenous perennials and by service to the community in moments of loss.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard Miller, chair

Ingrid Brophy  
Andrea Kramer  
Jalene Moore  
Bill Scharf



**POLICY COMMITTEE**  
**Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

The Policy Committee continued and completed its two year project of restructuring and reorganizing our UUCGT Policy Manual.

Committee members Judy Myers, Don Pyne and Tom Darnton met a few times during the fall and then Judy, with occasional assistance from Tom, completed and presented to the Board a revised Manual on Board and Committees, which was adopted at the April 2019 Board meeting. The manual organized our governance into Policies and Procedures, the former being adopted by the Board and the latter being subject to decisions by the various committees involved.

Personnel policy is now handled by the Staff Resources Committee. The Policy Committee will be seeking new members for the next phase of policy work, to include work with committees as they update their procedures and assisting in a re-examination of our governance structure as part of the process of discernment ahead of calling a new settled minister.

## **PROGRAM COUNCIL Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

**POLICY:** The purpose of Program Council is currently being defined by a group of current members of the Program Council with Board member Tom Darnton's assistance

**PROCEDURE:** Committee / Team Chairs or designees generally meet once a month August - May or June, 9:00 am - 10:00 am on the 2nd Sunday of the month. This year to accommodate our interim minister, Rev. Cathy Harrington who is busy prepping for Sunday Service during the meeting time, Program Council met for a lunch Potluck after Service on November 10, 2019. Now in the time of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Council has not met since March 8, 2020.

**COMMITTEES THAT ATTEND:** All committee chairs and interested members attend our monthly meetings. Attendance ranges from 9 to 14.

### **SUCSESSES:**

1. The best part of Program Council is coming together monthly to share what each Committee / Team is doing and for others to provide input and suggest ideas.
2. Program Council's most active and successful time is preparing for and hosting the Annual Thanksgiving Feast. The Feast is held on the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving at Gilbert Lodge, Twin Lakes Park.

Planning begins in September when 11 Teams are recruited. Many UUCGT Committees or Teams have volunteered to head up / take charge of the components of the Feast. Music Director leads VE and congregation in anthem and hymns; lay person organizes the service; RE Director reads a Story for all Ages. In 2019 over 120 people attended both from UUCGT, Benzie Satellite, and invited friends and family.

The Food and Fellowship are always terrific and building community is what the function is all about.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Walter, Acting Chair

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION COMMITTEE**

### **Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

This past year we have continued to engage the congregational members in educational activities and service projects. We have weekly announcements for potential actions in the Flash, monthly articles in the Beacon, and had a line-up of speakers ready to engage us in talks about their various organizations after our Sunday Services. This later project never got started due to the pandemic and the closure of all meeting places.

We were ready to assist in the services for Black History month and a congregational trip to the Jim Crow Museum. We were also planning to work with Sunday Services in a Holocaust Memorial service. All canceled due to the pandemic. I mention this as our intention and as a reminder for next year.

We continued with monthly meetings and pursuing more ways to engage in social justice issues and actions, realizing everyone has their own interests, but also pursuing something we can do as a congregation. In 2019 there were educational tables set up for the purpose of helping members know about other organizations doing social justice work in our area. This stopped with the cessation of church services in the building.

Before the pandemic we continued our work with immigrants, with several members working with JFON, Justice for our Neighbors. Through them we were able to help a family that had been separated by the immigration laws and also help an asylum seeker who was awaiting trial. When one seeks asylum, you are put in jail until the hearing is concluded. Our work with the interrupted family continues, but is difficult since we don't meet and her needs are great.

We also had several volunteers at Blair Elementary School. They were very much welcomed and enjoyed their work. They were cleared by the police and FBI before their work with kids. Again, this has been interrupted.

With the pandemic we are left with mainly communication through the Flash and Beacon and have encouraged members to remain active with petition signing, letter writing, and donating. At all times we are sensitive to the neutral political stance we must take, always staying clear of any suggestion of partisan politics. It is clear that doing an action is an individual decision and although encouraged, anyone can express themselves as they feel and think without worry of any judgment. All expressions are good as long as honestly stated.

Respectively submitted,

Emmy Lou Cholak, chair

Members include Barb Conley, Dusty Culton, Katherine DuVernois, Carolyn Hall, Jane Watts, Connie Moonie

## **STEWARDSHIP**

### **Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

Members: Dave Halsted, Karl Keinath, Penny Ort, John Hoffman, Rick Walter and Jan Zerbel (co-chairs) Rev. Cathy Harrington

The mission of the Stewardship Team of 2019-2020 was to inspire/remind/cajole each friend and member of UUCGT to make a financial pledge that would contribute to meeting the monetary needs of our congregation as determined by the Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees for the year 2020-21. We were cognizant of significant financial needs due to expenses that will be incurred for funding a search committee and attracting a quality settled minister as well as fulfilling the common desire among our congregants to increase the RE and music programs and fairly compensate our outstanding staff and pay our fair share of UUA dues. To meet those needs we were given the goal of collecting \$250,000 - \$275,000 in pledges and realized that would mean a nearly 20% increase over last year.

We started meeting on Sept. 12, 2019 to plan the pledge drive. We chose "Circle 'Round" as our theme and planned a 6-week focused campaign beginning with pre-campaign postcards and a Feb. 9 kickoff luncheon after Sunday service, during which Rick gave an informative talk for those who attended, and pledge packets were given out. We used visual reminders in the gathering space throughout the campaign and sent thank-you's for pledges as they were received. Short testimonials were part of Sunday services during the drive. There were weekly reminders in the Flash and articles in the Beacon.

