

# *UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF GERMANTOWN*

*2019-2020 Annual Report*

*Presented June 14, 2020*



6511 Lincoln Drive  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119-3625  
Office: (215) 844-1157  
[www.usguu.org](http://www.usguu.org)

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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2020**

*Submitted by Jenn Leiby, President Board of Trustees*

◆ **Members** – Nancy Anderson, Andrea Barsevik, Maggie Beaumont, Zachary Bosco-Dwornik, John Davis, Jenn Leiby (President), Jess Slivak (Vice President), Sam Stormont (Secretary), Debbie Ward

◆ **Mission** - The Board of Trustees is charged with the temporal affairs and property of the Society (By-laws, 1978). Under the governance model launched in 2015, the Board has responsibility for strategic direction, financial oversight, integrity of building and grounds, personnel policies, evaluation of the Senior Minister's performance, investment fund oversight and Committee on Ministry.

### ◆ **Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

The USG Board of Trustees has had a busy year.

- We oversaw and celebrated the completion of the elevator and the paving of the driveway.
- We repaid the congregational loans that were made to help build the elevator.
- We enthusiastically joined The New Sanctuary Movement, an organization that is doing important work helping people in our area with immigration issues.
- We upheld our commitment to check in quarterly on how we are doing as a congregation (and as leaders in the congregation) in addressing issues of racism, classism, ableism, and other oppressions. We have engaged in heartfelt reflection around making USG more welcoming to all.
- We gave our blessing to a plan to refurbish the organ with help from a grant from Partners for Sacred Spaces.
- We held Budget Feedback sessions during Fellowship Hour for several weeks and reviewed and discussed the feedback we received.

### **And then COVID-19 hit...**

Since March 15th, we have been working more closely with MET to share the workload and decision making that this shutdown has entailed:

- MET and the Board and a member of the Stewardship Team meet weekly
- The Board President has been attending MET meetings
- A special Fundraising Team has been created to address the Stewardship campaign and other budgetary and fundraising needs.

Subgroups have been created out of the Board and MET meetings:

- One that is tasked with setting up a dedicated COVID-19 financial relief fund
- One that is exploring what the future of USG looks like when we open again, specifically through the lens of the 8th Principle, which we adopted as a congregation last June.
- One that is looking at the 2019-20 budget and the 2020-21 budget as we move through this pandemic and resulting church building closure.

The Board re-evaluated the Budget Guidelines for 2020-21 due to the unprecedented uncertainty of the next year and we will be reviewing the 2020-21 budget as we go through the year, as possible opening and rental information may change.

These are the highlights of our year; more information is available in the monthly minutes

## **MINISTRY EXECUTIVE TEAM (MET) 2020**

*Submitted by Gale Gibbons (MET Representative)*

◆ **Members:** Reverend Kent Matthies, Church Administrator Celeste Lamb, and lay leaders Eric Foster, Gale Gibbons, and Andre Stormont

### ◆ **Mission of Committee**

The Ministry Executive Team (MET) manages the day-to-day operations of the church. MET works closely with committees such as Building and Grounds, Stewardship, Worship Arts, Welcoming, Child Spiritual Development, Adult Spiritual Development, Caring, and the Social Justice Council to help ensure they meet their goals. In addition, MET is responsible for preparing and maintaining an operating budget which has been reviewed and approved by the Board.

### ◆ **Significant Accomplishments 2019-20**

- **Transitions:** New lay members Eric Foster and Gale Gibbons joined the MET in July 2020, replacing Kay Weiser and Delores Hill-Ott. At the same time Celeste Lamb began her position as church administrator.
- **Accomplishments:** During late winter USG began learning about the COVID-19 virus and its impact. Guided by recommendations from the Governor, Mayor, Center for Disease Control and the UUA, we stopped in person worship, children's spiritual development and all other programs in March. Transitioning to tech supported worship and all activities was both challenging and rewarding.
- **CSD:** Ryan and the CSD committee continued creating rich CSD offerings for our children and teens.
- **ASD:** ASD and Mindfulness activities are now offered through Zoom and participation is good. The ASD Walking Group continues, observing safety protocols for social distancing.
- **Collaboration with Board:** In an effort to best manage the multi-faceted crisis of pandemic and recession the MET and Board began joint weekly meetings which greatly enhanced our ability to respond progamatically to community needs and to recalibrate the fundraising and budgeting processes.
- **Congregational Support:** Created teams to provide congregational support in these areas. health challenges, connecting socially, economic challenges, food delivery challenges, families with children at home.
- **Building and Grounds:** MET had discussions with the Building and Grounds chairs regarding maintenance and repair needs of our historic building and grounds, challenges they faced with the elevator and driveway projects, proposed security improvements, and need to restore budget cuts from past years.
- **Budget and PPP Grant:** Thanks to the hard work of the staff and MET, we applied for and received a Payment Protection Program grant from the Federal Stimulus Bill, which will be an enormous help. With the loss of rentals and the cancellation of the Service Auction, we were facing a deficit which the PPP grant will cover. Careful budget planning is more essential than ever as we look to the fall. In creating the 2020-21 budget, MET followed guidelines provided by the Board.
- **Ministerial Intern:** Having received a specific gift for this purpose from an anonymous USG household, we are considering having a ministerial intern join us for 2020-21. With the help of the Personnel Committee, MET has developed a full

process for reviewing a possible candidate and exploring what the internship would include. This process should be completed over the summer.

- **MET Personnel turnover:** The MET identified and invited a church member to replace Andre Stormont, who will be transitioning off the Team at the end of this fiscal year. The nominee has tentatively accepted the position and will begin serving July 1, 2020.

#### **Fall Accomplishments:**

- USG joined the New Sanctuary Movement as a member organization
- MET reviewed staff priorities for the coming year
- Resolved payment issues to our Mindfulness instructors who will receive any DANA offerings directly
- We welcomed a new recovery group.
- The Elevator was officially opened!

#### **Goals for Upcoming Church Year - an ever changing landscape**

- Manage Budget
- Manage Day to Day Operations consistent with Board guidelines
- Create and support structures for congregational support

#### **MINISTER'S REPORT 2020**

*Submitted by Rev. Kent Matthies, Minister*

We began this year with many good plans and worked with the goal of growing our capacities for meaningful worship, effective social justice, and nourishing spiritual development for all ages. By the end of winter, the world was highly impacted by Covid19. Our church's entire focus became meeting the challenges presented by Covid19.

On March 22, 2020 we held the first virtual worship service in the 155-year history of USG. As of the writing of this report we have held 13 virtual worship services in a row. The learning curve was steep, but people gave incredible amounts of time and effort and the results have been important accomplishments. Although we are physically apart from one another, there is a deep feeling of emotional and spiritual connection and uplift.

We give a huge thanks for the staff and volunteers who have worked hard to help us in the shutdown conditions to develop our communications and technology capacities in many areas of church life (worship, programs, ministries and committee work). We are so grateful to Celeste Lamb, who became our Church Administrator last fall. Celeste not only completed a year of getting to know new systems and people, but she did it with grace and effectiveness during a global pandemic, recession, social unrest and protest.

A very top priority during the pandemic has been and is keeping people safe and healthy. We established the USG Covid 19 Task Force charged with monitoring and interpreting guidelines from the Governor, Mayor, Center for Disease Control and UUA. To date we have no firm idea of when we can invite large groups of people go come back into the sanctuary for worship. The same is true for Children's and Adult Spiritual Development and all of our ministries and programs. We will only begin back in-person programs when we think we can do everything possible to ensure sufficient safety. It is very possible that 2020-21 will be a mixture of majority virtual with some in-person programs.

