

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

In addition to the financial and membership reports, the Coordinating Team (CT) brings the following items to the Board for your attention and awareness:

**PPP Loan**

Our PPP loan lender and current bank, Truist, opened the opportunity for us to apply for forgiveness of our \$173,062 loan in November and as previously reported, our application has been submitted. We continue to anticipate that this loan will be fully forgiven. It is our understanding that this process will take several months. We will update the board on any new information that comes from this process.

**Memorial Endowment Trust**

A Special Meeting of the Congregation was held on Sunday, December 6 immediately following the service to amend the Memorial Endowment Trust Agreement, dated June 3, 2018. The Board of the Trust requested to change its name to “The Memorial Endowment Trust of the Unitarian Universalist Community of Charlotte.” The Board of the Trust also requested to remove the following language: “The masculine gender shall be deemed to include the feminine and the neuter as the context may require.” The one reference to gender was changed from ‘his’ to “theirs.” Congregants unanimously approved these changes with a total of 109 members voting both absentee and in person.

The Endowment is now shifting to promoting their Grant program. In the December 10, edition of *Currents*, the Endowment encouraged teams and groups to begin to consider potential grant opportunities for 2021. In the past the MET Grant program has funded our Sanctuary projection system, new chairs for the Open Door School (ODS) Classrooms, meeting room and vestibule furnishing upgrades, interior signage, anti-racism workshops, a Freeman Hall makeover and the redesign of our pulpit. More recent grants include an electronic bulletin

board for the vestibule, hearing loops for our meeting spaces, matching grant funds for the ODS Scholarship Fund and Freeman Hall roof repairs (which you will read more about in the Building and Grounds report below.) The generous support of our members makes the funds for this grant program possible.

## **Building and Grounds**

The Building and Grounds team has been working diligently on several ongoing projects. On Thursday, November 19, the team held a Grounds Day where team members painted protectant on the fence surrounding our recycling dumpster, pressure washed the windows and pavement, trimmed the hedges near our exterior sign, picked up fallen branches, and cleared and cleaned the drainage area near our HVAC units. In the month of December, Building and Grounds Team members will continue to finish up remaining small projects such as nosing our stairs, painting the fence around our trash dumpster, and placing social distance markings on the grounds and in Freeman Hall.

On Thursday, December 3, Heartwood Tree service removed five dead trees on our property which included:

- sweetgum in parking lot,
- white oak in parking lot,
- pine at the corner of Gaynor and Hardwick located on the playground,
- cherry tree by the corner of parking lot and entrance near playground,
- white oak near the corner of parking lot and playground.

For the 2020-2021 congregational year, the Building and Grounds Team was awarded a \$12,000 grant from our Memorial Endowment Trust to make repairs to the roof over Freeman Hall. On Saturday, December 5, Vail-Syde, LLC began this work. The work includes protecting the extended wood beams of the existing roof, repairing and extending the scuppers, and making any needed repairs to the window stops. The wood beam and scupper work were officially completed on Monday, December 7. The work on the window stops is being scheduled for the week of December 21.

This roof work was made possible by the generous contributions of our members to the Memorial Endowment Trust, which funds their grant program.

## **Interim Director of Lifespan Religious Education search**

We informed the Board of our Interim search in last month's CT Report. While we received initial applications from some impressive candidates, the Interim Search Group reviewed our intent for this role in light of the reality that we will remain a virtual congregation for the foreseeable future. Because of that, we have opted to alter our approach.

We recognize that, given the current and projected course of the pandemic, there is no reason to imagine that we will return to in-person programming in any substantial way in early months of 2021. Remaining virtual will significantly hamper an Interim Director's capacity to coordinate our current program and would limit even further the opportunity to evaluate our religious education programming toward the end of improving or enhancing it. We have regrettably agreed that we cannot justify the not-inconsequential cost of adding this position at a time when conditions limit what we offer or expect to gain from an Interim Director.

So, we have recently opted to delay the search to fill this position and to repost this opening in the early part of 2021. Our hope is that, by delaying we will attract a larger pool of applicants and can then be able to fill this position in anticipation of a late spring/early summer start.

We have communicated with each applicant informing them of this decision and inviting their expression of continued interest when this opening is reposted.

For the first half of 2021 we will hire a part-time CYRE Coordinator who can assure our capacity to continue our current virtual programming for children and youth. This Coordinator will work closely with Eve in her role as professional staff coordinator of our Family Ministry Team. Jay will continue to serve as professional staff liaison to the Adult Religious Education/Spiritual Development Team through the spring.

## **Charting Member Participation**

Members of our professional staff are now charting the participation of our members each month, noting the ways in which we are engaging members in our services, virtual programming, Team meetings, and other activities. A portion of a professional staff meeting each month is being devoted to noting those who are not participating and making personal contact to inquire about their wellbeing, needs and interests. We are hopeful that this can be another way to help sustain connection to our members while we are apart.

## **QC Nerve Award**

UUCC members were recently informed by a member posting to our member Facebook page that the readers of the alternative publication *QC Nerve* selected us as Charlotte's "Best Church." Temple Beth El was selected as the runner-up. (For those who are not aware, *QC Nerve* is a publication created from the demise of *Creative Loafing*.)

Jay wrote the founders and co-editors of *QC Nerve* thanking them for this mention. Because neither we nor Temple Beth El are actually "churches," Jay also suggested that they consider changing this category to a term more reflective of Charlotte's significant religious diversity—spiritual community, house of faith, religious organization, etc.

