

**Coordinating Team
Report to the Board of Trustees
April 2019**

Cultural Justice Core Group

This group focused its March meeting to an exploration of the cultural justice issues in the timeframe 1900 – 1950. The group continues to recognize and explore the recurring themes of injustice related to patriarchy and sexism, treatment of the LGBTQ community, immigration, and religion. Members are reading and preparing outside of sessions and contributing to the substantive discussions that take place in each month’s gathering.

Economic Justice Core Group

This group devoted its April meeting to investigations of the intersectional topics of health care and education. The connections are clear and compelling, for example: lack of health insurance leads to delayed care which leads to poorer outcomes and missed work which leads to financial crises and, too often, medical debt bankruptcy.

Greening Our Facility campaign - Over \$16,000 has been pledged to the capital campaign as of April 12, which is a good start. The solar project is almost complete, awaiting inspections and approvals before we can generate power. More than 50 members attended a presentation by the installation contractor this past Sunday, April 7. We’ve signed a contract for upgrading our lighting to LED’s and that work will begin soon. In connection with the capital campaign, Sunday, April 14, is being promoted as “Carpool Sunday,” and there will be a special collection to benefit the campaign on Sunday, April 21.

The Next Steps in the Call to Action

Our Professional Staff met for a long and intense planning day on Tuesday, April 09. We began with a couple of exercises focused on “appreciative inquiry,” a way of pausing to recognize and appreciate the changes that we have helped create over the course of the last two years.

When asked “What has gone well?” professional staff members responded:

- Increased understanding of white supremacy
- Undoing Racism workshops
- Core group experiences

- Continuity of learning
- Youth con – content
- Lots of entry points for members
- Worship has been challenging and consciousness-raising
- We still care for one another – even new people
- Depth of the work creates deeper connections
- Hearing new voices
- Fostering new leadership
- Enthusiastic response to initial partners
- New members are eager to be involved
- Members can talk about what we’re doing and who we are
- Visitors have been referred to us by people in the community
- Offering our space to outside groups
- Exposing members to events happening in the community

Reflecting on what we want to make sure to continue doing/repeat/offer more of, responses included:

- Continue to offer initial entry points
- Continue core groups
- Offering challenging services
- Smell the roses
- Recognize people as individuals, get to know each other
- Small group ministry
- Care for each other
- Affinity groups
- Offer space to outside groups
- Explore comfort/discomfort, expand our comfort zones
- Integrate our learnings into existing programming

And, when reflecting on how the congregation has been changed by our concerted focus on the “Call to Action,” our professional staff responded:

- A lot of people have moved from focusing on charity to understanding the need to participate in fostering systemic change
- Collective changing of priorities
- We’ve lost members and others have diminished their engagement

- We've gained engaged members
- We're shifting from environmentalism to environmental justice
- Many now understand our role in the community as a component of the larger work rather than as those imagining themselves to be "white saviors"
- We're finding our lane
- Deeper engagement, deeper connections between members
- We are capable of being more articulate our intersectional justice issues
- We are learning to de-center our experience
- Holding a focus on what our work is

Guided by feedback from the Intersectional Justice Team, our staff has recommitted to the plan to repeat the two Core Groups from the 2017 – 2018 congregational year: Environmental Justice and Racial Justice. We'll also be working to transform the Core Group experiences in Cultural and Economic Justice into two new Engagement Groups seeking partners in the community with whom we can work to engage our learnings in these new areas.

In anticipation of the multifaceted work made possible by MET funding, we're now committed to create summer programming that invites members and visitors to reflect on the notion of "name" and "naming." A planning group will meet later in April made up of professional and volunteer staff from our ARESD, CYRE, Community Building, Family Ministry, and Worship Teams.

In very careful analysis of the current "Call to Action," and in keeping with our recognition that the board's new "Call to Action" will include much that is in the current "Call," the professional staff spent time generating a focus for the coming year. The focus for our 2019 – 2020 congregation year will be: "What We Hold Most Dear: Exploring and Integrating our Individual and Collective Spirituality." Supplementing that focus will be emphases on both "becoming a more outwardly focused congregation" and on "communicating and celebrating."

