

**Coordinating Team  
Report to the Board of Trustees  
November 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, has opened the opportunity for us to apply for forgiveness of our \$173,062 loan. Our official application for forgiveness was submitted on Wednesday, November 3. We continue to anticipate that this loan will be fully forgiven. We will continue to update the board on any new information that comes from this process.

**Memorial Endowment Trust**

A Special Meeting of the Congregation has been scheduled for Sunday, December 6 immediately following the service to update the name of our Community's Memorial Endowment Trust. The proposed new name is Memorial Endowment Trust of the Unitarian Universalist Community of Charlotte. The official notice of the Special Meeting will be sent to the congregation on Monday, November 23. We will then include reminders in Currents on November 25 and December 3. We will offer the opportunity to vote absentee in the official notice on November 23 and in the reminder notice in Currents on November 25.

**Building and Grounds**

After several months of meeting with tree companies, pondering testing, reviewing proposals and finally consulting with an independent arborist the Building and Grounds Team has unanimously approved the removal of five dead trees on our property. These trees include:

- 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

The removal of these five trees will cost \$6,235, which is above our \$4,500 budgeted number. These trees impose an immediate hazard and it was recommended that we remove them as soon as possible. The goal is to eventually plant trees to replace the removed trees. On a positive note there are five trees that can be saved through mitigation methods. The Building and Grounds Team is currently vetting those estimates and hope to have a plan for the remaining trees in the coming months.

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

Our position is now posted nationally and is featured in a page on our new website: <https://uuccharlotte.org/interim-dir-lsre/>. Eve and Jay are joined by members Craig Harbold, Melissa Schropp and Julie Smith as the group leading this search. We've now received our initial expression of interest and anticipate others in the coming days.

### **Potential In-Person Gatherings**

Our ad hoc Transitions Group—Melanie Greeley, Michael Kelley, Claire Lukens, Lee Martinec and Sheila Lay—met recently and encouraged the professional staff to explore potential ways to create in-person gatherings. Guided by their counsel, we are creating a pathway to initial gatherings in two settings: our grounds and Freeman Hall. Professional staff members are vetting an announcement to be released in *Currents* on November 19 that will spell out the guidelines we will be following in creating very small gatherings in the coming weeks.

### **MeckMin 45<sup>th</sup> annual Community-Wide Interfaith Thanksgiving service**

Our minister emeritus Sidney Freeman helped launch the initial interfaith Thanksgiving service here in Charlotte. Jay Leach has been involved in the planning of this year's service and Eve Stevens will be involved in the service. It will be a virtual service streaming live on Tuesday, November 24. Information has been posted on our member Facebook page and will appear in *Currents*.

## **UUCC CARES Fund**

The UUCC CARES Fund, created by special member contributions in the early stages of the pandemic, remains at its prior balance of \$27,837.21. Members will be reminded in upcoming issues of *Currents* that these funds are available to assist those with financial needs created by the pandemic.

## **Core Groups**

### •Cultural Justice

The Cultural Justice Core Group met again, November 10. Our second session included a discussion of the election in light of the work we are doing together in the core group. We framed US history beginning with settler colonialism and the genocide and dislocation of American Indians by white people and the arrival of enslaved African people in 1619. Participants heard how the dominant white, cis, straight, patriarchal culture in the American colonies used a developing legal code to reinforce a strict gender binary with specific behavioral expectations and to sanction what was moral/acceptable behavior in regards to sexuality as well as laying out dire consequences for deviating from sanctioned behavior and identity.

Participants then discussed this history of gender and sexuality using Iris Marion Young's "Five Faces of Oppression" (exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence) as a means of better understanding how those in the dominant culture protected their own power and interests through the calculated oppression of those outside the dominant culture's norms and identity. Having thought more critically about oppression, participants then shared their own definitions of "justice."

### •Economic Justice

The November session of the Economic Justice Core Group continued our exploration of what we're calling "the strands of our national economic DNA" with a detail examination of our actual founding story in Jamestown. Challenging the account of our founding as rooted in the pursuit of personal and religious freedom, we noted how the first English settlement here was actually a venture funded by the investors in a joint stock company, an early forerunner to

corporations. The initial motivation to colonize was primarily economic, the pursuit of additional wealth on the part of those with the excess capital to underwrite such a venture. Central to this narrative is the reality that the Powhatan, whose territory the English colonizers claimed as their own, had occupied that land for millennia. And, critical also is the reality that, the arrival, in 1619, of enslaved Angolans, as the first humans held in such bondage in the English colonies, became an essential element in the profitability of colonizing.

Participants are exploring personal messages they received at an early age about how our economic system works, why some people have so much more than others and how their own family's economic status was presented. This month they are applying an economic justice lens to media messaging, discussing with their partners the implied messages in the way issues of economic injustice are portrayed.

Each participant is researching a particular topic for presentation to the group. Selected topics include healthcare, the environment, criminal justice and reparations.

### **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 The Worship Team considered a recent request from a member that we consider offering a live stream of our Sunday services at both 9:15 and 11:15. After considerable conversation, they determined that this is not an option that they would endorse. The professional staff is reviewing our Sunday morning scheduling in light of this discussion. We have no changes to propose at this time but want to continue exploring ways to engage as many of our members and potential visitors as possible

•Adult Programming We continue to benefit from a very engaged Adult Religious Education and Spiritual Development Team led by Chair Sharon Baker. We're now creating multiple ARESD offerings each month. We're continuing with monthly Credo sessions, weekly Coffee times, regular Discovery Circles and

Affinity Group gatherings. Under the extreme challenges created by the pandemic, we should be proud of all of the programming that we are continuing to offer. We encourage Board members to participate; these gatherings offering clear glimpses into the impact our programming is making on the lives of our members.

#### •Children, Youth, and Families

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

Our Middle Schoolers met recently for socially distanced service project as well as for biking and outdoor fun. There was a strong turnout for the biking event with the largest group of participants in quite some time.

This year's Coming of Age Program continues with the evening ceremonies that would have been held at the spring retreat. Much work went into changing these powerful experiences from gender focused (Male Spirit and Female Spirit) to inclusive of all gender identities/affinities. Two identical ceremonies will be held Saturday, November 14.

Our High School youth will lead a service entitled, Social Justice: Where We Are on Sunday, November 15.

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." The Family Ministry Team led an afternoon of outdoor games for all ages in October, our first in-person event directed at families since the pandemic began.

We began with circle games and moved on to an impromptu sculpture competition using materials found in recycling bins while kids played together on

the grounds. There were only three families in attendance in addition to a handful of adults who attended which made for a smaller group than we'd hoped for.

Two Parent Discovery Circles started this month and will continue to meet monthly through June, providing peer support and to engage in spiritual reflection related to the adventure of parenting.

### Community Building

In October we held an in-person, socially distanced Plant Swap. Over thirty members attended, bringing offerings from their own gardens or seed packets from the store. Everyone set up at a social distance and participants took turns introducing themselves and telling one another about the plants they'd brought. There was enthusiasm expressed for offering this event annually.

The Stewardship and Community Building Teams came together to put on a virtual Member Appreciation Night: Halloween Edition. This was a virtual event that included a costume contest, trivia, and scavenger hunt. Messages of gratitude for our members and all that they contribute to this community were offered by our ministers and by John Burns of our Stewardship Team. Over forty people attended.

### Congregational Care

Healing threads began meeting at a social distance and has completed 23 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 continued 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.