

UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF GERMANTOWN

2020-2021 Annual Report

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Submitted by Andrea Barsevick, President Board of Trustees

◆ **Members** Andrea Barsevick (President), John Davis (Vice president), Sam Stormont (Secretary), Nancy Anderson, Maggie Beaumont, Zachary Bosco-Dwornik, Sarah Frazier, Dev Howerton, Lee Meinicke

◆ **Mission** - The Board of Trustees is responsible for providing vision and strategic direction for the future, creating and maintaining policies, and maintaining oversight of the ministries and finances of the Unitarian Society of Germantown.

◆ Goals for Past Year

- Maintain a firm financial footing for USG despite the stresses of the global pandemic
- Address financial hardships within our congregation and our local community
- Provide leadership for the study of the UUA Report, “Widening the Circle of Concern,” and engage in a process of taking action to dismantle racism and other oppressions within our USG community

◆ Significant Accomplishments of Past Year

The past year has been an extraordinary and difficult time in the life of this congregation. Since March 2020, the country has been in various stages of lock down due to the COVID19 pandemic necessitating the cessation of in-person worship. As a Church community, we pivoted to virtual church services as well as spiritual and social justice activities. Nationally and locally, we have faced additional challenges. In May 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man died in police custody, and, in October 2020, Walter Wallace, a Philadelphia man, was killed by police. These events triggered the Black Lives Matter Movement across the nation. USG responded by holding daily vigils on Lincoln Drive. The fall of 2020 was marked by a highly partisan contested election. USG worked on voter registration and education and served as a polling place. In January 2021, an unsuccessful siege of the U.S. Congress was attempted by right-wing activists to disrupt democracy; however, Joseph Biden was successfully inaugurated as the 46th president. All told, it was an incredibly stressful time. With this as backdrop, the Unitarian Society of Germantown has had several notable accomplishments.

- The Board provided oversight of changes to the operating budget and authorized the submission of a successful PPP loan/grant from the federal government that enabled us to end the fiscal year without a deficit.
- Our annual stewardship campaign successfully raised \$381,000 for the operating budget (the highest amount ever) to fund our mission.
- The Board launched a COVID Financial Relief Fund to support members of our Church community as well as local community organizations that support people in financial distress. By appealing to our church community and directing funds from the USG Sullivan Assistance Fund, we raised \$92,000 and distributed it to individuals and community organizations to alleviate suffering due to the pandemic.
- The Board has made a commitment to provide leadership for and actively participate in the study of the UUA Report, Widening the Circle of Concern, through participation in monthly sessions of the working group and providing monthly updates to the congregation about our proposed actions to dismantle racism and other oppressions in our Church community.
- With the help of a generous donor, the Board has extended our spiritual and social justice missions as we provide an educational experience and stipend for our ministerial intern, Ms. Latifah Griffin.

- The Board has begun a thorough review & revision of the financial policies of USG to ensure that we are on a strong financial footing to live out mission.

◆ **Goals for 2021-2022**

- Plan for the “future of worship” and the “new normal” for carrying out our mission as pandemic restrictions are lifted
- Renew the Board commitment to making changes in our USG systems and processes based on our study of the UUA Report, Widening the Circle of Concern
- Continue our review of financial policies to ensure that USG is on a firm financial footing to live out our mission

MINISTRY EXECUTIVE TEAM (MET)

Submitted by Gale Gibbons, MET Representative

Members: Reverend Kent Matthies, Church Administrator Celeste Lamb, and lay leaders Eric Foster, Janet Haas and Gale Gibbons

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, ERC, Adult and Child Spiritual Development and the Social Justice Council to help ensure they meet their goals. In addition MET is responsible for preparing and maintaining an operating budget.

This year for MET, as with all of us, the COVID pandemic has required us to be flexible, open to change and ready to learn new skills. In its duty to manage overall operations, the MET has supported efforts at USG to continue to offer meaningful worship and spiritual opportunities to members and friends. During this past year MET has worked to ensure the safety of members and friends at the Black Lives Matter vigils, helped the Social Justice Council with our first virtual MLK Day ceremonies, and facilitated funding for creating and delivering virtual worship with music and videos. Administrator Celeste Lamb and CSD Director Ryan Hurd have been extraordinarily helpful as we all develop technical skills and become adept with zoom gatherings.

We are so grateful for the strong leadership of Reverend Kent Matthies and Board President Andrea Barsevick in providing strong leadership and support for our work.

Transition

Janet Haas joined the MET in July, replacing Andre Stormont

Finances

We are very grateful to Celeste for her work in submitting our second PPP loan application, which was approved and the funds received. The process for applying to convert the first round loan to grant is early complete.

We are developing the budget for the coming year, mindful of the Board’s priorities and guidelines.

It is our hope the Board regularizes the funding for the Ministerial Intern, so that we can continue to host interns. The benefit to USG and the intern are so positive, we would hope to continue with this.

CSD and ASD

See Ryan's report for details. The Covid circumstances have been challenging, especially for CSD. Ryan and the CSD Committee continue to develop creative ways to support our families and children. ASD had new offerings this year with good participation. The Mindfulness Center is working well; previous leader Howard Silver stepped down. His contributions to this are significant and very much appreciated.

Covid Relief Fund

MET worked with the Board and the Sullivan Assistance Committee in creating the Covid Relief Fund and in helping the process for submissions for grants from the community as well as the congregation. Over \$93,000 was distributed from the Fund.

2020 Election

USG was asked to serve as a polling place for the November 2020 election. Thanks to the planning and organization by Celeste, Anne Bower and volunteers, more than 400 people voted here. We continue with this for the May 18 Primary.

Ministerial Intern

Intern Minister Ms. Latifah Griffin joined us in September on a half time basis. Despite the challenges of COVID, she has made important connections in the congregation and is developing her ministerial skills. Her presence and contributions have increased our capacity for ministry in positive and important ways. In the upcoming budget, we have included funding for a second year.

Goals for Upcoming Year

- We believe it is time to begin planning for a re-opening of USG which would include in person as well as virtual opportunities for participation. The recently created Covid Hybrid-Reopening Task Force should widely represent the congregation in exploring how best to accomplish this. All individual decisions about participation and vaccination will be supported and respected. A proposal has been made to the Board for funding the necessary tech equipment. Proceeds from the Auction have also been designated for this purpose.
- Continue to create prudent budgets adhering to the guidelines and limitations provided by the Board
- Manage day to day operations consistent with Board guidelines and policies
- Provide support for the Widening the Circle Initiative
- Create and support structures for congregational support

MINISTER

Submitted by Rev. Kent Matthies, Minister

By the end of February 2020, the world was highly impacted by Covid19. Our church's entire focus became meeting the challenges presented by pandemic. During many trials and tribulations, we witnessed the people of church responding with grace and courage. The life-affirming and life-saving efforts of the people of USG during pandemic should never be forgotten. I give big thanks to staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly helping us meet the challenges of the day.

