

**Coordinating Team  
Report to the Board of Trustees  
April 2020**

For what we assume are quite obvious reasons, we are foregoing our typical format for this month's Coordinating Team report. What follows is our effort to inform you about the activities of our community in this past month and to call particular attention to a few essential matters.

Over the course of recent weeks, we have pivoted from our normal course of things to becoming an entirely virtual congregation. This includes:

- Sunday services—we are now attracting hundreds of viewers each week including a contingent of “visitors” and those outside of the area. We've received weekly expressions of appreciation and support for what we're able to offer. Special thanks are due to Belinda Parry who has taken on major new responsibilities in order to make what we are offering possible. Each week presents a significant challenge, a part of which is trying to keep “perfect” from being the enemy of “good.” Our learning curve was steep and we're evolving in our understanding as we go.

- Children and Youth programming—Kathleen Carpenter has created many remarkable ways for children, youth and families to stay engaged. Each Sunday provides a way for groups to connect. There are regular story times for young kids. A special Facebook page for families with regular way to engage through posting photos. Social times are being scheduled for middle and high school kids. Two months ago we could not have imagined needing any of this. Now, it is becoming a regular part of what we do.

- Adult programming—Discovery Circles are meeting virtually. Both our Economic Justice and Racial Justice Core Groups have maintained their monthly sessions with substantive content. We're offering everything from yoga to writing courses, reflections from members and garden tours. Martha Kniseley has enabled us to continue engaging adults and will be adding additional offerings in the coming days. John Herrick is now coordinating weekly opportunities for us to connect through music; these have been much appreciated engagements on Wednesday evenings.

- New neighborhood email groups—Kelly Green has helped create and manage our new neighborhood email groups. After some initial glitches, we're

moving now to expand on this way of connecting with those living near one another. We anticipate continuing this after this time and taking advantage of the potential for these groups as conduits for communication and engagement.

- Caring for our community—Our professional staff has been making a series of regular phone calls—to our previously homebound members, to educators, health care workers, those who live alone, others who have needs. Martha and Jay are spending a significant portion of their days responding to member needs. Our Congregational Care Team is reaching out with both phone calls and cards to members who are facing particular challenges. Jay is offering a Community Check In every Tuesday and Thursday at 5:30 pm, an open, free-flowing way for members to connect and share.

- Focus 2020—As you read in our most recent issue of *Currents*, the work of our Focus 2020 Task Group is continuing. While these times obviously present unexpected challenges, the group is continuing to meet and is now focused on finalizing a “tag line” to aid in identifying and publicizing our community.

- Professional Staff—We have continued to meet. Some of us are facing personal and family challenges and we are serving as a support group for one another. We’ve shifted our focus significantly from long range planning to trying to create programming and an approach that will help the congregation feel cared for in this time. Each member of our staff has been forced to learn new skills, take on new challenges, surmount new barriers. All are working to do all we can to continue to sustain a robust and vital congregation.

## **ITEMS FOR YOUR FOCUSED ATTENTION**

### **Application for Paycheck Protection Program Loan**

A key part of the large stimulus bill that Congress passed at the end of March (CARES Act) was the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). It allows small businesses and nonprofits, including congregations, to obtain forgivable loans that are to be used to maintain staff and payroll during the COVID-19 event. The loan amount is calculated at 2.5 times average monthly payroll expenses for 2019, and most of the loan can be converted into a grant – “forgiven” – if the recipient maintains and pays staff at 2019 levels during the crisis.

Given Open Door School's lack of tuition income now that the school is closed and given the uncertainty that hangs over congregational income due to the financial hardship the health crisis has imposed on many of our members, the Coordinating Team decided it would be wise to pursue a loan under the PPP program. Not wanting to be at the end of the queue for loans, we have already submitted a preliminary application. Because Doug is retiring at the end of June, we asked Treasurer Ron Maccaroni to take the lead in applying for the loan.

Consolidating our numbers with those of ODS, and working with easily documented payroll expenses, we have applied for a PPP loan of \$173,100. We applied through BB&T/Truist since that is where we bank. Here are three scenarios that could play out as a result of the application:

1. No loan – The “worst case” is that we receive no loan, and that is looking more likely based on reports that the program is out of funds and the SBA has stopped taking applications. The only thing we have heard from BB&T/Truist is that our application is in their queue. It is possible that Congress will revive the program with additional funding. If we receive no loan, then Open Door School will attempt to maintain staff and payroll by utilizing financial reserves and by appealing to families of students for contributions. Some families have already offered to help. The UUCC will be dependent on the generosity of our members and our financial reserves to absorb any shortfalls that result from the COVID-19 event and resulting lockdown.
2. We receive loan and most or all of it is forgiven (converted into grant) – This could be considered the “best case” scenario. It assumes there’s a balance between our shortfall and the amount of the loan, and that we are able to document sufficient expenses under the rules of the program to allow all or most of the loan to be converted into a grant.
3. We receive loan but it doesn’t cover our shortfall and, on top of that, we have to repay a portion of the loan – A situation could arise where we receive the loan but, under the rules of the program, cannot document sufficient expenses to have the full amount of the loan converted into a grant. In that case, we would be adding to our indebtedness, at a 1% interest rate and with a two-year term on the remaining amount. Even under those benign terms, additional debt could be burdensome if we remain financially stressed by the health emergency.

Only the UUCB Board of Trustees can authorize the congregation to take on debt. Therefore, we are asking for the Board's authorization:

- to apply for a loan of up to \$173,100 under the Paycheck Protection Program; and
- for Treasurer Ron Macaroni to have the authority to sign documents relating to the loan

The Coordinating Team will keep you informed as our application proceeds through the local and Federal processes, or not. Please let us know if you have questions.

### **The UUCB CARES Fund**

Now that members are beginning to receive payments from the federal CARES Act, we've created our community's CARES Fund. Members received advance notice of an impending eblast on last Thursday and the eblast then went out on Friday morning. We have already received feedback from members who will be supporting this Fund with their personal contributions. We look forward to opening the Fund to requests for support in the coming days after we have received the initial round of contributions.

### **Caring for our Unsheltered Homeless Neighbors**

During the past few weeks, Jay has been deeply engaged in an effort to create a more responsible and safer response to our county's unsheltered homeless neighbors. In hours of engagement with activists, service providers and the faith community, he was instrumental in helping to create a call for action that circulated to all elected officials in the city and county along with the managers of both. It has garnered over 80 signatories of support including from the leadership of Crisis Assistance Ministry, the Urban Ministry Center and Men's Shelter, from organizers and activists and from dozens of faith leaders. Jay participated in a meeting with the County Manager, the County Health Director, the Chief of Police and other key leaders in county administration in which the call to action he co-authored was carefully reviewed. He has also helped develop the proposal

submitted to the county last Friday calling for county funding for a more responsible way to shelter the most vulnerable of our unsheltered homeless neighbors. Jay's engagement is in the name of our congregation and helps extend the ways we are continuing with our effort to extend our values beyond our congregation.