During the Covid19 crisis we launched the following new teams to help USG and wider communities: health & caring, finance & employment, homeschool and parenting, social connections, and food delivery. If you or someone you know needs help in these areas, please let us know and we can support you with information, pastoral support, programs, and resources.

We do our ministries within the realization that most everyone has experienced shock and grief around the challenges of Covid19 and the attendant recession. In all our ministries and programs, we hold the question of how can we help each other stay resilient, get the help we need, and stay connected to make it through this pandemic.

A major flash point in our nation came at the end of May with the murder by Minneapolis Police officers of George Floyd, an unarmed African American. We have all been involved in the earthquake of unrest, protest, and rebellion which has shaken the US in the weeks since the crime. This is another moment holding our church accountable to our lifetime work of dismantling racism at every level of society, including in the most individual and congregational forms. With faith, we continue USG's decades long commitment to anti-racism, anti-oppression and pro-diversity work in our worship, spiritual development and justice work. At the writing of this report we are holding a Black Lives Matter public witness/protest five days per week (Mon-Fri, at 5-6 pm) in the front of our building on Lincoln Drive. Wearing masks and using social distancing, USG members and many neighbors emphasize the all too often forgotten truth that Black Lives Matter.

As we move forward in these unparalleled times we are creating a USG Future team. The goals of our work will include planning for the following phases: 1) How we do virtual church with excellence for as long as needed? 2) How do we move into hybrid (in-person and virtual) church in the next phase? 3) What does USG look like after this pandemic?

These topics can seem overwhelming to many of us. We intend to enter our work with very specific questions such as: a) When we have people back together in person in the sanctuary, at the end of worship when we pass the peace, will we encourage handshaking or hugs? b) When we can be back together at the USG campus, for which events will we offer the option of people attending virtually? What will virtual or hybrid participation do to the quality of interactions? How will accessibility and breaking down barriers for participation be impacted? What will be the role of video for programs and marketing? At this time USG has a team of 10 people engaged in a Video Ministry Academy program where we are building skills and plans for making videos to support our mission and efforts in all sectors of church life. These specific questions will tie in with our commitment to "Building Beloved Community with compassion, service and empowerment."

If you have specific questions or ideas for how we do our ministries and programs in the future please reach out to the Board of Directors, the Ministry Executive Team, or Staff.

In Faith,  
Kent

## **BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT 2020**

*Submitted by Celeste Lamb, Business Administrator*

My first year at USG has been quite eventful.

As a new employee, much of my time and energy has gone into learning processes, the software that USG uses, faces, names, and abbreviations.

I helped move USG through the uncharted waters of a pandemic shutdown, and also got to witness firsthand how the USG community responds in a time of civil response to injustice. I look forward to a second year with a little less to learn and a little more progress.

Below are some of the things I managed to accomplish.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

- Established a communications committee made up of staff and volunteers (Carolyn Scott, Ryan Hurd, Abbey Porter, Treva Burger, Caroline Bright, Marilyn Dyson, Joanne Davis) that met regularly from August until March
- Established and used a Canva account for making attractive advertising for events and virtual Order of Service
- Increased use of Instagram
- Streamlined communications by transitioning Center for Mindfulness newsletter to USG Mailchimp account

### **TECH**

- Assisted and instructed employees and members on uses of software, troubleshooting issues with emails, Breeze and USG website logins
- Created and ran slideshows for services
- Updated website as needed (I was not the only one to do this) creating new pages when necessary
- Created a system for requests of Zoom meetings on USG accounts as well as creating instructions for users of USG Zoom accounts
- Used UUA resources to create an additional Zoom account allowing up to 300 people per meeting in order to do virtual services
- Transitioned services to Facebook Live and then to Zoom
- Recorded Zoom Services and uploaded those and other videos to Youtube

### **BOOKKEEPING**

- Paid bills including necessary taxes
- Processed staff and lay reimbursements
- Recorded expenses and income in QuickBooks
- Assisted with creation of 2021 budget
- Filed necessary tax forms

### **PERSONNEL**

- Processed payroll and related filings
- Provided new employees with all required hiring forms

### **ETC.**

- Worked with Ministry Executive Team to manage practical functioning of USG
- Worked as member of newly established COVID -19 Task Force that created policies and made decisions on Church closing and use of building by other groups, as well as protocols for use of building
- Assisted rental coordinator with contracts with renters and making decisions related to rentals
- Completed required forms for insurance companies and licensing entities

## **DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT (DSD) 2020**

*Submitted by Ryan Hurd, Director of Spiritual Development*

This year as Director of Spiritual Development, I established a series of thematic goals to focus my vision for building beloved community. The ways we engage are radically shifting, but the calling is the same: We are here to grow together, strengthened by our intergenerational relationships and our compassionate approach to self-inquiry, civic engagement and spiritual growth.

I have worked in three main arenas – to support individuals, leaders and families, to develop new programs, and to expand upon what is already working here. Here are some thematic highlights from the last year that are not specifically mentioned in the ASD and CSD reports.

These highlights include:

- Refocusing CSD to serve not just children but families
- Relaxing the heavy commitment level for CSD volunteers, while simultaneously expanding the number of volunteers and deepening CSD's intersections with the congregation including Social Justice, Ending Racism and Earth Honoring Comms.
- Creating new comfy places and a crucial 15 minutes for parents to have a conversation in the Sullivan education wing while the children finish their workshops.
- Working with the Archives committee towards a goal of expanded access to children's books.
- Consulting with Building & Grounds to reinvest in secure and comfortable spaces for our Junior and Senior youth groups.
- Expanding community building programs for ASD, including Death Café and dreamwork.
- Helping create a simplified budgeting practice for ASD mindfulness teachers that reduces staff and volunteer time.
- Participating actively in my local cluster of religious professionals, the DSAREC chapter of LREDA which includes monthly programs for career/skill development.
- Completing my 3rd Renaissance Module on the Philosophy of Religious Education, with additional trainings on topics including: faith development, youth ministry, and the foundations of ritual.
- Integrating my professional training in dreamwork by delivering a dream-themed homily in August 2019, giving a well-attended workshop on lucid dreaming, and several "Dream Chapel" programs for our 1st – 5th graders that included dream sharing, dream mapping and dream mask making.
- Participating actively in the USG Security team during the pandemic.
- Drawing on my background in online education and digital marketing to quickly shift to online community building during the pandemic, not only for CSD but also for worship and ASD, especially the Center for Mindfulness.

As we look ahead, there are many unknowns about how we will be together as a community. It's daunting. Yet I am lifted by the spirit of innovation in our congregation to find new ways to support one another, to grow and learn, and stand together for justice.