Jay was informed that the award was already being changed and was also sent an electronic copy of this citation. So, we can be proud of the fact that the readers of this alternative publication voted us the "Best House of Faith" for this year. This is welcomed (and obviously free) publicity to a readership reflecting a demographic that is young, progressive, active in the community and diverse in race and gender.

It has been heartening to see our members' pride in learning this award, some of whom are posting mention of this award in their own social media outlets.

## **UUCC CARES Fund**

The UUCC CARES Fund, created by special member contributions in the early stages of the pandemic, had an increase of \$50 bringing its balance to \$27,887.21.

## **Core Groups**

•**Cultural Justice** The Cultural Justice Core Group met, December 8. Our third session included an opening discussion about claiming the word “power” and exploring what we mean by that word. This then framed a very full two hours of LGBTQ U.S. history. We heard stories of the early days of organizing for gay rights which largely placed white cisgender gay men and women at the forefront of the gay communities’ struggle for civil rights and who advocated an assimilationist philosophy—encouraging gay people to assimilate into the dominant culture and not make waves as a way of gaining acceptance, respect, and civil rights. We then turned to some of the stories that came out of LGBTQ resistance to police brutality in the 1960s, observing the fraught dynamics navigated by women and trans people during the gay rights movement following the Stonewall Uprising, and observing that trans people of color were predominantly the leaders of organizing resistance to arrests for the crimes of being gay or cross dressing, and leading a cultural revolution which challenged rather than accepted the dominant culture.

We discussed Audre Lorde’s “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” and participants shared their own research with the group into the dominant culture’s response to early gay rights organizing and to the AIDS epidemic.

•**Economic Justice** This group has now completed a deep exploration of the economic justice realities in our founding stories. We have reviewed the implications of exploitative exploration and of the kind of colonizing that took place in both Jamestown and Plymouth that was funded by well-to-do English investors pursuing even greater economic benefits from these efforts. Group members presented on the social construct of indentured servitude and on Bacon’s Rebellion in our further exploration of the economic realities prior to our founding as a nation. Though limited by the virtual format, this continues to be an engaged and committed group, marked by one absence in the first three sessions.

## Ongoing Activity

We continue to strive to be a vital and engaged virtual congregation despite the many challenges that presents for all of us.

•Sunday Services With recent contributions from our senior high youth, our young adults and from our house band, we are continuing to explore ways to make our virtual services as engaging as possible. The Worship Team is offering valuable feedback and suggestions which continue to be reflective in various aspects of these services. In addition to our ongoing Sunday efforts, we will be offering our usual family-friendly Christmas Eve service at 5pm and the more formal service at 7pm.

•Adult Programming From our Sunday morning Credo sessions, our ongoing Discovery Circles, and the programming we are now regularly creating and offering for our adults, we have maintained a remarkably robust array of opportunities for adults. It is worth noting that this programming has been sustained after the retirement of Martha Kniseley, our Adult Programming Coordinator, and under the limitations and challenges of our virtual format.

•Children, Youth, and Families This month, our beloved Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth, Kathleen Carpenter, will retire from our staff after 28 years of service to our congregation. Kathleen continues to be in the process of helping volunteers and staff prepare for her exit, preparing ongoing programming that will help support us through this transition period.

Another round of activity bags has been prepared and collected by families with kids 3 through elementary age. Spirit Play and K-1<sup>st</sup> and elementary programming continues to sustain similar attendance to recent years' in-person classes.

The Coming of Age Credo presentations took place over Zoom this month with much effort put in on the part of our youth and COA/CYRE volunteers. Youth shared what they give their hearts to and received blessings from their COA mentors. The evening included music and deep appreciation for those who put so much into carrying this beloved program forward during the pandemic. We are proud of our youth and the way they continue to live our faith in the world.

Following Unitarian Universalist Association recommendations, we will not be offering Our Whole Lives classes for any age group this congregational year. Instead, our CYRE Team is working with Kathleen Carpenter to offer the virtual, Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators: Small Group Ministry by Robin Slaw. Through ten sessions, “parents and caregivers [will] explore their role as the primary sexuality educators of their elementary through teen age children.”

We will offer two virtual cooking competitions this month created with families in mind and open to people of all ages.

Parent Discovery Circles continue to meet monthly, providing peer support and a chance to engage in spiritual reflection related to the adventure of parenting.

•Community Building The Community Building Team put on an in-person socially distanced Pie Walk on the grounds of our members Tom Nunnenkamp and Lib Jones’ beautiful and extensive garden, Maple Walk. We had a good turnout, people enjoyed the grounds, conversation with one another, music provided by John Burns and Rob Katz and went home with pie!

Last month and this month have held opportunities on Zoom for those who attended our Senior Connections group in the past to connect and share memories. The CB Team remains grateful to Jane Kusterer’s warm and welcoming facilitation of these offerings.

•Congregational Care The Congregational Care Team in coordination with Eve Stevens and Membership Coordinator, Kelly Greene are compiling a list of people who have experienced loss and health challenges this year and will be sending holiday cards their way this month.

Healing threads continues to meet at a social distance and to share hand-knitted blankets/shawls for congregants who experience loss, serious illness and who have recently welcomed a baby into their family. Additional blankets are donated to Hospice.

Our ministers continue to reach out to our members in times of crisis, celebration, and simply to check-in.

The Congregational Care Team continues to provide our members with cards, meals, rides, and virtual or socially distanced visits this month. The Team also continued to go the extra mile reaching out specifically to families with kids at home to offer support and meals.