During the winter of 2020 the worship arts team was in the process of creating an open, creative process to include the entire congregation in exploring possibilities for innovating worship. When pandemic we pivoted into innovating worship in ways we had never imagined. On March 8, 2020 we held the first virtual worship service in the 155-year history of USG. As of the writing of this report we are approaching 15 consecutive months of holding virtual worship services. The learning curve was steep, but I feel proud our teams who gave incredible amounts of time and effort. We have worked hard to continually improve our cameras, sound, lighting, and zoom management. This past year we have been physically apart from one another yet many have spoken of deep feelings of emotional and spiritual connection and inspiration.

In shutdown conditions staff and volunteers strengthened our communications and technology capacities in many areas of church life (worship, programs, ministries and committee work). A team of ten USG leaders received additional training in video production. With the top goal of quality communications within worship, social justice and spirituality in the coming months we will increase the impact of our video and social media capacities.

We do our ministries within the realization that most everyone has experienced shock and grief around some combination of Covid19, economic hardship, and systemic oppression. In the design of all our 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 (even to have fun and thrive at times!).

Our Caring and Welcoming teams generated a calling system to the entire congregation. Two times with phone calls and once with emails/texts we reached out to check on every single person/household. Many members reported how much they appreciated this outreach. In many cases this outreach helped us identify emotional, physical or financial needs in response to which the church has assisted. In addition, with the Board's leadership USG raised over \$90,000 for Covid relief for USG members and neighbors in the wider community.

In the summer and fall of 2020 USG invested major people efforts into voter registration, education get out the vote, and count every vote campaigns. In coalition with POWER, UUJusticePA and the UUA we mobilized with effectiveness. From grocery stores, to libraries to the Constitution Center we made an impact on invigorating democracy. More people voted than ever in the history of the United States. This democratic surge helped to end the reign of a toxic, treasonous President.

USG also continues with our participation with POWER and UUJusticePA on economic & environmental justice and well as Live Free campaign on criminal justice reform. Currently

campaigns to increase the minimum wage and the creation of a Philadelphia Public Bank are highlights.

A major flash point in our nation came at the end of May 2020 with the murder by Minneapolis Police officers of George Floyd, an unarmed African American man. That tragedy gave shape to our commitment to show up strong and effective for social justice efforts. In this time a large percentage of USG folks were involved in the earthquake of unrest, protest and rebellion which shook the nation. In the end of October in West Philadelphia the murder of Walter Wallace, by Philadelphia Police brought larger waves of crisis and response. These have been critical moments holding our church accountable to the 8th principle, which is our lifetime work of dismantling racism at every level of society, including in the most individual and congregational forms. From May until November we held Black Lives Matter public witness five days per week in the front of our building. In April of 2021 we resumed this Monday through Friday (5-6 pm) public witness and continue as of this writing. Wearing masks and using social distancing USG members and many neighbors emphasize the all too often forgotten truth that Black Lives Matter.

We continue with our Ending Racism Committee offering important programs. We have also organized a large, committed group of USG leaders to work on the Widening the Circle report from the UUA Commission on Institutional Change. We will explore idea and actions to implement throughout most areas of the church structure to make our congregation as welcoming, anti-oppression and diverse as possible.

A very top priority during the pandemic is keeping people safe and healthy. We established the Covid 19 Task Force charged with monitoring and interpreting public health, science and medical news. We continue to monitor and interpret guidelines from the Governor, Mayor, Center for Disease Control and UUA. In Fall 2020 we opened to allow smaller groups to meet outside, while following our clear, established protocols.

This month (May 2021) we are launching a **Hybrid Task Force**, which will examine how we further USG mission of building Beloved Community, by figuring out how we can meet in-person as feasible, while also maintaining remote options for people who cannot or do not wish to attend in person. The members of the Hybrid TF Steering Committee are Andrea Parry, (Chair), Kent Matthies, Janet Haas, Celeste Lamb and Dev Howerton. We will work to design church programs that help folks logistically and emotionally with the changes. Our work will prioritize inclusivity, vulnerable populations, varied demographics

USG responded to the first stages of the Covid pandemic with vision and mindful compassion. How we move into the future may define who we are and what we want to be more than ever.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Submitted by Celeste Lamb, Business Administrator

My second year here at USG has been eventful, despite the fact that our doors have largely been closed. It has been a year with lots of ups and downs and much of it felt like treading water with little progress. However, I had laughs with co-workers and volunteers.

In the next year I look forward to our reopening, and working with the newly created Moving Ahead Committee. I hope to improve internal and external communications and increase revenue through grants and rental income. I look forward to overseeing a new bookkeeper as well as a short term digital media developer. I also look forward to assisting our tech transition to livestreaming our Services from the Sanctuary.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Penned poignant, timely, clever and/or informational messages for Lincoln Drive sign
- Promoted Standing in Solidarity Vigil via social media
- Promoted Online Service Auction via social media
- Used Canva software for making attractive advertising for events and internal communications
- Continued use of Instagram, with improved engagement
- 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, Zoom, Breeze and USG website logins
- Updated website as needed (I was not the only one to do this) creating new pages when necessary
- Recorded Zoom Services, edited to be copyright law compliant and uploaded those and other videos to Youtube and th USG website
- Coordinated system to allow Zoom access for Memorial services and helped prepare for Memorial Services and recruited Zoom tech volunteers
- Assisted Service Auction Committee with set up of online auction website and recorded and edited instructional video for online auction and guided creation of Auction kickoff
- Continued to schedule Zoom meetings for groups and committees

BOOKKEEPING

- Paid bills, including necessary taxes
- Processed staff and lay reimbursements
- Recorded expenses and income in QuickBooks
- Became de-facto bookkeeper for the Philadelphia Interfaith Peace Walk
- Tracked expenses and income for Covid Relief fund
- 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 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
- Completed required forms for insurance companies and licensing entities
- Facilitated USG becoming a polling place, coordinating with Philadelphia Board of Elections and coordinating USG volunteers

- Worked as MET representative to B&G as well as helping coordinate building access to contractors, got my hands dirty cleaning up from leak in Sanctuary and wrapping trees in Grove to catch spotted lantern flies.
- Was only daily presence in building, fielding every phone call, drop by, and request for building access, and item drop off or pick up
- Attended AUUA Pro-Days and GA sessions and programming
- Worked with short lived Futures Committee designed to brainstorm alternatives to online worship
- Attended online courses and seminars in video production, worship tech, copyright law, and grant writing
- Tried to keep on top of the Nest thermostat and resolved (I hope!) repeated issue with boiler
- Fielded calls from staff members who set off the alarm
- Oversaw work of wonderful Assistant Administrator and Sexton
- Worked with Scott Smith to develop plans for livestreaming from the Sanctuary

DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT (DSD)

Submitted by Ryan Hurd, Director of Spiritual Development

This year as Director of Spiritual Development, it has been my honor and privilege to help hold our congregation during this challenging time. I have seen first hand how dedicated people can work together under stress, and shift into new ways of supporting one another.