## **MUSIC DIRECTOR 2020**

*Submitted by Mark Daugherty, Music Director*

Because of the current health crisis, so much of how we do worship on a Sunday morning has changed. On a typical Sunday morning now we are all remotely zooming, with all the worship team being in different locations. I still come to USG to do my part of the music because I like the piano (the wonderful Walsh Steinway as I call it) and I create a connection and a sense of continuity for many of the congregation with our beloved sanctuary. I have gotten accustomed to the strangeness of being alone in the church during worship. For a few weeks, I handled all of the music in the service as a solo pianist and the congregation sang muted. I have experimented with creating an accompaniment track for one of our soloists to sing karaoke-style in his/her home. Lately with much assistance from Jessica Stanforth, I have started to create video clips using iMovie on my Mac. What this allows is for us to use different singers within the same piece. It is a good addition to our toolbox for music but it certainly is time consuming. I have spent a lot of my time researching other possibilities for making music with others online, but there is nothing that allows for concurrent musical collaboration at this time – at least that I have found. But I am still looking. I would welcome anyone who wishes to join me in this quest. One of the obvious casualties of the pandemic is the loss of the choir as a usual participant in our services. We still meet on Thursday evenings for a zoom rehearsal and once we even tried to sing together online. That was a disappointment, since there is no way to perform together because of differing internet speeds.

In an effort to explore possible new directions in worship, several of us are taking an online course in making and editing videos. We're only on the second week at this time so it's a little premature to see how we'll develop these talents, but I am guardedly optimistic. The instructor has already told us that we will not be editing clips into a composite whole in the style of the famous virtual choir pieces on Youtube. Darn. But perhaps some of the skills might transfer to that sort of project.

Up until the lock-down, we had many good worship services. Musical highlights include our December holiday service (Navidad Nuestra by Ariel Ramirez) and our February service (Selected Shorts, a musical celebration/appreciation of Beverly Gross Spencer and Bob Hefele). In January our long-time baritone section leader, Tom Schoonmaker decided to retire from the choir. I had planned for the spring service to be a celebration of Tom. But then the covid issue hit and in the middle of March we stopped being able to rehearse and we were no longer able to worship together. As a result, the third musical service was a kind of retrospective of choir performances from our archives. I still want to honor Tom, but I think we should do it in the sanctuary and not as a zoom meeting. Our section leaders have been an important part of the musical program at church, and they include the three mentioned before as well as our soprano Siobhan Raupach. Before social distancing became the norm, they helped our volunteers to learn their music and anchored their respective sections. Now with corona, they have again become soloists and are singing in most services. It is always a pleasure to hear them and they add much artistic beauty to our worship.

I serve on the Worship Arts committee as well as the Music Ministry committee which I created during the fall. The purpose of this committee was to get more input from the congregation for what they might enjoy in the music. We had several meetings and Bob Burger even created a page on the church's website that was a kind of survey for people to fill out saying what they wanted to hear and what direction(s) they would like the music to take. This committee has

become inactive because of covid. Maybe we can find new ways to resurrect it. Members included Charles Gabriel, Bonnie McDairmont, Bob Burger, Red Malleck, and Soyini Powell Emery.

The last bit of news is an amazing surprise. Last summer we applied for a grant to repair our Rieger tracker action organ and we were awarded \$15,000 to do it. I was glad for the help of Charles Gabriel and Lynne Kalish in completing the application. Under the terms of the grant, the church had to match the grant amount and we did. Unfortunately, the company that I thought we would use was unable to work on the instrument until the fall of 2020 and the work had to be completed by the end of June 2020. I met with the Patrick Murphy Organ Company and we came to an agreement that was signed in January of this year. They would be able to work on it this spring and that is what happened. The result is that the organ will be back in working order by the time of the annual meeting. I'm looking forward to using it again during our worship services as well as finding new ways to showcase it. It really is a magnificent instrument and we should be proud of it and its history.

Last fall the staff had a retreat in which we were to formulate individual goals for the year. Mine were:

1. Since the original time for this retreat was 2 weeks ago, I am including as a goal getting the application in for the grant to help with the organ repair
2. If the grant application is successful, I'll be overseeing the organ repair
3. I will be keeping more comprehensive documentation on the time I work for USG
4. Set up with some assistance I hope a committee that explores and recommends additional new musics for Sunday morning worship
5. Be a part of the dialogue for music in Sunday morning worship
6. Explore implementing a series of musical programs/concerts
7. Become familiar with and use Breeze
8. Grow and expand choir – new singers

Numbers 1 & 2 have been met. Yeh! Number 3 was a personal goal of mine and I did it for most of the fall. Keeping track of one's hours in and of itself can be a time consuming task. Number 4 was the aforementioned Music Ministry committee. I did this and we met, but with the corona virus, the committee has gone on hiatus. Number 5 is closely related to number 4 and I think I have been a part of that dialogue. Number 6 is not happening right now because of Covid. Number 7 I have done, although I don't use it that much. Number 8 is an ongoing goal, but of course right now the choir is on hold.

Where we need to go I think is:

Develop a committee to assist with technology in music.

Continue the dialogue about music in Sunday morning worship

Work on my film/video editing skills

Look through the Youtube archives for musical performances that we might use until we are having worship in the sanctuary

It has been quite a year filled with many challenges. It is a pleasure to work with our professional team of Celeste, Carolyn, Ryan, and Kent as well as the dedicated volunteers who make Sunday worship happen every week. I would also like to voice my appreciation to the members of our sound team who have given so generously of their time every Sunday. This covid crisis has at least given them some time off (but don't get used to it, guys!)

## **ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT 2020**

*Submitted by Ryan Hurd, Interim Chair*

### **◆ Members**

Ryan Hurd (Interim Chair), Gerry Whelan (Emeritus-Chair), Joanne Davis, Rick Rodes, Howard Silver, Jerry Caruso

**◆ Mission of Committee** To provide programs, events and communal gatherings that support members and friends of the Unitarian Society of Germantown in finding spiritual paths that are meaningful and relevant to their individual journeys as well as to the community as it moves forward compassionately in defining, refining and strengthening our Beloved Community.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

- Continue to develop new programs and spiritual practices to appeal to a wide range of our USG members and friends.
- Continue to develop and foster a robust program of meditation, mindfulness and related teachings involving our partner Springboard Meditation Sangha and hosting nationally recognized meditation teachers.
- Continue our Exploring Elderhood program and help that community take more active ownership of that program and to consider other directions that Exploring Elderhood might take.
- Support Exploring Elderhood in offering another Elder Service to the whole USG Community
- Continue our program of Difficult Conversation and provide a safe, respectful forum where many more of the topics that our members struggle with and sometimes appear to divide us can be explored and where we can learn what positions people who may differ from us may hold and their reasons for holding those views.
- Continue to offer the whole USG Community an annual Community Day wherein we can come together to share and explore new spiritual practices, share an intergenerational celebration of our Beloved Community.

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

Most of last year's goals were met abundantly. Adult Spiritual Development can be seen to support programs that fall into three categories: faith formation, spiritual practices (including mindfulness), and community building.

### **Center for Mindfulness at USG**

- Formalized our mindfulness workshops into the Center for Mindfulness at USG in Summer 2019, led by Howard Silver, featuring many events, including the Sunday evening program *Breathe* and a number of mindfulness and meditation experts, including Deborah Cooper, Mary Kalyna, Jesse Frechette, and Pamela Freeman.
- Established a weekly Mindfulness Newsletter with a current email list of 250 people
- Led financially successful and well attended one-day retreats by Esther Wyss-Flamm, Deborah Cooper, and Rev. Kent Matthies.
- Successfully transitioned mindfulness programs to online in March 2020 due to COVID-19 shut down, creating a robust community gathering support several times a week.
- 6 Week Intro to Mindfulness with Jesse Frenchette has been a popular program well attended by USG members and visitors alike.

- We thank Deborah Cooper for her support and guidance in growing the mindfulness community.