The pandemic delayed our follow-up plans, but in April we decided to proceed with phone calls to those who had not yet pledged, and we did get some results. On May 1, Karl reported that we had 113 total pledges ranging from \$25 to \$15,000 and totaling \$196,318.48. We are disappointed that we fell short of the goal. We are grateful for some other sources that will be helpful, such as the donated dinners project by John Hoffman and Lauren Keinath which is dedicated to helping fund the Search Team, and we hope the Federal Paycheck Protection Program will ease some of the financial burden.

For next year, Rick Walter has agreed to take on the responsibility of chairing the 2021-22 Stewardship campaign, providing practical experience for a new group. The new UUCGT website should offer easy on-line pledging among other technical improvements. It could be that the many excellent on-line opportunities offered by UUCGT during the pandemic may result in increased *gratitude giving* next year!



Respectfully submitted,  
Jan Zerbel

## **SUNDAY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

### **Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

Members: 10 members at the time of this report including the Music Director and the Religious Education Director

Pam Hendrick, co-chair  
Amanda Mangiardi, co-chair  
Karen Casebeer  
Andi Kramer  
Misty Sheehan  
Margaret Wozniak

Renée Russell, Music Director  
Betsy Hammerberg, Director of Religious  
Education  
Richard Miller  
Mary Van Valin  
Rev. Cathy Harrington (ex officio)

#### **Our mission and purpose:**

The Sunday Services committee is responsible for the details of each service. We work with our minister to design services, including handouts, settings, music, hymns, children's time, and all the details that go into making each service run smoothly and be as impactful as possible. Typically, each month one of the members would be responsible for creating and organizing a Lay-led service without the Minister.

#### **Accomplishments for 2019-2020:**

During the months of January and February of 2019 the SSC members continued to hold 2-3 lay-led services a month. We relied on Reverend Jane Lippert, the Community Outreach Coordinator at Central United Methodist Church, for a spiritual message each month.

In March 2019 our committee was delighted to begin to work with temporary minister, Beth Marshall. Beth delivered two services a month back to back. We continued to use Jane and our lay led services.

In July of 2019 we were grateful to begin our work with Reverend Cathy, our interim minister. Cathy currently provides three services each month and our committee creates a lay-led service once a month.

August of 2019 the Co-chairs Hal Gurian and Amanda Mangiardi won the Gamble Award for leading the SSC through challenging times during and after Rabbi Chava Bahle's illness, prolonged absence, and eventual resignation. Hal was awarded for his tireless work on the SSC and Congregational Care Team, and for bringing laughter and joy to everyone around him.

The Sunday Services Committee held a retreat on October 19, 2019 at the lake house of Mary Van Valin. It was a beautiful setting for in-depth conversations about how we might improve as a committee, work best with our Minister, meet the needs of our congregation, and grow intellectually and spiritually among ourselves.

One of the decisions at the retreat was to subscribe to Soul Matters, a UU affiliated resource for services which includes themes for the year, sermon ideas, small group ideas, and religious education ideas. Many other UU congregations use this resource and it has proven to be a valuable addition to our resources.

On Saturday, December 21, 2019, members of SSC, Misty Sheehan, Nan Worthington and Betsy Hammerberg, offered a Winter Solstice Service to our congregation and the community. This service was well attended and included guests not only from our congregation. A total of 60 people attended.

The Sunday Services Committee recommended to the Board that we limit our Christmas Eve services to the Candlelight Service and not continue to hold services at the State Theatre. One of the issues was the State wanted us to sign a contract and pay them a flat fee, even though we have split the proceeds with them in the past. Most likely we would have lost money if we had proceeded to hold the service.

The Christmas Eve Candlelight Service held on December 24, 2019 dedicated all proceeds to immigration causes in our community. Over \$1500 was raised and donated to our community.

January 2020 Hal Gurian resigned as Co-chair and Pam Hendrick stepped up to take his place and co-chair together with Amanda Mangiardi.

Since March of 2020, Michigan has been shut down to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, Covid-19. One of the most challenging things going on right now is learning how to deliver virtual services. We thought our committee was challenged during the time of Rabbi Chava's absence, but this is an entirely different level of challenge. The level of technical information needed to run an effective and seamless church service is substantial.

Our committee has had to become experts on Zoom and learn how to create and deliver virtual services for our congregation during this time of social distancing amidst the Pandemic caused by Covid-19. Our first post-Michigan shut-down service was March 22, 2020. That service was held in the sanctuary. Since then our services have been held via Zoom, with everyone staying home as directed by our Governor, Gretchen Whitmer. We have attendee numbers in the 70s for computers signing on to our virtual services.

I would like to express gratitude for our Religious Education Director, Betsy Hammerberg. She is largely responsible for our committee's success in bringing seamless and beautiful services via Zoom. Once it was clear we would have to use Zoom for services, Betsy jumped in and learned all the technical information she could. The difference between the first service on March 22, and the second one a week later was substantial, and that was largely due to Betsy.

Additionally, our Music Director, Renee Russell was another learning powerhouse. Renee learned how to record and play live music and music from the internet via Zoom. As music is such an important element of our services, we are grateful to Renee for helping us make sure we were able to continue to deliver music to our congregation.

We plan to continue to perfect our online services and fine tune the transitions along with other elements of Zoom virtual services that we will continue to address.

**Plans for the next year 2020-2021:**

This past year has been a year of growth for the Sunday Services Committee. We look forward to continued growth as a committee as we strive to bring thoughtful, provoking, and spiritual messages to our congregation either electronically or back in the sanctuary.