In my work overseeing the Children and Adult Spiritual Development communities, we pivoted our focus from programs first to a new triage of goals of caring, building community and then serving folks through rich and essential programming. Programs weren't always the best way to serve people — especially parents and children who have been overburdened and increasingly “zoomed out.”

Allow me to provide more detail about how I envisioned my priorities this past year:

1. Care: My primary focus this last year has been on care, support and outreach of the congregation, especially families and vulnerable folks such as those who are physically isolated, youth, and working families with young children.
2. Community: Building *communitas* virtually and in-person (as deemed safe) through CSD and ASD events has been a second important priority.
3. Rich programming: Zoom events need to serve strong community needs or have focused and compelling educational content. These programs are reviewed in the ASD and CSD Committee reports.

Here are some thematic highlights and professional milestones from the last year that are not specifically mentioned in the ASD and CSD reports:

- Presented “A Time for Big Dreams” in July 2020 in the pulpit, focused on how the upswing in dreams and nightmares can provide insight into new solutions.
- Presented “Sacred Rest” workshop in the Fall 2020 Staff Retreat as a way to honor our need for self-care during ongoing trauma and loss
- Presented “Minecraft for Ministry” in January 2021 in a national UUA webinar “What’s working for families”

- Developed and Co-facilitated a “Roundtable Conversation with Religious Educators and Ministers” alongside Rev. Kent Matthies, Rev. Aija Simpson, and DSAREC president Paula Gribble in May 2021.
- Training: Ancestral healing for white folks, by Ancestral Apothecary: a program for exploring how white supremacy & settler colonialism show up in ancestry, community, and selves as well as tapping into the wisdom and resiliency of ancestors.
- Training: Pastoral Care for Youth, UUA. Honing peer counseling and youth counseling skills.
- Training: Video Ministry Academy with Peter Bowden, for the latest tech and solutions for digital presentations.
- Participating actively in my local cluster of religious professionals, the DSAREC chapter of LREDA which includes monthly programs for career/skill development. This participation led to our wonderful regional shared programming detailed in CSD report.
- Continuing to draw on my background in online education and digital marketing for online community building during the pandemic.

As we look ahead, there are many unknowns about how we will be together as a community in the years ahead. But let’s move forward carefully, on mission, with our hearts and spirits and minds all onboard. To do so, we must also recommit to maintaining access to fairness and equity — by which I mean online and multi-platform whenever possible, so those who are not able to be in-person can still be an equal member of this community. This is going to require still even more new technology, new solutions, and new vision. It’s daunting, but I’m confident we can do this, together.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Submitted by Mark Daugherty, Music Director

Because of the continuing health crisis, much of what I wrote in last year’s report is still true. On a typical Sunday morning we remotely “zoom,” with the worship team in different locations. I come to USG to do some of the music live, usually the ingathering music, the prayer bowl ring, and the prelude. The rest of the special music that may include a hymn, Spirit of Life, the offertory and the postlude is taped on Thursday evening. This is generally how the music comes to be for most Sundays. From my perspective it is a much better system than what we explored last year in response to the pandemic when live musical collaboration was pretty much off the table. Over the summer, we experimented with creating a virtual choir for one of the services. What this entailed was creating an accompaniment track for singers to sing with remotely to make video clips that were then edited by Jess Stanforth (thanks, Jess!) into a vocal ensemble. As we discovered, this was a very time-consuming activity, requiring around 20 hours of video editing per musical selection. Consequently, I was glad when the lock-down restrictions were eased a bit and several people could meet in the sanctuary to create the music videos. There really is no substitute for live music making! Nevertheless, there were technology challenges to overcome with this system also. While we could sing together in a small socially-distanced group, we still needed to wear masks which tended to muffle the sung text. In an effort to enhance the vocal parts, we brought in Bob Williford to help with the microphones, and that made it easier for the congregation to understand the singers. For a good part of the year, Tim Spencer came in and helped with the video shooting and preparation. But now with Tim having had a knee replacement the video preparation has fallen back on me. I’ve learned quite a bit about that, but it does take quite a bit of time and makes for a scramble on Friday. Most recently I have created another virtual choir project for our service. This time I had 19 singers participate

and each of their files had to be lined up and synchronized. It made a good clip. But while it is creatively enjoyable to do this exercise, it is still too time-consuming to be sustainable. I still spend a lot of time researching other possibilities for making music with others online, but there is nothing yet that allows for concurrent musical collaboration at this time and there probably won't be. As we move through what is hopefully the tail end of the pandemic, I am looking forward to having the singers together again so that we can create our musical community.

In an effort to explore possible new directions in worship, several of us took an online course in making and editing videos. We learned quite a bit about how to shoot a video, for example how to light and frame the shot. But there was no discussion about editing clips together to make a layered video, something that would have been helpful in creating virtual choir clips.

This year we have had two music services thus far. In December I put together several holiday selections sung by our regular soloists Siobhan Raupach, Beverly Gross Spencer and Bob Hefele. Tom Schoonmaker came out of his musical retirement and sang for us. In addition to the regulars, we also heard from Betsy and Charles Gabriel. On February 14, we presented a musical valentine featuring the aforementioned singers as well as Rebekah Eberhart and Meg Ryan.

Another musical service is being planned for June.

Our section leaders have been an important part of the musical program at church. 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 would be remiss if I didn't mention that our long-neglected Rieger organ has been restored. With the help and assistance of Charles Gabriel and Lynne Kalish, we applied to Partners For Sacred Spaces for a grant to help with restoring the organ. We were lucky enough to be awarded the grant and we engaged the firm of Patrick Murphy Organbuilders to handle the repairs. They repaired the instrument at their shop (wearing masks and social distancing) and then re-installed it. The project was completed at the beginning of June last year. I have used the organ a number of times since and it has been well-received. I look forward to finding new ways to use it in the future, especially when we are back in the sanctuary. It really is a magnificent instrument and we should be proud of it and its history.

I serve on the Worship Arts committee that meets once a month. Last year I had created the Music Ministry committee, the purpose of which was to get more input from the congregation for what they might enjoy in the music. But this committee has become inactive because of covid. I hope to resurrect it.

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

1. Adapt to the new reality of how to do music for worship on Sunday morning.
Continue to integrate video filming and production of music for worship. This can include using different types of apps and software.
2. Work with Mike R to construct a barrier system in the sanctuary to protect the singers and me.
3. Revisit and explore new ways to collaborate musically with others.
4. Try to stay in contact with the choir – possibly to create a new holiday music presentation but at least to maintain some aspects of the singing community at USG.

Offer the singers various ways to stay connected and contribute to musical programs at USG.

About #1: Adapting is an ongoing process. I have made numerous video clips for the musical portions of our service and a typical Sunday morning includes live music as well as pre-recorded material. As for different types of apps – there is still no app or program for concurrent musical collaboration. The issue of latency has not been solved, although with better internet connection as well as Ethernet rather than Wifi it is less obvious. Over the summer I experimented with JamKazam, an app that allows for some simultaneous music-making and it is better than Zoom but still it is not the solution that we had hoped for.