#### **Additional Spiritual Practices-based programs:**

- Everyday Spiritual Practices, A conversation group based on the book by the same name, was piloted throughout fall 2019 – winter 2020, thanks to leadership by Gerry Whelan and Gale Gibbons.
- Lucid Dreaming – Ryan Hurd presented in August 2019.
- Yoga with Esther Wyss Flamm, increasing in attendance during Zoom days.
- Online presentation by Suvuco, a Buddhist monk based in the UK, organized by Deborah Cooper.

#### **Faith Formation:**

- UU-101 seminars once a month, led by Eric Foster and Charles Gabriel.
- Susan Bockius led a book group on John Buehren’s new book *Conflagration*, about transcendentalism, UUism and its ties to Buddhism and social justice.

#### **Community Building:**

- ASD hosted a successful Community Day on November 24, 2019, providing not only an entertaining worship service but also several morning workshops featuring spiritual practices, and a delicious brunch.
- Elderhood, hosted by Gerry Whelan throughout the year, met once a month, with numerous guest speakers. After lock-down, the virtual version of Elderhood began meeting once a week, including some extra sessions playing games such as Charades.
- Gerry Whelan also continued his popular series on difficult conversations with the national platform known as *Better Angels*, discussing the left/right political divide.
- *Death Café*, facilitated by Maggie Beaumont and hosted by Ryan Hurd, was held twice in person in Winter and Spring 2020, creating a safe place to talk about death. Since COVID-19 shut down, two more well-attended virtual Death Cafés were offered.
- Gerry Whelan has been transitioning out of ASD leadership since March 2020. He continues on leading several important programs and to assist Interm Chair. We are so thankful for Gerry for his years of steady leadership and community building!

#### **◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

- Continue to support community virtually through Elderhood meetings & Death Café.
- Continue to support faith development through UU 101
- Build new shelving and storage for meditation equipment and CSD in Sullivan 3
- Pilot new faith development workshops, possibly in conjunction with regional UU support such as LREDA.
- Continue to develop our robust spiritual practices-based programs digitally during a time of uncertainty. The Center of Mindfulness is well positioned for online meetings, including digital online retreats with national leaders such as Oren Sofer.
- Resuming Difficult Conversations after lock down
- Other new programs to consider are a community dream group and labyrinth meditation workshop.
- ASD is poised to transition our programs to safe and sustainable gatherings when allowed, as well introduce as hybrid gatherings so those who cannot meet in person may still participate from home.
- We hope to invite new members to our committee and find a new Chair.

## **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE 2020**

*Submitted by Bill Blasdel, Co-Chair*

### **◆ Members**

Members Co-chairs: Bill Blasdel & Kurt Ahrens. Active members: Lynne Kalish, Carolyn Cotton, Scott Smith, August Anderson, Howard Silver and Andre Stormont (MET).

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

Operate, repair, maintain and continually improve our historic, beautiful property, working within constraints according to the following priorities:

1. Assure a safe facility
2. Preserve & protect the property from degradation (biggest threat – water leaks)
3. Reduce/control operating costs (including utilities)
4. Enhance the property for members' use, accessibility, and for rental income
5. General cosmetic improvements and refurbish one space each year.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

1. Stay within approved FY 19-20 budget and exclude the B&G budget from being reduced or cut to balance the overall USG budget.
2. Re-affirm priority statement and develop a prioritized list of repairs and improvement projects for the fiscal year, and execute them accordingly.
3. Formulate, propose and negotiate budget for FY 20-21 with the 1st increase in 8+ years.
4. Engage the congregation in discrete projects and ad hoc workdays.
5. Establish a “Proposal Form” for the congregation to suggest project to the Committee.
6. Start a multi-year campaign to eradicate invasive and noxious plants on the property.

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

1. Repair damage and repaint 11 wall and ceiling areas.
2. Remove massive air handler & ducts in Bristol Room, repaint and install new heating.
3. Reclaim construction road area and plant grass.
4. Landscape outside of elevator building.
5. Repair storm drain in Grove.
6. Rehab CNS stream bed, take down 4 dangerous major trees & remove 4 fallen trees.
7. Replace kitchen door and reconstruct outside kitchen steps.

### **◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

1. Stay within approved FY 20-21 budget and eliminate “cuts of convenience” from the B&G budget to balance the overall USG budget.
2. Re-affirm priority statement and develop a prioritized list of repairs, and improvement projects for the fiscal year, and execute them accordingly.
3. Formulate, propose and negotiate budget for FY 21-22.
4. Take advantage of the the substantial discounts available from contractors that are eager for work to do maintenance and undertake necessary projects that otherwise would interfere with the normal functions USG.

## **CARING SYSTEM 2020**

*Submitted by Linda Bernstein, Co-Chair*

### **◆ Members**

The entire USG community comprises the Caring System. Andrea Bernstein, MS, LPC joined the the steering team this year. The Caring Team now consists of Andrea plus Linda Bernstein, Sarah West, and Rev. Kent Matthies.

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

To organize the energy of the USG community to provide comfort and assistance to fellow members during times of sickness or hardship. To celebrate joyous events with community members. To publicize joys and sorrows so that community members can reach out on their own with congratulations or condolence.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

To normalize seeking and receiving help. To encourage members to ask for or accept help when they encounter obstacles. To encourage members to be unconventional in thinking about ways to help and be helped.

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

In conjunction with the cancer support group, the caring team offered an after service workshop led by Andi Bernstein, on Supporting A Loved One Through a Crisis. Due to scheduling conflicts it did not receive the wide audience we had hoped, but was greatly appreciated by those in attendance.

In addition to the usual health crises and challenges experienced by members, the caring team has been called on to help members with particular challenges during the Covid19 pandemic, both members with increased anxiety and members coping with the Covid illness.

Two babies were born to congregation members this year and the community provided support to the new parents.

As always, the USG community is overwhelmingly generous when appeals are made for meals or other support. Many members send individual cards and other messages of encouragement to people experiencing joys or sorrows. Members report feeling very supported by the congregation during challenging times. We are often called on to prepare an all-church announcement when a member of the congregation passes away. Sadly this happened several times this year.

### **◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

To continue to harvest the high levels of energy and compassion in the the USG community and channel it into support for people in need.

## **CHILD SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT (CSD) 2020**

*Respectfully submitted by Ryan Hurd, Director of CSD*

◆ **Members** Janet Haas (chair), Ryan Hurd (Director), Alan Gardner, Lucas Jaeger, Sharon Mafuru, Kristin Shipler, Jess Stanforth, Gale Gibbons (MET liason)

### ◆ **Mission of Committee**

- Provide developmentally appropriate education that supports the lifelong process of learning to cultivate goodness, compassion, empathy, and love for oneself and others.
- Offer safe and caring spaces for introspective work, connecting to nature, and building right-relationships in community across generations.
- Put into practice hands-on, experiential education for children, facilitators and parents that cultivates respect, stewardship, service, mindfulness, responsibility, justice, and the search for truth and beauty.
- To welcome young people into the UU community, help them find their way into becoming active members, and provide them opportunities to learn the rich history and guiding principles of UU

### ◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

- Teacher training could include at least one of these themes: equipping teachers for leading diverse classes, learning differences, and restorative justice; Work with POWER to facilitate anti-racism work, combat adultism in youth ministry, and expand volunteerism in CSD
- Support our most vulnerable families and youth.
- Make room for Young Adults, especially emergent (post-bridging) young adults
- Continue to grow the mindfulness platform of ASD and integrate with CSD goals.