TEAM REPORTS

CHILDREN AND YOUTH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEAM

submitted by Kathleen Carpenter, Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth

Team members: Lisa Walls, Peg Argent, Heather Douglas, Kat Eason, Tracy Hickman, Holly Hoerst, Claire Lukens, Erin Maness, Debbie Rubenstein, Greg Schropp, Stefanie Smith. As the visioning body for the C.Y.R.E. program, the team's responsibilities include: input into the selection of curriculum, safe congregation concerns, program goal setting and evaluation, support for teachers and advisors, and coordination of special R.E. activities such as Crafts with Santa and parent orientations.

Each month's team meetings begin with a reading and discussion to deepen team member understandings of the issues and challenges facing our faith, our families, and/or our children.

Some lessons around curriculum content and delivery have occurred after two years of vision-guided programming for the children and youth. The team and I see the focus on moral development and justice education/awareness as vital but inadequate. We recognize the need for more experiences that provide spiritual depth, hands-on service / empowerment, and relationship building (both peer and multigenerational).

The team is committed to exploring the best ways to meet the needs of our children and youth – and to working collaboratively with the new Family Ministry Team to meet family needs. There is a recognition that not only has programming changed but so too have demographics that impact church attendance. This month, they will devote a Saturday to a SWAT analysis of the CYRE Program and how it can best work to further our congregational vision. Strategies will be debated including: more immersive experiences several times a year combined with less structured Sunday mornings; the identification and offering of additional values-based special programming like Coming of Age and Our Whole Lives; more opportunities for children and youth to worship with and work alongside adults in

the congregation; and more support for our teachers and advisors, both virtual and in real time.

There are definite success stories within this year's CYRE programming which illustrate the integration of learnings around oppression. There are also success stories that show the value of community building and immersive experiences. But we must keep listening, learning, and adapting.

COMMUNITY BUILDING TEAM

submitted by Eve Stevens, Minister

Our current Community Building Team members are Judy Calabrese, Anne Forcinito, Kathy Jackson, Emily Katz, Erin Maness, Jenn McLeod, and Melissa Schropp. We share in the work of nurturing loving community by creating opportunities that invite the people of our congregation to find a deeper sense of connection to one another and a deeper sense of belonging within the UUC.

We are grateful to have sixteen consistent and committed coffee service volunteers each month and hope to recruit further help for next congregational year to allow our regulars more breathing room. In late January we hosted a well-attended potluck before the Music event, "Deeper Than the Skin." In February the team put on a game night for all ages. There were a variety of age groups present and the team was happy to note that people enjoyed having both the opportunity to play games with their own age-group as well as the opportunity for adults and kids to share in one game.

March's St. Patrick's Dance was well attended, but before and after the dance, the team had a conversation about the ways St. Patrick's Day celebrations in the U.S. tend toward caricature of Irish people and such celebrations do not feel in keeping with who we are and aspire to be as a congregation. We have decided to discontinue this event in the future but plan to replace it with another offering as the past few years have shown that community-building events in March have been particularly well-attended.

Also in March, the team provided an opportunity on a Sunday for congregants to engage with different and new people after the second service. We had about

thirty people stay to play a fast-pace get-to-know-you game we called “Sparking Conversations” (last offered in July, 2018). We continue to discuss other ways we might engage people in community-building opportunities when we already have them here for Sunday services.

FINANCE TEAM

submitted by Doug Swaim, Director of Administration

The Finance Team advises the Coordinating Team on all UUCC financial matters. Randy Whitt is in his second year chairing the Team. Other members are Jeff Barnes, Warren Tadlock, George Ladner and Mary Ann Hendrick. The team meets monthly on the second Thursday so they can review the prior month’s financial report before it is passed along to the Board.