About #2: I did the research on barriers that are used at my Mt Airy gym. These are large clear vinyl protective barriers that can be set up around people and equipment. This information was presented to the covid team or MET but I believe they were not convinced or deemed it too costly.

About #3: This is an ongoing goal and continues. We've experimented with me providing accompaniments for the soloists but we have found that meeting in the sanctuary while observing the covid restriction protocols is much better. I've recorded musicians outdoors where it is considered safer. However, meeting outdoors also means restrictions on workable times because of the weather and daylight.

About #4: We have occasional zoom meetings to check in and see how things are going. Back in the fall I had considered asking a small group of choir members to come together and present the holiday music service. But about that time there was an upsurge in covid infections and I didn't feel comfortable asking people to come in to sing as a 10 member group. Some of us did meet outside to record Silent Night for Christmas Eve.

Where we need to go I think is to develop a plan for creating a hybrid service. This will involve expanding the tech committee since I think we will have to find ways to make online worship visually more engaging for the home viewers.

No surprise: we need to continue the dialogue about music in Sunday morning worship.

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.

ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by Ryan Hurd (Interim Chair)

◆ Members

Ryan Hurd (Interim Chair), Joanne Davis, Rick Rodes, Jerry Caruso, Vanessa Lowe, and Javier Ramos with Janet Haas (MET representative)

◆ Mission of Committee ^{[[L]]}_{SEP} 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 diverse Beloved Community](#)

◆ Goals Established for Past Year

1. Continue to support community virtually through Elderhood meetings & Death Café.
2. Continue to support faith development through UU 101
3. Build new shelving and storage for meditation equipment and CSD in Sullivan 3
4. Pilot new faith development workshops, possibly in conjunction with regional UU support such as LREDA.
5. 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.
6. Resuming Difficult Conversations after lock down
7. Other new programs to consider are a community dream group and labyrinth meditation workshop, as well as developing a “walking meditation” trail in the USG woods (in partnership with B&G).
8. 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.
9. We hope to expand the members of our committee

◆ Significant Accomplishments of Past Year

Most of last year’s goals were met abundantly! Goals #7 and #8 have not yet come to be (carried over for this coming year).

Adult Spiritual Development can be seen to support programs that fall into three categories: faith formation, community building and spiritual practices (including mindfulness).

Faith Formation:

1. UU 101 seminars once a month, led by Eric Foster and Charles Gabriel, is considered part of ASD but is independently organized.
2. Susan Bockius is leading a new year long program on the divine feminine, based on an updated curriculum based on *Queens of the Cakes of Heaven*.
3. “Images of the Divine,” facilitated by Gerry Whelan is meeting once or twice a month, giving a platform for individuals to share their own personal relationships to the divine, however they conceive it.

Community Building

1. Beloved Hearts Collective course “Trans Inclusion in Congregations” is approved for purchase by Board and ASD. Its delivery to the congregation over 2021 - 2022 will be managed by a new steering committee headed by Ryan Hurd and Vanessa Lowe.
2. Elderhood met once a week until Winter 2021, and is now meeting every two weeks, led by Elaine Hills, Carolyn Cotton and Ann Pron.
3. Gerry Whelan also continued his popular series on difficult conversations with the national platform known as *Better Angels*, discussing the left/right political divide.
4. Death Café, facilitated by Maggie Beaumont and hosted by Ryan Hurd, was held three times in person in Summer 2020, Fall 2020 and Winter 2021, creating a safe place to talk about death.

Center for Mindfulness (CFM) at USG

1. CFM continues to serve 30 adults a week on average.
2. The Sunday evening program *Breathe* includes Deborah Cooper, Mary Kalyna, Jesse Frechette, and Pamela Freeman, with Rev. Kent Matthies leading on 5th Sundays.

3. Additional weekly programs include Mindful Mondays with Jesse, Wednesday Mindfulness with Deborah.
4. The weekly Mindfulness Newsletter with a current email list of over 300 people is organized by volunteer Abbey Porter and supported by USG Communications team.
5. Led well attended one day retreats by Esther Wyss Flamm and Oren Sofer, and seasonal offerings with Suvaco Hanson.
6. We thank Howard Silver for his leadership in the transition to virtual meetings. Howard stepped down as Coordinator in Fall 2020; duties are currently maintained by DSD Ryan Hurd and Communications Team.
7. Howard Silver also oversaw the building of new shelving and storage for meditation equipment and CSD in Sullivan 3.
8. Zoom hosting of mindfulness teachers by USG is made possible by Jerry Caruso, Javier Ramos, Abbey Porter and Ryan Hurd.
9. Co-sponsorship with Springboard Sangha continues.
10. Qigong with Margaret Kinnevy beginning in May 2021, outdoors.

Additional Spiritual Practices-based programs

1. Yoga with Esther Wyss Flamm, increasing in attendance during Zoom days.
2. Drumming by Karen Smith, outdoors and in person, Fall 2020.
3. Conscious Dance with Michelle and Mariama beginning in May 2021, outdoors.
4. EarthSpirit Circle, our UU pagan group, is now considered part of ASD but remains largely independently, currently organized by Justy DeForest.
5. Ryan is leading a “Moon Dreaming” dream incubation program on the full moon in May.

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

1. Continue to support community virtually during a time of uncertainty, and be open to hybrid transitions to in-person so those who cannot meet in person may still participate from home.
2. *Trans Inclusion in Congregations* by Transforming Hearts Collective, in small groups, virtually and in-person. [More info here.](#)
3. Pilot new faith development workshops. Some ideas include: UU history (basically UU 201), trainings in community investment/reparations, ethical personal finance, and Building your own theology.
4. For the Center for Mindfulness: A regional LGBTQ mindfulness event, and pursue working with organizations that support BIPOC spaces. Also Meditation 101 offered several times a year to bring in new folks to mindfulness community.
5. Research and invest in outdoors programming readiness such as purchase of canopy, and installing additional lighting for after dark outdoors in the Grove and the labyrinth area.
6. Purchase and implement tech to allow for hybrid participation, when possible. Also, consider virtual liaison volunteer at events (shared goal with Children’s Spiritual Development).
7. Bring back Community Day! May change the date may be needed to make it better for outdoors and add a rain date. September / October.
8. More promotion of UUA and GA content/workshops/offerings
9. Ware Lecture Sat June 26th 2021? 7PM -- outdoor viewing if possible -- needs review of tech, staff support and copyright rights.