### ◆ **Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

- Janet Haas has served as CSD Chair since Fall 2019, serving to not only run CSD Committee meetings but also keeping the calendar up-to-date and working with fellow committee members in the planning and execution of special programs such as our Teacher Meet & Greet Fellowship Hour, Pumpkin Carving, Bread Communion, and the Christmas Play.
- Fall 2019 Teacher Training included a workshop on Restorative Justice, led by Kristin Shipler. Winter 2020 Teacher Training included a workshop on integrating mindfulness into CSD, led by certified mindfulness instructor Jesse Frechette. We also had a well-attended late winter (March 1) training that was open to teachers, families, USG leadership as well as Childcare Staff called “Stewards of Children,” on the topic of recognizing and preventing childhood sexual abuse, led by Christine Ginsberg.
- Piloted a new Religious Education model known as “Way Cool Sunday School,” which features a flexible and variable educational program consisting of age-specific workshops twice a month, Children’s Chapel (or “Spiritual Practices Sunday”) once a month, and Social Justice Sunday once a month. This model reduces the commitment level of individual volunteers while increasing the number and diversity of CSD guest speakers and topics. We piloted new curricula in all grade levels, which were well received by teachers and children. Many of our CSD volunteers this year had never been part of CSD before, creating greater intersections in the congregation. To achieve this, we are especially thankful for the participation of members of the Social Justice, Ending Racism, Young Adult, and Earth Honoring Committees.

- Extended CSD class schedule by 15 minutes into Fellowship hour. Worked well for both teachers and kids as they were able to fulfill and appreciate the planned time together
- Integrated mindfulness into CSD workshops at every level.
- Hired 2 new childcare workers.
- Re-catalogued the Children’s Library, thanks to Andrea Barsevick
- Added a new super comfy couch to the Sullivan Library, thanks for Mer Halferty.
- Expanded the CSD Rover job to have a rotating committee member available for each Sunday class in the Sullivan wing as a support resource to teachers and kids. This freed Ryan to teach when needed and connect more with new families
- During lock-down, we quickly established a weekly online CSD meeting space for families called CSD LIVE. We prized connection over content, and music over lessons, bringing faith-specific words, rituals and songs to families at a time of great anxiety. We also created a new online resources page for parents that includes select recorded content from CSD LIVE sessions as well as Story Time with Ryan.
- Our CSD Sunday Service featured three musicians, 10 child and youth participants, and the talents of Becky Horner and Jess Stanforth in creating video montages of the year.
- Donated to Turning Points for Children Philadelphia in honor of CSD Teachers’ names.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

- Pilot online Summer programs in conjunction with at-home faith development materials to support families during continued limited movement due to COVID-19.
- Pilot online Fall – Winter programs for CSD that continue to support families, create connections, and provide practical materials for faith development with support from UUA as well as LREDA community.
- Eliminate CSD registration fees for visitor families
- Hold multiple Town Hall meetings with parents about their needs and concerns about the ever-evolving timeline of “re-opening” in conjunction with guidance from the CDC, Philadelphia public health, and local community experts and the USG Security Team.
- Once we physically return to the building, continue our long-term project of making the Sullivan wing more CSD-friendly with cleaning-out and adding storage (new sofa and cataloging Children’s Library were a start)
- Whether virtually or in-person, continue to use and expand our curricula to be inclusive of mindfulness, human issues, exploration of nature, physical activity, and music. Our goal is a well-rounded program that speaks to all age levels and utilizes adult talent within the congregation

## **EARTHSPIRIT CIRCLE 2020**

*Submitted by Maggie Beaumont and Tom Berendt, Chairs with Jess Stanforth*

### **◆ Members**

Tom Berendt, Maggie Beaumont, Jess Stanforth, Sarah Frazier, Meg Ryan, Ben Manes, Dena Ellis, Justy DeForest, Nancy Coates, Susan Bockius, Ryan Hurd

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

To develop awareness of worldwide Earth-honoring traditions and practices;  
To celebrate the seasonal and lunar changes during The Wheel of the Year;  
To provide a gathering opportunity for solitary practitioners of Earth-based traditions;  
To introduce those who are not Unitarian Universalists to our beloved community.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

To continue to conduct ceremonies for the solar holidays; to research Earth-honoring traditions from around the world for future celebrations; and create opportunities for diverse spiritual experiences and explorations of Earth-based devotional possibilities.

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

- Worked through Breeze Church Management to respond to new ESC inquiries in two days, impressively expanding our e-mail contact list.
- Composed, coordinated, and led the annual Beltaine celebration, online on April 26th in USG's Sunday service. Provided musicians, vocalists, and readers.
- Continued to coordinate a working relationship with Ryan Hurd of DSD group to help us make some of our ceremonies more child-friendly, including a joint effort for pumpkin-carving night.
- Maintained activity of monthly meetings beyond ceremony-planning to include a guided meditation and a song or story.
- Created outdoor rituals in USG's new labyrinth and altar space in the grove.
- Jess created a documentation library.
- Composed a covenant for the group.
- Created and facilitated a Yule celebration that was attended by more than 80 people.
- Made a relatively seamless transition to virtual gatherings during Covid19 pandemic.
- New Co-chairs (Tom Berendt and Maggie Beaumont) were appointed as of May 6, 2019.

### **◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

- Utilize photography and/or video of ceremonies to publicize EarthSpirit Circle;
- Pursue becoming a chapter of CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans);
- Improve EarthSpirit Circle's website presence;
- Maintain storage of documents on Dropbox for continuity, utilize our Google Group for communication, and coordinate volunteers through Sign-Up Genius.
- Improve online membership and participation via Zoom meet-ups.

## **ELEVATOR & DRIVEWAY PROJECTS 2020**

*Submitted by Bill Dowdall, Chair*

◆ **Members** Bill Dowdall, Chair, Linda Bernstein, Bill Blasdel, Carolyn Cotton, Charles Gabriel, John Pron, Gloria Guldager and Susan Smith

Our mission was to oversee the design and construction of an addition to the church building and installing an ADA compliant elevator in the new addition. The committee was also charged with repaving the driveway that's runs between Johnson St. and our parking lot. Our goal for the past year was to complete both projects.

The building was completed and the elevator became operational this past August enabling everyone access to all three levels in the church building. The Driveway was repaved this past January. Mission accomplished!

Our goal is to get past the Covid-19 Virus so that we can once again gather in the church, using the elevator if needed and drive down the driveway without looking out for pot holes.

## **ENDING RACISM COMMITTEE 2020**

*Submitted by Barbara Dowdall, co-chair*

◆ **Members** Tonika Berkley and Barbara McDowell Dowdall, Co-Chairs; Nancy Anderson, Treva Burger, Devery Howerton, Rosita Johnson, Parvathy Menon, Gail Mershon, Lois Murphy, Nancy Roecker Coates, Jim Salom, Eli Scarce, Susan Zingale-Baird

### ◆ **Mission of Committee**

Vision: ERC envisions a society in which racial justice and equality are the reality for all.

Mission: ERC works toward dismantling racism in all its forms, individual, institutional, and systemic, through self-examination, education, advocacy, public witness, and service.

### ◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

- Encourage ERC members and USG congregants to address all forms and
- levels of racism through self-examination, education, advocacy, public
- witness, and service
- Continue sharing Black Lives of Unitarian Universalists (BLUU) and Racism Book Study Group
- Continue monitoring and occasionally joining with UUA racial justice efforts via
- <https://www.uua.org/multiculturalism>
- Recruit and appoint a new co-chair
- Expand membership
- Increase awareness about racism within USG through the weekly EERC table lending library, recommended readings, etc.
- Invite guest speakers to USG
- Support Coalition Against Mass Incarceration (CAMI)

- Support Men Who Care of Germantown in their work at Roosevelt School and MLKing HS; Participate with POWER in advocating for fair funding and full resources for all Philadelphia public schools
- Organize field trips
- Participate in worship planning
- Host an ERC Open House in the fall of 2019 [sic]
- Expand coordination of Ending Racism activities with other Delaware Valley congregations Establish Northwest interfaith links with groups sharing similar goals

#### ◆ **Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

- Invited community to view documentary "Walk in My Shoes" about police/community relations
- Organized trip to Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture in DC; participated with Restoration on with additional trip.
- Visit by Valerie Russ, Philadelphia Inquirer; article on ERC history printed
- Encouraged implementation of 8th principle
- Participated in Fall Social Justice Festival
- Provided programming for new CSD Social Justice Sundays
- Open House in October for ERC and Black Lives of UU
- Continued association with Men Who Care of Germantown
- Continued weekly ERC table and lending library at Fellowship Hour
- Initiated Online library and links to Anti-racist resources
- Continued monthly Racism Study Book Group
- 3rd Annual NCTE African American Read-In participation by USG
- Racism and Technology Workshop with Michael Coard from Philadelphia Tribune and Allison McDowell from Wrench in the Gears blog
- Field Trip to see Brian Stephenson's film Just Mercy
- Initiated study of forgotten African American suffragists in 100th anniversary year of 19th amendment
- Field trip to hear Angela Davis at Annenberg
- Participation in monthly 8th Principle Call In with Paula Cole Jones
- Joined early planning for USG member Tuskegee Airmen exhibit
- Created online tribute to longtime ERC member Marion Watlington on her passing
- Participated in planning for George Floyd Memorial Town Hall

#### ◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

- Re-imagine ERC as a Committee of the Whole (USG)
- Participate in conceptualizing and implementing the 8th principle in the life of USG as a model for sister congregations
- Increase and expand USG connections with the racially diverse and activist community in which our building sits and from which we take our name.
- Continue activities of last year and years past and adapt as needed

## **MLK DAY OF SERVICE 2020**

*Submitted by Lois Murphy, Chair*

### **◆ Members**

Lois Murphy (Chair), Devery Howerton, Diane Sharp, Melissa Guerriero, Carolyn Scott, Parvathy Menon, Judi Morrow, and Jim Salom

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

The MLK Day of Service committee is responsible for identifying, planning and facilitating service projects, securing supplies and donations, recruiting and communicating with volunteers, supervising on-site logistics and developing and conducting worship for USG's annual MLK Day of Service. Our mission is to provide a day that combines meaningful service and spiritual development and honors of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

Our primary goal was to continue as in the previous year to have participation of approximately 300-400 volunteers engaged in approximately 25-30 service projects. We also wanted to build on successes of the previous year and address and avoid problems that had been identified in the past.

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

The USG MLK Day of Service took place on January 20, 2020. The event was successful and included over 400 volunteers who participated in the 23 separate projects. Rev. Kent Matthies led an inspiring service, after which volunteers were routed to their projects. This year we had greater publicity for and organized a well-attended economic justice protest, in collaboration with POWER, Senator Art Haywood and with leadership from Rev. Matthies.

The feedback from Volunteers, Project Leaders, the Coordination Team members, and others involved in the day was overwhelmingly positive.

### **◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

1. Identify co-chairs for the 2020 MLK Day of Service Planning Committee.
2. Discuss any modifications to the overall approach including worship service, service activities, priorities and protest or witness, in light of any continuing restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic, and in light of current events including Black Lives Matter and activities surrounding criminal justice reform.
3. Re-evaluate the number of projects and volunteers that can reasonably be conducted on-site at USG.
4. Determine the number of people that can be safely accommodated in the sanctuary for the service and adjust volunteer numbers accordingly.
5. Address improvement suggestions and recommendations identified in the previous year.
6. Evaluate and implement options to streamline data management and communications with groups of volunteers.
7. Hold first planning meeting by October 1, 2020.
8. Have all project leaders and projects confirmed by November 1, 2020.

## **SERVICE AUCTION COMMITTEE 2020**

*Submitted by Deb Kish-Silver and Janet Haas, Co-Chairs*

### **◆ Members**

Deb Kish-Silver and Janet Haas, co-chairs. Members: Carolyn Cotton, Lynne Kalish, Nancy LaFauci, Gwen Lindgren, Judi Morrow, Nancy Radcliffe, Judy Rodes.

MET Representative: Andre Stormont

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

To raise greatest amount of funds possible to assist USG in meeting its overall goals. To build fellowship and encourage community across all age levels within USG.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

1. Discuss overall auction planning, fundraising challenges, volunteer engagement, and target audiences with the goal of exceeding the funds raised at the previous year's auction
2. Decide upon a fresh, fun auction theme that would appeal to all ages, as well as be family-friendly
3. Evaluate new fundraising methods to ensure we meet our goal for 2020
4. Become more familiar with the Auctria auction program implemented the previous year and look for ways to maximize its use. Explore the cost and feasibility of printing the auction booklet in USG's office using the new printer as a cost-saving measure
5. Continue to work with office staff to maximize advertising print, social media, and with the use of slideshows before service

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

The advent of COVID-19 resulted in the April 25th auction being cancelled indefinitely.

However, progress the auction committee made towards meeting our goals deserves noting:

1. Our theme is The Wizard of Oz - one that is appealing to all ages, and is fun to advertise and decorate. There was enthusiasm for the theme as the solicitation campaign for donated items and events started strong in mid-February, and within 3 weeks donations numbered half those of last year's auction. But donations came to a halt in March with the lockdown
2. We planned to enhance fundraising on auction night by offering a large Keurig coffee-themed basket filled with goodies donated by the auction committee. We also planned to ask other large committees if they would like to donate filled, themed baskets. In addition to the 50/50 raffle, a table of regionally-themed wines was to be available for sale
3. We worked with office staff on the feasibility and logistics of printing our own booklet. Considering the flexibility of the program and committee members willing to donate their time, we found that in-house printing could be done for approximately half the cost of the prior year's outside printing fee.
4. We had an effective working relationship with the office staff on advertising across all social media that was going strong until the lockdown. We appreciate the staff's continued help with communications regarding the auction status to this day

### **◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

Because of the continued shutdown due to COVID-9, we are unable to fully address goals for the upcoming year. However, the committee has offered the following for consideration, all dependent upon when the church re-opens:

1. Next year's physical auction is tentatively scheduled for Saturday 4/24/21 in the evening as has been done in previous years. That date is on the church calendar
2. If we do open in the Fall, we plan to host a fun-event evening on Saturday, October 24th based on our current auction theme. Ideas for the evening include food/drink, a themed trivia game, maybe a basket raffle, a small silent auction, as well as a small poster auction offering events that would occur over the winter/spring period prior to the 2021 auction. That date has also been reserved on the church calendar
3. If we are not open in the Fall, we are willing to run a live virtual auction. Consideration needs to be given to the fact that a virtual auction will consist primarily of goods for sale and those types of events that can be held virtually, such as a class. It will be difficult to offer main and poster type items such as dinners, tours, and even a rental home if we remain in a modified lockdown with social distancing. A live virtual auction will entail research and additional assistance in developing its format
4. A continued goal is to encourage members of the congregation to join the committee with new ideas and techniques for fundraising
5. A long-term goal is still the discussion with Ministry, Board and MET about various ways to increase fundraising efforts that are not totally dependent upon the auction committee. We do need to get younger people and families involved in fundraising efforts, so a survey of the congregation could be helpful. But first, we need to get past COVID-19 and run The Wizard of OZ auction.