The Team is reviewing components of the FY19-20 budget as they are prepared by the Coordinating Team. By the time the Board meets, they will have reviewed the full preliminary budget proposal.

In addition, the Finance Team has been helping develop a forward-looking plan for capital spending. At its March meeting, Jeff Barnes presented a comprehensive report on capital spending from reserves for the past ten years. At its April meeting the Team will look at an updated and prioritized project list prepared by the Building and Grounds Team. The two reports will be the basis for a discussion about capital spending planning.

Last year the Team identified a need for increased emphasis on network security here at the UUCC and has since been working with staff to develop a network security plan. Office Administrator Alesia Hutto is now finalizing the plan which will be implemented by the professional staff.

MUSIC TEAM

submitted by John Herrick, Director of Music

The Music Team oversees all aspects of the music program, including seeking ways to expand the variety of music offered, participation in ensembles, community building and spiritual growth through music. The team also acts as a

sounding board for the director of music and seeks to be welcoming and encouraging of all who wish to participate in the musical life of the congregation.

Activity highlights since the January 19 report:

On Saturday, January 26, the Music Program hosted a special program on race in America, entitled “Deeper Than the Skin.” Performer/story-tellers Reggie Harris and Greg Greenway inspired the audience of 150 with their songs and first-hand accounts of racism in this country. Prior to the concert, the Community Building Team hosted a community potluck. Greg Greenway was our musical guest in services the following day.

On Sunday, February 10, 20 singers joined John Herrick in a Singing Valentine outreach to Brookdale Carriage Club, where they were met by a “sellout” crowd, and Royal Park in Matthews, a new assisting living location for the outreach program. This is one of the music participants’ favorite programs during the year and brings joy to aging communities that rarely get visits this time of year.

All of our music ensembles—the Children’s Choir, Adult Choir, Chamber Choir, UUCS House Band and Handbell Ensemble—performed in services over the winter months. On Sunday, March 3, an ad hoc Women’s Choir provided music for our International Women’s Day service.

The Music Program is busy preparing for Music Sunday, scheduled for May 5. Entitled “Singing for a Better World,” our choirs, soloists and band members will present social justice songs from around the globe as well as music that celebrates cultural diversity and earth awareness. An ad hoc Youth Choir is being pulled together for this special annual service.

Spring Music Program community building events will include a progressive potluck supper on Saturday, April 27 at the homes of several members, and plans are underway for “summer fun” activities, interspersed with Summer Choir rehearsals. Members of the Music Program continue to support those who are experiencing illness or loss.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

submitted by Kelly Greene, Membership Coordinator

Staff is beginning the volunteer recruitment process for the 2019-2020 congregational year. In the current year, over 100 UUCU members have served on leadership teams and approximately 100 members have served in other volunteer roles. The trend of new members becoming engaged and volunteering soon after joining has continued. However, Room in the Inn struggled to get enough people to help each week throughout the program this year. Our Engagement Groups and the partnerships they are developing are offering additional opportunities for our congregation. One member noted, "Volunteering is doing for others from my heart yet building relationships for my soul". As we begin volunteer recruiting, we consider that what a volunteer does not only gets work done for the congregation; it can also be a gift for the one volunteering.

Attendance Data for March 2019

| Attendance Area | Jan-19 | Feb-19 | Mar-19 | Mar-18 |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| ARESD Offerings | 292 | 348 | 307 | 347 |
| Community Building | 135 | 109 | 141 | 194 |
| Congregational Team Meetings | 113 | 131 | 138 | 124 |
| CYRE | 651 | 545 | 590 | 555 |
| Family Ministry | 63 | 45 | 50 | n/a |
| Music | 341 | 174 | 126 | 137 |
| Intersectional Justice | 103 | 107 | 165 | 91 |
| Visitors | 79 | 55 | 65 | 69 |
| Worship | 1215 | 1048 | 1312 | 1121 |
| | | | | |
| Totals | 2992 | 2562 | 2894 | 2638 |