10. Revisit ASD Committee's mission and mission statement throughout next year, especially in regard to the shared grounds of spirituality and social justice.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Submitted by Bill Blasdel, Co-Chair

◆ Members

Co-chairs: Bill Blasdel & Kurt Ahrens. Active members: Active members: Andre Stormont, Lynne Kalish, Carolyn Cotton, Scott Smith, August Anderson, Howard Silver and Celeste Lamb (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 20-21 budget and remove the B&G budget from being reduced/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 19-20.
4. Engage the congregation in little 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

Build the French Drain & stone stream bed drainage system

1. Prototype project list for congregational engagement in projects and work days.
2. Open the Dining Room light well for the 1st time in 58 years, rebuild grate & construct security door.
3. Replace Committee Room carpet with tile.
4. Rehab Sanctuary courtyard window frames & rebuild Mother & Child section.
5. Take down 3 major trees & remove 3 fallen trees

◆ SMART Goals for Upcoming Church Year

1. Take whatever action is needed to fulfill the primary mission to *Assure a safe facility* during re-opening the building from the COVID shutdown.
2. Stay within approved FY 21-22 budget and eliminate “cuts of convenience” from the B&G budget to balance the overall USG budget.
3. Re-affirm priority statement and develop a prioritized list of repairs and improvement projects for the fiscal year and execute them accordingly.
4. Formulate, Propose and negotiate budget for FY 19-20.

CARING SYSTEM

Submitted by Linda Bernstein, Co-Chair

◆ **Members** The entire USG community comprises the Caring Committee. The Caring Committee Steering Team consists of 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**

Members of the caring team helped with the outreach phone calls that were made in the first few months of the pandemic. In these phone calls, we were made aware of caring needs that were routed to the ministers or the Covid fund for support. Several USG families who were struck with covid received meals and other support. Even though it was an extraordinary year because of the pandemic, babies continued to be born, families encountered loss, and medical needs developed. The congregation is abundantly generous and unflagging in its willingness to provide rides, meals and other support.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

We adapted meal delivery and rides somewhat due to covid protocols. We hope things can get back to normal soon. Whatever happens, we will continue to rally 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)

Respectfully submitted by Ryan Hurd, Director of CSD

◆ **Members** Ryan Hurd (DSD), Jessica Stanforth (chair), Ryan Hurd (Director of Spiritual Development), Avery Hamill, Becky Horner, Sharon Mafuru, Kristin Shipler, and Janet Haas (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 opportunities to learn the rich history and guiding principles of Unitarian Universalism.

◆ **Goals Established in 2019 – 2020**

1. Pilot online Summer programs in conjunction with at-home faith development materials to support families during continued limited movement due to COVID-19.
2. Pilot online Fall – Winter programs for CSD that continue to support families, create connections, and provide practical materials for faith development.
3. 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.
4. 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)
5. Whether virtually or in-person, continue to use and expand our curricula to be inclusive of mindfulness, social justice 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.
6. Children participation in worship
7. 8th Principle integration. Perhaps a RACE institute workshop, a book-reading group.

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

We largely met our goals established last year, and those we did not (goals 3 and 4) were subject to the turbulence of pandemic life in 2020. Goal 7 was partially through children's curriculum, but not continuing education for teachers. These goals have been carried over for this next year

Our accomplishments and ever-evolving strategies must be seen in the context of heavily reduced volunteerism, limitations on physical gatherings, and ongoing trauma and stress for families, children and youth. Our approach has been both providing children’s programming as well as a heightened focus on family reach-out/pastoral care and all-family participation:

1. Continued pastoral-style reach out to parents by CSD committee. This may be the most important activity we engaged in, as our role during the pandemic shifted from primarily producing programs to community support.
2. Summer programs included 2020 Minecraft camp for 1st - 8th graders led by Ryan Hurd and supported by parent participation; Book Club for Upper Elementary, led by Sarah Frazier and Ryan; Summer Story time, with rotating storytellers including Georganne Hardin Fong, Becky Horner, Ryan Hurd, and support by USG childcare staffer Maya Foster.
3. Mailed postcards to families in Fall and Winter, organized by Becky Horner
4. Increased participation in families in virtual worship through chalice lighting, opening words and other small roles in service.
5. Fall programs included: Growing Anti-racist UUs, two cohorts of Lower and Upper Elementary, led by Ryan Hurd in conjunction with DSAREC education leaders (Delaware and Susequhanna Area Religious Education Cluster). This allowed us to pool our teaching resources as well as gather enough children to run a successful program; UUtopia Minecraft, two cohorts of Elementary and Youth, facilitated by Ryan Hurd, again in conjunction with DSAREC leaders from 8 congregations in the

region. UUtopia was very popular, with over 70 registrants, serving 10 - 15 children and youth a week in the region, and received national attention through the UUA's "What's working for Families" webinar.

6. Christmas 2020 Family Service was a beautiful service highlighting family traditions, an acapella family choir led by Rebekah Fernandez, and youth leadership by Avery Hamill and Zoe Leiby.
7. Winter and Spring programs include: another 6 weeks of Growing Anti-Racist UUs, continued Minecraft UUtopia through April 2021, and UU Explorers: a combination of nature exploration with USG childcare worker Ann Ward and the Moral Tales curriculum, developed for online use by Sara Kelley, facilitated also by Ryan Hurd.
8. Youth meetings included Movie nights, dream group, and online gaming; participation has been 1 - 3 youth/session. Helpers include Wendy Furry, Heather Hill, and youth leaders from UU Thomas Paine.
9. Outdoors events included: Pumpkin Carving (in the parking lot); Holiday Greens-to-go (thanks to Deb Kish-Silver), multiple seasonal Open Labyrinth sessions (Winter solstice, Imbolc, and Equinox), lit by tea lights and the electrical wizard of Scott Smith; and the Story Stones painting workshop in May 2021.
10. Family faith development kits called "CSD Treasure Boxes" have been assembled monthly in Spring 2021, for pick up at USG on designated Sundays. Ryan and CSD committee members also delivered the boxes to those who could not make the pick up. These boxes were lovingly developed on theme with Soul Matters by Janet Haas, Jenn Leiby and Zoe Leiby.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

1. Once we physically return to the building, continue our long-term project of making the Sullivan wing more CSD-friendly with cleaning-out of cabinets and adding storage (carried over from last year's goals)
2. Whether virtually or in-person, continue to use and expand our curricula to be inclusive of mindfulness, social justice issues, racial justice, all aspects of diversity-equity-inclusion (DEI) work, 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 (carried over from last year).
3. Hold Town Hall meeting(s) 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 (carried over from last year)
4. Seasonal teacher trainings to include anti-racism and inclusion workshop opportunities for teachers and church leaders. Including Trans Inclusion. Partner with local org such as The Race Institute or CHOP. <http://www.raceinstitute.org>
5. Tracking curriculum and sourcing of stories, practices and traditions in CSD in conjunction with the Widening the Circle platform. (8th principle integration)
6. More utilization and development of our outdoor spaces. Goal: once a month outdoor events for families (such as hiking in the Wissahickon), as well as Sunday RE.
7. Purchase and implement tech to allow for multi-platform participation, when possible. Also, consider virtual liaison volunteer at events (shared goal with Adult Spiritual Development).
8. Youth programming: OWL and/or Coming of Age if possible. Outdoor hiking and campfires events in person, given parental permissions.

