

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

December 2019

STAFF AND CONGREGATIONAL ISSUES AND TRENDS

- The **Focus 2020 Task Group** is coordinating the multi-phased “rebranding and outreach” project that won MET grant funding last spring. Group members are Barry Ahrendt (chair), Manny Allen, Sherry Sample, Kim Hutchinson, Tom Nunnenkamp and Doug Swaim (staff). Long-time UUCC friend and national UU leader Leon Spencer has provided valuable consulting assistance. The first phase of the project is “reconsideration” of this institution’s name, and the Task Group received well over 200 suggestions for a new, or adjusted, name by the December 1 deadline. We will publish the full list and conduct an electronic straw poll amongst a winnowed list of 20 to 30 possibilities the week of December 16. Any change from our current name will have to win endorsement by way of two-thirds of the votes cast at a duly-authorized meeting of the membership. Meanwhile, the Communications and Building & Grounds Teams are doing the preliminary work for later phases of the project, “rebranding” and construction of new exterior signage.

- At its third meeting on December 3, the 2019-20 **Environmental Justice Core Group** focused on environmental justice issues here in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Clean Air Carolina Director and long-time UUCC member June Blotnick explained how red-lining reduced investment in Charlotte’s historically Black neighborhoods and set them up for the twin dislocations of urban renewal and major roadbuilding. Subsequently, the residents of these neighborhoods have been subjected to high levels of pollution from the transportation corridors that now run through and adjacent to them. At the same meeting we used a 2017 report, “Making Charlotte a Climate-Ready and Just City” as the basis for considering how climate change is likely to affect Charlotteans. The group is comprised of 13 members and staff facilitators Kathleen Carpenter and Doug Swaim. The goal for the year is to gain a deep understanding of systemic environmental injustice in preparation for working for transformative change.

- On December 9 we published the **winter 2019-20 edition of *Soundings***. This issue focuses on our congregational theme for the year, “What We Hold Most Dear: Exploring Our Individual and Collective Spirituality.” Rev. Stevens contributed the introduction which is followed by reports from CYRE and ARES D about how their programming has developed the theme. There are reflections by members of the Racial Justice and Environmental Justice Core Groups and a reflection by Membership Coordinator Kelly Greene on her experience attending the Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) conference in St. Paul, MN, in November. For those willing to invest the extra time, *Soundings* continues to serve as a vehicle for deeper reflection on topics that are important in the life of our congregation.

TEAM REPORTS

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

submitted by Martha Kniseley, Adult Programming Coordinator

The month of September was devoted to registrations for new classes and especially our small group ministry. Two Discovery Circles are now meeting monthly October-May. Four new facilitators also serve on the Small Group Ministry Steering Team (SGMST). Especially noteworthy was the coordination between Eve, staff liaison to Family Ministry; Martha, staff liaison of the SGMST; and Camilla Mazzotta, creator of monthly session plans, as they worked together to create two Discovery Circles for Parents that now meet monthly on Friday evenings. Eve and three volunteers facilitate those sessions.

As the ARES D Team plans for the year, they take into consideration the following criteria:

- The Board’s Call to Action;
- Intersectional Justice and the separate topics of Environmental, Racial, Cultural and Economic Justice;
- Our commitment to offering opportunities to explore Spirituality and UU Identity; and
- The 2019-2020 theme: “What We Hold Most Dear: Exploring and Integrating our Individual and Collective Spirituality.”

We began the program year with the first of Jay's "Snapshots of Spirituality" Series: "A Snapshot of Religious Humanist Spirituality" from William R. Murry. This was well-attended, and members expressed new appreciation for a positive view of religious humanism and the definition of spirituality as described by Bill Murry in his book *Becoming More Fully Human*.

In October, Tom Cole and Sharon Baker led the discussion about the Henry Louis Gates' series on Reconstruction, while Eve began her course on the Seven UU Principles. Both classes have been full with 20+ participants. The Reconstruction class tended to attract folks who have already been engaged in Justice programming. Eve's class seemed to attract more newcomers with a curiosity about who we are.

In November, we sponsored a two-day workshop called "Reversing Runaway Inequality." Community organizer Sam Singer and ARES member Shannon Maples led 20 members through multiple group discussions and presentations. Many expressed appreciation for the training as it seemed to provide a new understanding of Intersectional Justice.

During the first week of December, Sharon Walker invited Anabel Buchenau, professor from UNCC and creator of the Witness in Residence program, to bring last year's panel to speak about the impact of transition for a transgender individual that "extends far beyond the self to their families, friends, colleagues and community." We had hoped for a bigger audience but those who attended seemed appreciative of the safe space that was provided in the Bernstein Room for these conversations.

The articles in the December *Soundings* provide another way to evaluate how members view their educational experiences as we address our annual theme.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

submitted by Doug Swaim, Director of Administration

The Building and Grounds Team advises the Coordinating Team on a broad range of facility- and property-related issues. Team members help directly with some

projects and organize and take the lead on annual spring and fall work days. Team members for the 2019-20 congregational year are Roy Smith (chair), Judy Love, Jinny Sullivan, Tom Moore, Lee Martinec and Dick Kistler.