## **SHARE THE PLATE TASK FORCE 2020**

*Submitted by Eric Foster, Chair*

### **◆ Members**

Eric Foster (chair), Lee Meinicke, Sara Hertz, Mea Schiff

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

**(2020) Distribute our Sunday plate once a month to local charitable interests**

### **(From 2019)**

1. Connect to something larger than ourselves.
2. Acknowledge our interdependence with each other.
3. Shift our congregational outlook to one of abundance rather than scarcity.
4. Strengthen our ties with our neighbors.
5. Show our community that we are the church “of the loving heart, open mind and helping hands” in a very real and tangible way.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

Identify four interests to share our plate with (the other 8 months are filled by "regular" recipients)

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

A new entry into our recipient list was the "Lest We Forget Slavery Museum" in Germantown. They were very grateful for the \$835 we collected for them to preserve their invaluable collection of slavery materials. POWER and UUPLAN were supported this year again, and the New Sanctuary Movement was supported in May (\$975 collected), a particularly timely donation. One month was skipped, due to one Sunday service cancellation in March due to the pandemic disruptions.

Overall, with still June to go, \$11,187 has been distributed to our awardees. Average Share the Plate award was \$1243, the second highest in the last six years.

### **◆ Goals for 2019-2020 Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

Sunday services transitioned to virtual this spring, but STP collections remained strong for this time of year. We hope to see that continue as service may remain virtual for the foreseeable future.

## **SMALL GROUP MINISTRY FACILITATORS 2020**

*Submitted by Jody Hill*

### **◆ Members**

Kent Matthies and Jody Hill, co-chairs; Mark Bangela, Anne Bower, Treva Burger, Carolyn Cotton, Dev Howerton, Shobhi Kanal, Johanna Moyer, Andrea Parry, Mark Thompson, Eileen Whelan, Adrienne Wolkenberg

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

To continue to promote and maintain a vibrant SGM program that feeds our souls and provides a forum for deep listening and meaningful sharing. To carry this energy and purpose out into the world of service.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

To oversee and manage an SGM program which provides a forum for discussion and sharing among facilitators about the successes and challenges of the program. To enroll and include both church members and interested friends and to suggest a group that most closely meets their needs and time constraints. To review Soul Matters curricula, condense the long version to 2 pages, and thus provide options for individual group discussion. To encourage feedback from facilitators and SGM members to improve everyone's experience at least once per year. We will work on ways to increase the number of groups fulfilling this important part of their covenant by offering service opportunities and regular reminders. (Ongoing)

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

Maintained close contact and met faithfully to keep the program whole and relevant. Began exploration into using group energy to extend outside the monthly meeting into service activities.

### **◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

To extend our reach for inclusion of all who would benefit and are interested, especially to welcome more people of color to join SGM. To provide a sharper focus on content relating to multi-culturalism and freedom from oppression. To meet at least every 2 months to stay connected and updated so that the program remains vibrant and relevant. Find ways to introduce curricula exercises and questions in the weekly Spirit to help people engage them.

- With the goal of increasing the number of people in Small Groups each year, host SGM tables after at least two services during the year to inform and recruit new SGM members.
- To support the goal of having groups doing service projects together, commit as facilitators to encouraging this. Record number of SGMs engaging in service projects as an SGM.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATING TEAM 2020**

*Submitted by Lois Murphy, Co-Chair*

### **◆ Members**

Lois Murphy and Diane Sharp (co-chairs). Participants include Devery Howerton, Dennis Brunn, Mel Streib, Anne Gwynne, Treva Berger, Parvathy Menon, Vanessa Lowe, Marilyn Dyson, Yvonne Marlier, Gail Mershon, Carolyn Scott, Steve Battafarano, Jody Hill.

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

The Social Justice Council broadly serves to plan, facilitate, and coordinate the social justice programs for the congregation. The Council also serves to inform and educate congregants about the various social justice activities with the goal of providing meaningful opportunities for taking action in alignment with our UU Principles.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

- Promote USG membership in and collaboration with POWER, Pennsylvanians Organized to Witness, Empower and Rebuild, an interfaith organization working toward “building communities of opportunity that work for all” representing over 50 congregations in the Philadelphia metro area. Create Local Organizing Committee.
- Continue supporting endeavors such as MLK Day, PIHN family hosting, Rebuilding Philadelphia, food pantry support, ERC, and other committees.
- Reinvent social justice initiatives, including voter registration and hunger support, during the time of COVID-19;
- Continue and expand relationship with UUPLAN and collaboration with other Interfaith partners.
- Improve communication about social justice initiatives and activities, including updating the website.

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

- Successful MLK Day of Service, at which approximately 300 volunteers participated in over 25 projects.
- USG team formed and participated in the annual Rebuilding Philly event.
- USG Social Justice Council has begun collaborating with partners including POWER and UUPLAN to encourage voter engagement and voter outreach in this time of pandemic.
- USG members have engaged in witness in support of Black Lives Matter and advocacy in support of criminal justice reform.

### **◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

The goals for the next year are to continue to enhance communication and collaboration and to increase awareness and participation in social justice activities by members and friends of the congregation. Significant initiatives for the upcoming year will include

- Encourage USG members and friends to become more active in POWER Interfaith working groups including environmental justice, criminal justice reform, education justice, economic justice, and voter engagement.
- Explore the development of social justice interest groups among USG for rapid email communications and to support activism in areas of interest to members.
- Explore participation with Rebuilding Philly, which may need to be changed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic for the fall of 2020.

- Review and reimagine opportunities Martin Luther King Day of Service volunteer activities in January 2021.
- Explore opportunities to host or support homeless families through PIHN.
- Explore opportunities to support immigrant families through New Sanctuary Movement.
- Continue and expand relationship with UUPLAN and collaboration with other Interfaith partners
- Expand opportunities for Voter engagement through collaboration with UUPLAN and POWER, and other parties.

## **STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE 2020**

*Submitted by Rick Rodes, Chair*

### **◆ Members**

Rick Rodes, Chair; Eric Foster; Kent Matthies, Kay Weiser, George Buckman, Jody Hill

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

To foster financial and congressional ownership among our members.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

The financial goal for this year's Stewardship campaign is \$400,000.00

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of Church Year**

1. January, 2020-Planned Rollout for 2020-2021 Stewardship Campaign. Established goal of \$400,000. Campaign emphasis was INCREASE your pledge.
2. March, 2020-Launched USG Stewardship Campaign which included Kick-off Sunday (Sermon and Lunch-March 8), pledge mailings, emails, blurbs in OOS and eCommunicator, arrangement of Stewardship Moment Testimonials (4), updated database, process of Pledges including thank you notes.
3. The week following launch COVID-19 hit and world turned upside down. All church gatherings were stopped and all communications went virtual. Weekly Stewardship meetings zoomed, USG services online, campaign emphasis softened, Goal estimate revised downward.
4. As of May 28, 2020 we have received \$308,000 or 77%.