9. Revisit our mission statement this summer 2021 in planning meetings, with hopes to re-establish a curricular flow (scope and sequence) for CSD with the questions: how do our goals align with our mission, and how do our curricula and activities achieve these goals?

COVID 19 TASK FORCE

Submitted by Bill Dowdall, Co-Chair

◆ Members

Susan Smith, Bill Dowdall-Co-Chairs, Mary Schuler MD, Jeff Jaeger MD, Kent Matthies, Celeste Lamb, Ryan Hurd, Jenn Grau

◆ Mission of Committee

The Covid-19 Task Force was organized in early March 2020. The Task Force is an advisory group making recommendations to the Board and Met that are based on science, medicine and government guidelines.

◆ Significant Accomplishments of Past Year

On March 11, 2020, the NBA canceled their season. We followed suit the following day and recommended closing the USG church building and grounds for all organized activity including the Sunday Worship Service. The Sunday Worship Service moved to Zoom. A few weeks later we followed the CDC mask recommendation and required people to wear face masks when on the USG campus.

During the past 14 months we have modified some guidelines. We approved a request to have a daily BLM demonstration along Lincoln Drive. The group is limited to 25 all wearing masks along with social distancing. We started to allow members to have weddings and memorial services in the sanctuary with attendance limited to 12. We gradually increased the limits, and it now stands at 34. Last September we also approved allowing small groups of no more than 12 to gather in the grove and wooded areas.

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

Moving forward we will gradually open the church building. A special task force will be developing action plans for small group gatherings, CSD & ASD, and worship services in the Sanctuary that are compliant with health and safety guidelines.

ENDING RACISM COMMITTEE

Submitted by Tonika Berkley, Co-Chair

◆ **Members** Tonika Berkley, (Co-Chair), Carla Campbell, (Co-Chair), Treva Burger (ERC Leadership Team), Barbara McDowell (ERC Leadership Team), Parvathy Menon (Treasurer), Dev Howery (Secretary), Elizabeth McGoran (Librarian), Eileen Teti, Margaret Thompson, Rosita Johnson, Jim Salom, Lois Murphy, Nancy Anderson, Nancy Roecker Coates, Sarah West, Zachary Bosco Dwornik

◆ **Mission of Committee**

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**

- 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

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

- Restructured the committee to better share the work, with a leadership team, treasurer, secretary and a librarian who is creating a catalog of ERC books to increase their accessibility to the congregation.
- Restructured ERC meetings to include bimonthly "ERC Presents..." speaker series, which invites organizations and individuals working in anti-racism and anti-White supremacy work in Germantown and beyond. We've hosted speakers such as Lori Tharps, creator of 'My American Meltingpot' podcast, Lynn Washington, owner of 'Books and Stuff' online bookstore, Dana Carter, educator and activist from Melanated Educators Collective and the Racial Justice Organizing Committee, and David Rose, Curator of Sally Blagg, LLC and the American Teahouse, which are centered in providing resources, asset based community development and advocating for Native and African Indigenous individuals in Historic Germantown and beyond.
- Crafted a Land Acknowledgement Statement acknowledging the presence of the ancestral Indigenous residents, Lenni-Lenape, and their existence in Pennsylvania and Germantown, specifically. We consulted with Sarah Frazier, who is a student of the Lenape culture and the Lenape Society of Pennsylvania in order to craft the statement which we read during ERC meetings.
- Maintain the Ending Racism page off of the main USG website, featuring ERC action and education recommendations, videos of our past speakers, and the Ending Racism Resource List and Library List.
- Involved with monthly zoom meetings with the UUA 8th Principle originators Paula Cole Jones and Bruce Pollack-Johnson, where representatives from UUA congregations nationally share their progress leading up to votes, actions and activities after votes. USG voted to support the initiative at our 2019 Annual Meeting. A vote on adoption will be held at a future General Assembly. ERC Leadership member Barbara McDowell Dowdall notifies interested USG members of the meetings, attends and reports back.

- Involved with Widening the Circle of Concern Working Group, which ERC Leadership member Treva Burger co-leads with Board President Andrea Barsevick and Welcoming Committee Chair, Lisa Dutton. WICOC's Working Group's goal is to analyze the results of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change's findings and to help to oversee the enactment of the recommendations of the Commission, in order to implement policies of equity and inclusion of BIPOC-LGBTQ communities.
- Participated in the annual National Council for Teaching Education's African American Read In, where UU members read books by various Black authors during the month of February and share book reviews during our monthly ERC meeting. This is our 4th year of participation and Barbara submits our reading list to the NCTE.
- Treva is spearheading The Racism Book Study Group, which meets monthly to discuss books based on anti-racist and anti-White Supremacy subject matter. They are currently reading "My Grandmother's Hands" and are offering weekly healing practices to the congregation.
- Support BLUU (Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism) programs such as BLUU Box sessions, which highlight and celebrate African American UUs in congregation and national history, as well as BLUU Havens which establishes a Black-only social space for UUs.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

- Continue to participate in the Widening the Circle of Concern Working Group
- Continue with "ERC Presents..." our bimonthly speaker series
- Support USG orgs such as Participatory Defense Hub/CAMI, POWER, and UU Justice PA
- Create our online library catalog to compile and track book titles for easier circulation
- Exploring ways to support the BLM Vigil
- Create more opportunities for virtual and in-person (when permitted) field trips to local and in/out of state sites of interest
- Create an outdoor or virtual open house in Fall 2021
- Developing workshops/plenaries to invite speakers to discuss topics of interest (i.e. impact of COVID on underrepresented groups)
- Participate in the 2022 NCTE African American Read In
- Continue activities of last year and years past and adapt as needed

MLK DAY OF SERVICE

Submitted by Lois Murphy, Chair

◆ **Members** Lois Murphy (Chair), Diane Sharp, Melissa Guerriero, Carolyn Scott, Andrea Durham, Betsy Gabriel, 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. In 2021 we had to adjust our projects to assure that many could be completed at home, involved contactless delivery or could involve virtual participation.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

Our primary goal was to continue to the greatest degree possible as in previous years. However, we had to create all new projects that were not on site but that involved making care packages, making food, delivering packages, and virtual programs. Although participation was down from past years we achieved participation of over 200 volunteers engaged in approximately 13 service projects.

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

We successfully adjusted to difficult circumstances and planned rewarding projects for 200 volunteers and an inspiring service in difficult circumstances, and reached out to and maintained relationships with over 10 agencies we supported. The feedback from Volunteers, Project Leaders, the Coordination Team members, and others involved in the day was overwhelmingly positive.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

1. Identify co-chairs for the 2021-2022 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. 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. Evaluate and implement options to streamline data management and communications with groups of volunteers.
6. Hold first planning meeting by October 1, 2021.
7. Have all project leaders and projects confirmed by November 1, 2021.