As mentioned above, the B&G Team has been researching the city's sign ordinance so that we can be clear on options, particularly where our Sharon Amity frontage is concerned. The current sign at the corner of Sharon Amity and Hardwick is "nonconforming." Any new signage will have to meet stringent set-back and road-safety requirements. The goal is to be ready to proceed with the design of a new sign once our current name-reconsideration process has run its course.

The B&G Team has been involved as we have recently replaced two components of our HVAC system. The Team endorsed the decision to replace the rooftop package unit (unit #2) with a 14 SEER unit rather than spend more on a slightly more efficient unit.

The Team has been working with an arborist to assess our tree maintenance needs. Given our heavily naturalized and forested property, we have ongoing challenges. Two large trees are slated for removal and several others are stressed and in need of fertilizer regimens. Some of this can be covered from our operating budget. Staff may need authorization to commit funds from reserves to cover the larger tree removals. B&G Team members plan on removing some smaller trees themselves during a workday December 12.

The Team has been looking at options for adding a color-contrast nosing to the brick stairs in the vestibule with a goal of improving visibility and safety. We believe we've found the right nosing and will soon test an adhesive to see if it works on the challenging surface represented in the sealed and waxed brick.

Team member Tom Moore recently helped with modifications to the small kitchen on the RE wing. We removed the old stove, which hadn't functioned in a while, and Tom replaced it with a used base cabinet from Habitat. He then installed a new counter. The changes are much-appreciated by the ODS staff.

COMMUNICATIONS

submitted by Belinda Parry, Administrative Assistant

The Communications Team provides graphics, design, writing, photography, web and social media services directly to UUCC staff and teams for smaller-scale projects and works with contractors hired by the UUCC on larger projects. There are four Team members: Joe Argent, Paul Nisely, Nancy Pierce, and Scott Smith.

The team continues advising on the UUCC website refresh project. We are currently focusing our attention on the *Currents* and *Soundings* pages. We are working with the Membership Team to review and update materials provided to visitors and new members. The Focus 2020 Team has asked for our assistance with the marketing phase of the renaming/rebranding project, specifically the components and method for rebranding. We are always evaluating the efficacy of current UUCC communication platforms (website, Currents, Soundings, Facebook, etc.).

MEMBERSHIP

submitted by Kelly Green, Membership Coordinator

The Membership Team looks for ways to improve the welcoming and engagement of visitors, new members and existing members. Phyllis Bertke, Tara Anderson, Rich Greene, Rita Heath-Singer, Lincoln Baxter and Linn Martin are serving on the team this year. Kelly Greene is the staff liaison.

Membership

As of November 30, we have 631 members. From July through November, nine members have been removed. Four no longer live in the area. One did not feel connected or cared for. One was unhappy with our direction. One wants to be around more people of color. One is taking a different spiritual path. We also added nine new members. They bring with them five children. These new members are involved in CYRE, choir, a core group, an affinity group and coffee service. They appreciate our offerings for children and families, our justice work, our welcome and the spiritual depth they find here.

Thirty-three members have not contributed since 2017 so will potentially be removed from membership. Those members no longer attend and have not responded to requests for feedback.

Visitors

The Membership Team is in the process of updating the visitor cards and the information we offer at the visitor table. We are also investigating options for new, more regular offerings for visitors. Only 11 visitors attended Getting to Know Us or Meet a Minister from September through November, though 61 completed yellow cards. From the period of September through November 2018, 62 visitors completed yellow cards. None of them have since become members. We are aware of only two who still attend. Our goal is to offer a greater variety of inviting sessions to help those who are new here learn more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation. We also want to get them engaged, involved and connected to others as soon as possible.

MEMORIAL ENDOWMENT TRUST

submitted by Doug Swaim, Director of Administration

Five Trustees appointed by the UUCB Board oversee the Memorial Endowment Trust, which was established in 1980 and constitutes a long-term financial resource for the congregation. Some sizeable gifts, along with gains in the stock market, have propelled the endowment past the \$800,000 mark. Current trustees are Laurie Reed, Mike Long, Patrick McNeely, Joy Bruce and Richard Pratt, who serves as chair.

In November the MET sent all members its annual Legacy Society promotion which includes a profile of a current Society member or members. This year Gwynne and Lee Movius were in the spotlight. The promotion encourages members to include the MET in their planned giving, especially their estate documents. Anyone who does so becomes a member of the Society.

The MET also thanked recent contributors by way of an article in *Currents*.

Attendance Data for November 2019

Attendance Area	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Nov-18
ARESD Offerings	180	222	267	177
Community Building	141	140	204	73
Congregational Team Meetings	241	210	175	112
CYRE	608	415	446	411
Family Ministry	38	28	24	37
Music	306	228	145	121
Intersectional Justice	21	31	34	53
Visitors	59	52	70	39
Worship	1197	1009	1074	942
Totals	2791	2335	2439	1965