### **◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances**

It is estimated that Pledge Campaign for fiscal year 2020-2021 will come in about \$350,000

## **WELCOMING COMMUNITY TEAM 2020**

*Submitted by Lisa Dutton, Co-Chair*

### **◆ Members**

1) Lisa Dutton - Chair 2) Treva Burger 3) Alice Parker 4) Deb Kish-Silver 5) Elaine Hills 6) Eric Foster (MET rep) 7) Nancy LaFauci. Stephen Conrad (liaison to Ushers)

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

To welcome all and foster continued engagement with USG.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

1. Conduct Visitor and New Member events with the minister for new members and active visitors from the previous year biannually (target October and March/April)
2. Continue and monitor the “buddy” assignments to active visitors and new members to help them connect at USG. Seek feedback or meet 2x/year.
3. Consider new ways of engaging and tracking visitors by 7/30/19 a. Share a short list of
4. “engagement” opportunities each month b. Use Breeze database for better record keeping of “visitor” engagement
5. Continue to identify new ways to make sure new members are engaged by 7/30/19. Try to get key leaders to enter attendance information into Breeze.
6. Expand /add ushers to 5 - 6 ushers with 1-2 serving as Greeters (perhaps outside of sanctuary at side entrance door and by the elevator) by 7/30/19
7. Send holiday cards to folks who we haven’t seen in a while or are not able to come to church. Check list with minister/staff who also send cards.

### **Annually**

1. With CSD, provide information to bridging high school seniors about UUism where ever they are going and also online in early summer.
2. Support congregants connecting with those in their Villages through USG social events (All Church Dinner- March, Fall Potluck, CSD Carnival), in addition to Fellowship Hour.

### **Ongoing**

1. Review USG materials annually, update as needed.
  - a. Visitor postcard - July/Aug
  - b. USG brochure – July
  - c. CSD brochure - July
  - d. Develop holiday events postcard for visitors (who attended within the last 12 months) by
  - e. September, send by mid-October
  - f. Update or develop signage, posters, other displays - July/Aug
  - g. Other materials - by respective committees
2. Support\*annual event(s) to introduce new people to USG (with goal to increase membership)
  - a. Consider new event such as friends and family invitation to Community Day, Fall potluck, etc. (or other ideas suggested at the Retreat)
  - b. Distribute USG brochures at MLK Day of service and appropriate “events” held at USG \*We feel the Welcoming Committee can support such events, but leadership (Board, Staff, MET, etc.) should design and lead events to increase or diversify membership. Team Internal Operational Responsibilities (not listed here. On our internal list)

### ◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year

- Continued coordinating Villages to host Fellowship Hour
- Conducted our standard programs: UU101 and Member orientation sessions, and new Member signing ceremonies. 19 people joined this fiscal year (1 in July, 5 in August 2019, 4 in November 2019, 9 in February 2020)
- Held a breakfast with the minister for visitors and new members in Oct – the breakfast planned for March was cancelled due to Covid-19
- Developed and sent holiday events postcard for visitors (who attended within the last 12 months)
- Hosted an Ushers, Welcome Table hosts breakfast – discussed processes, Holiday event planning, and security. It was well attended and appreciated by the participants
- Held a combination breakfast and mini UU101 for women from the Interim House at a time that worked for their schedule. 12 from Interim House and 11 from USG attended. We would like to continue regular special programs for them. They gave us an appreciation award at their Volunteer Day.
- Designed and mailed holiday cards to select USG congregants (over 50 cards sent) • Sent recent high school graduates information about UU congregations near their colleges. • Assigned new members and receptive visitors to “buddies”. Only a few people were interested in being assigned this year. We received good feedback.
- Updated name tags per personal preferences (with or without pronouns) color coded by Village • Updated the “Welcome to USG brochure” in October 2019. (Ryan updated the CSD brochure) • Held a Village feedback session in February 2020 attended by 11 people. We planned to launch a “reeducation” initiative to help clarify the intent of and ideas for the villages. We didn’t start the information distribution due to Covid-19.
- In response to the CoVid-19 pandemic, the Welcoming committee worked with Caring to make multiple rounds of calls and contacts to USG congregants to check in on their well-being and remind them of USG support and resources. Roughly 40+ were involved in making the three rounds of contacts so far.
- Issued a request for someone to lead a “men’s” zoom activity. Hal Krieger took the lead and conducted the first session with about 10 participants.
- Welcoming committee members are identifying, welcoming and tracking new participants in virtual services with hopes to engage members and visitors we hadn’t seen face to face in a while and also engage those new to USG. There are a number of people who now attend the virtual services regularly – which is great!

### ◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year in Light of Current Circumstances

1. Figure out how to identify and contact visitors to virtual services to engage them in a range of USG activities as well as engage some people who only participate in select programs (such as SGM, Earth Spirit Circle, etc.) so they feel engaged. Then implement the new process.
2. Conduct new member programs virtually – new member orientation, signing ceremony, etc.
3. Check in with new members 4- 6 months after “signing ceremony” to help them get engaged and assess their areas of interest.
4. Identify and implement approaches to engage groups of congregants (either by Village or common interest groups) as virtual programs continue.
5. Send holiday cards to folks who we haven’t seen in a while or are not able to come to church. Check list with minister/staff who also send cards.

## **Annually**

6. With CSD, provide information to bridging high school seniors about UUism where ever they are going and also online in early summer.
7. Design and implement processes to maximize Breeze database, especially considering new virtual activities. May start to enter “attendance” in Sunday virtual services.
8. Seek to add new members to the Welcoming Committee
9. Adapt to pandemic safety precautions as needed going forward

## **WORSHIP ARTS 2020**

*Submitted by Tom Ott, Chair*

### **◆ Members**

Tom Ott (chair); Steve Conrad, Mark Daugherty, Ryan Hurd, Kent Matthies

### **◆ Mission of Committee**

(From 2019) Create worship experience that is spiritually inspiring, rich, engaging, challenging and comforting. Continue expanding roles for drama, movement and visual arts.

(For 2020) The Worship Arts Committee (WAC) meets on the first Thursday of each month. Our set agenda is as follows: Review of previous months’ Services, CSD Report, Usher Report, Music Report, New Business. In addition, the committee is responsible for scheduling Worship Associates and filling in guest speakers when the minister is not in the pulpit.

### **◆ Goals Established for Past Year**

While the WAC has not been the principal manager of our reformatted Services during the Covid 19 crises (the minister and his team deserve much praise for organizing and producing quality Sunday Services) we have seen this as an opportunity to continue our discussions of how to produce the most excellent Sunday Service possible for our congregation. These are challenging conversations, in that each component of our Service has passionate advocates and those who, with equal passion, oppose change. For example, many believe our Services could be made more flexible if we were to remove the pews and replace them with free standing seating. This issue has been referred to as the third rail of church politics. Other changes have been more easily expedited, such as making the sanctuary more accessible for the handicapped.

### **◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

- There was significant turnover in Worship Associates, and we successfully recruited and trained four new Worship Associates, including Tom Ott, Margaret Thompson, Jovana Ramos, and Jeff Jaeger
- We held a special Saturday meeting to train worship associates and discuss services.
- Before the year began, the committee arranged for a number of dynamic preachers to speak as guests.
- We experimented with services that featured multiple members of the congregation giving short talks about their views of the theme of the month. These were well received.
- We continued to incorporate more movement and drama into the services and worked to keep the Story for All Ages engaging.
- We began to prepare a review of Sunday services for the congregation.

### **◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

In addition to its ongoing responsibilities, the WAC will continue to engage in structured conversation during the coming year with the intention of strengthening each component of our Sunday Services.