SERVICE AUCTION COMMITTEE

Submitted by Deb Kish-Silver, Chair

◆ **Members**

Carolyn Cotton, Lynne Kalish, Nancy LaFauci, Gwen Lindgren, Judi Morrow, Nancy Radcliffe, Judy Rodes, Jessica Stanforth, Celeste Lamb, Janet Haas.

◆ **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**

Discuss overall auction planning, fundraising challenges, volunteer engagement, and target audiences with the goal of exceeding the funds raised at previous year's auction

- Decide upon a fresh, fun auction theme that would appeal to all ages, as well as be family-friendly
- Evaluate new fundraising methods to insure we meet our goal for 2020
- Become more familiar with new Auctria auction program implemented the previous year and

look for ways to maximize its use

- Explore cost and feasibility of printing the auction booklet in USG's office using the new printer, as a cost-saving measure
- Continue to work with office staff to maximize advertising in print, social media and with use of slideshows before service

◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year

The advent of Covid-19 resulted in the April 24th auction being cancelled indefinitely. However, the

auction committee did make progress towards our goals that deserve mentioning.

- Our theme was The Wizard of Oz – one that is appealing to all ages, and fun to advertise and decorate. There was enthusiasm for the theme as the solicitation campaign for donated items and events started strong mid-February, but before coming to a halt in March with the lockdown
- We planned to enhance fundraising the night of the auction by offering a large Keurig coffee themed basket filled with goodies donated by the auction committee. 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.
- We had an effective working relationship with the office staff on advertising across all social media that was going strong until the March lockdown.

Because of the continued shutdown due to Covid-19, we are unable to fully address goals for the upcoming year. We had hoped that the spring of 2021 would have allowed us to resume plans for a live auction. We realized that it was not going to happen. However, the committee began meeting in October to discuss what alternatives might be available.

After much discussion, the committee decided we would look into doing a virtual auction. After some research and with the help of Celeste Lamb, we felt that it was feasible to try. We had no idea how much money we might be able to raise but we set a goal of 10,000.

We also realized that a virtual auction would consist primarily of goods for sale and those types of events that can be held virtually, such as a class or that would be COVID safe.

We launched our online auction on May 3, 2021. The auction was to run for 1 week, culminating with the raffle drawing of a basket of wines.

We decided that the proceeds from the auction would go toward upgrading our audio visual devices to enhance our streaming capabilities.

We were thrilled to see that we were able to raise over 10,000 dollars. The committee is pleased that so many members of the congregation participated in the auction.

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

- A long-term goal is still the discussion with the Ministry, Board and Met about various ways to increase fundraising efforts that are not totally dependent upon the auction committee.
- Encourage members of the congregation to join the committee with new ideas and techniques.
- We do need to get younger people and families involved in fundraising efforts, so a survey of the congregation would be helpful when we are past Covid-19.
- The committee looks forward to the spring of 2022 and the realization of another live auction, using the theme of "The Wizard of Oz"

SHARE THE PLATE TASK FORCE

Submitted by Eric Foster, Chair

◆ Members

Eric Foster (chair), Bobbi Penniman, Tanya Vales, Mark Bangela

◆ Mission of Committee

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

The committee meets about twice a year to nominate, discuss, and/or review new organizations for open months. When possible, we coordinate awards with monthly social justice themes.

◆ Awards and Recipients

The 2020-21 year was unusual due to the covid pandemic, which affected the execution and outcome of our STP program.

July and August did not include STP recipients because the church set up a special Covid Relief Fund to aid people and organizations that were financially affected by the pandemic. (That fund eventually dispersed over \$93,000.) Rebuilding Philadelphia, a regular on the STP docket, was cancelled due to virus concerns. The MLK Day service was also not held in person, so that the plate was not passed for it this year. And Christmas Eve services, like all other services this year, were held virtually, so that the plate (by text) was very slim for our plate partner, PIHN. There was one new recipient this year, the Maternity Care Coalition. Others were repeat (and virtually “default”) recipients.

The awards for the 2020-21 year are:

Month	Recipient	\$ Award
April	UUJusticePA	760
May	New Sanctuary Movement	975
June	UU House Outreach	755
July	--	--
August	--	--
September	Lingelbach/Henry	510
October	--	--
November	The Attic	615
December	PIHN	425
January	MLK Day	--
February	POWER	1,245
March	Maternity Care Coalition	550
	Total trailing 12 months	5,835

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY FACILITATORS

Submitted by Jody Hill, Chair

◆ Members

Jody Hill and Kent Matthies, co-chairs

Mark Bangela, Anne Bower, Treva Burger, Carolyn Cotton, Maryann Helferty, Shobhi Kanal, Nicole Miller, Johanna Moyer, Andrea Parry, Prashant Rushi, Eileen Whelan, Adrienne Wolkenberg

◆ Mission of Committee

To maintain a vibrant program of small groups that feeds our souls and provides a forum for deep listening of personal stories and monthly spiritual themes. To encourage carrying this energy and purpose out into the world of service. To assist new facilitators in their roles.

◆ Goals Established for Past Year

- To extend our reach for inclusion of all who would benefit and are interested, especially to welcome more people of color to join .
- To provide a sharper focus on content related to multiculturalism and freedom from oppression.
- To enroll and include both church members and interested friends to suggest a group that most closely meets their needs and time constraints.
- To meet every 2 months to stay connected especially during this pandemic time
- To support groups doing service projects together as an SGM (difficult with pandemic restrictions)

◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year

- Treva began new Racial Healing SGM
- People of Color SGM gained traction and began midyear adding also to facilitators group Nicole and Prashant
- Kent broke off from 2019 new member SGM and began another group. Mid-year, these two groups merged with very positive results
- Continued to meet every other to every 3 months to discuss and trouble shoot
- Negotiated ZOOM forum for all meetings with very joyful outcome that members who could not come to a meeting could stay connected!

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

- To continue to extend outreach for inclusion of all who are interested and to continue to stress and include more multiracial/multicultural content
- To continue frequent meetings to stay connected
- To resume face-to-face meetings when safe To resume yearly (August?) outreach for SGM either virtually and/or in person
- To re-introduce when able the idea of service projects as a group

SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATING TEAM

Submitted by Lois Murphy, Co-Chair

◆ Members

Lois Murphy (co-chair), Diane Sharp (co-chair), Barbara Dowdall, Anne Bower, Marilyn Dyson, Carolyn Scott, Betsy Gabriel, Tony Heyl, Charles Gabriel, Chuck Bowser, Andrea Parry, Andrea Durham (other USG members participate from meeting to meeting, including Devery Howerton)

◆ 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.
- 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, 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

Highlights of accomplishments by members of the Social Justice Council during the past year include the following:

- Successful MLK Day of Service, which had to be reinvented due to COVID-19 restrictions, to be virtual and no contact, at which over 200 volunteers participated in 13 projects; coordinated with an MLK day worship service and activities for all ages.
- USG Social Justice Council continues to develop its partnerships with POWER and UUJustice PA.
- USG Social Justice spent significant effort to encourage voter engagement and voter outreach in 2020 by phone banks, texts banks, postcards, and by keeping our congregation informed about changes to voting due to vote by mail and measures related to the pandemic, and supported USG becoming a polling place and provided volunteers.
- USG members have engaged in sustained public witness in support of Black Lives Matter and advocacy in support of criminal justice reform.
- USG members have continued to organize and publicize events to honor earth day in April, and prepare voters for the primary in May.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

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 resuming participation with Rebuilding Philly, which may need to be changed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 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 UUJustice PA and collaboration with other Interfaith partners

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Submitted by Rick Rodes, Chair

◆ **Members**

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

◆ **Mission of Committee**

To foster financial and congressional ownership among our members.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

The financial goal for last year's Pledge Campaign was \$400,000.

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of Church Year**

- Received over \$385,000 in pledges with average pledge increase of over 10% compared to previous year. This far surpassed our revised expectation after the Pandemic hit in March, 2020.
- Planned 2021-2022 pledge Campaign with weekly or bi-weekly zooms. Goal \$400,000.
- April, 2021 Launched Campaign including Sunday Service message, send out pledge mail and email, blurbs in eCommunicator.
- Have processed incoming pledges and sent out Thank You notes.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

Pledge Campaign goal for 2021-2022 is \$400,000. Campaign theme: Responding to the Call and Pledge to your capacity.

As of May 1, 2021 we have received about 50 pledges totaling about \$150,000.

WELCOMING COMMUNITY TEAM

Submitted by Lisa Dutton, Co-Chair

◆ **Members**

Lisa Dutton - Chair, Treva Burger, Alice Parker, Deb Kish-Silver, Elaine Hills, Stephen Conrad (liaison to ushers), Eric Foster (MET representative), Nancy LaFauci (resigned mid-year)

◆ **Mission of Committee**

To welcome all and foster continued engagement with USG.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

1. Figure out how to identify and contact visitors to virtual services to engage them in a range of USG activities. 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. Partially Done
2. Conduct new member programs virtually – new member orientation, signing ceremony, etc. Done
3. Check in with new members 4-6 months after “signing ceremony” to help them get engaged and assess their areas of interest. Done
4. Identify and implement approaches to engage groups of congregants (either by Village or common interest groups) as virtual programs continue. Relied on existing programs.
5. Send holiday cards to people 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. Done.
6. With CSD, provide information to bridging high school seniors about UUism where ever they are going and also online in early summer. – *not done*
7. Design and implement processes to maximize Breeze database, especially considering new virtual activities. May start to enter “attendance” in Sunday virtual services. – *not done*. (Adopted a different approach to tracking attendance in services and new visitors.)
8. Seek to add new members to the Welcoming Committee - *not done*
9. Adapt to pandemic safety precautions as needed going forward - Done (for new member signing ceremony).

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

- Welcoming committee members are identifying, welcoming and tracking new participants in virtual services. Tracked attendance manually. Saved weekly Zoom service participant log. Maintain a file of “new people” attending services. The committee chair contacts those people who start to attend consistently if there is an email associated with their Zoom logon, or if they complete a visitor form (few complete the form). Eric F and I send personalized messages to new attendees during Sunday services via chat. We hope to engage members and visitors we don’t see regularly and also engage those new to USG. There are a number of people who consistently attend the virtual services– which is great!
- Conducted our standard programs: UU101 (offered monthly – few participate virtual) and New Member Orientation sessions (3 conducted), and new Member signing ceremonies. 1 person joined this fiscal year (1 in August); 1 former member returned to the area and re-instated her membership. (6-7 people plan to join during the June signing ceremony)
- Held a question and answer with the minister for visitors and new members in February 2021.

- Held a membership information session in April. 17 RSVP'd to attend. 12 actually attended. 7-8 indicated interest to become members when the member signing date is set. This level of engagement far exceeded our expectations.
- In response to the CoVid-19 pandemic, the Welcoming committee worked with the Caring Team 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+ committee members and other volunteers were involved in the outreach to the congregation.
- Made targeted calls to members who joined USG in the last year to check on their level of "engagement". Some attend sporadically, some will participate once in person activities resume (feel Zoom fatigue due to Zoom calls in other aspects of their lives).
- Developed and sent holiday cards for congregants. Over 230 cards sent – far exceeding our usual average of about 55. Seven people were involved in the design, mailing logistics and note writing.
- Updated many handouts/information sheets for distribution electronically (general membership as well as to support the new member orientation sessions).
- Developed an online visitor form. Use of the form is moderate (many who attend online services don't complete the form – even when prompted).
- Attempted Young Adult outreach. Contacted a few young adults to get their opinions on programming to appeal to young adults. No one responded.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

1. Offer a membership information session and/or question and answer session with the minister at least twice during the year.
2. Adapt welcoming practices as needed when in person services resume (welcome table, supporting fellowship socializing – for whatever is allowed, mobilize greeters).
3. Develop goals and implement processes appropriate to the needs of hybrid (in person and virtual) services.
4. Expand the number of Welcoming Committee members – goal, add 1-2 people.
5. Offer a UU102 session for newer members (and any members interested) to answer questions about USG, help people engage, and provide an overview of the USG databases.
6. With CSD, provide information to bridging high school seniors about UUism where ever they are going and also online in early summer.
7. Establish ongoing Young Adult (25 – 35?) outreach to foster stronger connection to UU/USG. Consider promoting regional and national UU activities to have a critical mass of participants.
8. Send holiday cards to congregants (will most likely go back to the former practice of just sending to those we haven't seen or those with Caring challenges over the last year).
9. Continue to represent Welcoming needs on the *Widening the Circle* working meetings. Implement changes identified.

WORSHIP ARTS

Submitted by Tom Ott, Chair

◆ Members

Tom Ott (chair), Steve Conrad, Mark Daugherty Ryan Hurd, Kent Matthis, Latifah Griffin-Rogers

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.

Further, it is the responsibility of the WAC Chair to track the development of Service during the week when the minister is not involved in building a Sunday Service.

The WAC, in concert with the newly created Worship Tech team that manages our Zoom services, deserve much credit for organizing and producing quality Sunday Services despite radical changes necessary as a result of Covid 19. In an effort to produce excellent Sunday Services week in and week out, the WAC has engaged in challenging conversations, including listening to our congregants, even as each component of our Service has passionate advocates for change and those who, with equal passion, oppose change. For example, many believe our Services could be made more flexible (when we return to the sanctuary) 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 those with disabilities (2019/2020) and developing programming conducive to Services conducted via Zoom (2020/2021).

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. By example, our April/May agenda contains the following new business:

- Full review of the UUA Widening the Circle Report
- Installation of cameras in the Sanctuary for hybrid Services
- Explore having a member of a local Lenape Nation addressing the congregation

As we all look forward to the return to the USG sanctuary, the WAC looks forward to redirecting our conversations to continue to improve our in person celebration of life.