

**Coordinating Team
Report to the Board of Trustees
April 2021**

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

A Procedural Clarification on Board Meeting Process

Part of the Coordinating Team's role is to serve as an educational resource to the Board.

As such, after consulting the Bylaws, the CT raised with the Board Co-Chairs, during our monthly pre-agenda meeting, a procedural clarification concerning operating procedures for meetings of the Board.

Article V, Section 5 of our Bylaws provides for special meetings of the Board. While 5 f lays out the guidelines of going into executive session, 5 d clarifies that all regular and special meetings of the Board must begin as open meetings and minutes for all meetings must be available upon request by members of the congregation.

The CT additionally wanted to clarify that, 5 f requires that, "Any action agreed to in executive session must be formally voted at the same or the next following open meeting of the Board in order to be binding."

Transition Task Group

Members of our Transition Task Group will meet on Monday, April 26 to continue charting a course toward in-person programming. They will be guided by discussions had amongst the professional staff. Following this meeting, we will be communicating with the community regarding plans for the coming months.

By the middle of May all members of our professional staff will be fully vaccinated. As such, staff will begin moving back into their offices at 234 (our

new shorthand reference to the building at 234 North Sharon Amity, a space we have heretofore referred to as “the church.”) All staff will be working primarily from their professional offices by Monday, May 17.

Upon our return, we will begin creating opportunities for appointments at 234 with other fully vaccinated members. We also anticipate being able to plan more intentionally for gatherings on our grounds and in the building itself in the coming months.

At this point, we are planning for a return to both in-person services and to CYRE class offerings on the Sunday after Labor Day, September 12. We have the benefit of being able to return to our live-streaming capabilities, thus potentially retaining the involvement of some virtual participants who may continue to opt to access our services in this way.

PPP Loan

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has officially approved the forgiveness of our PPP Loan. Truist, our lending institution, has received reimbursement from the SBA for the loan. The loan account is officially closed, and the PPP Loan funds have been transferred to our reserve account. This brings our reserve balance to \$162,493.10.

Memorial Endowment Trust

The Memorial Endowment Trust (MET) of the UCC provides an opportunity for members to contribute financially to the life and well-being of the congregation through legacy gifts, memorial contributions, and other means of celebrating or honoring lives within our community. Members are invited in regular appeals to consider including the MET in their legacy giving. Years of careful cultivation and management by MET trustees have resulted in a balance sufficient to generate significant income. Each year the trustees determine the portion of that income available to support and enhance the work of the congregation through grant funding.

This year's grant process is still ongoing. Grant applications were submitted in compliance with the announced March 31 deadline and the MET Board is now reviewing and vetting submissions. As reported in a prior CT report to the Board, the Endowment announced that \$39,000 will be available for potential grants in the 2021-2020 congregational year. The grant awards will be publicly announced at the annual Congregational Conversation in June.

Open Door School

Our preschool, the Open Door School (ODS), has now been open for one full quarter and operations continue to run smoothly and safely. ODS continues to adhere to all county and state mandates and the guidelines of their safety plan as the driver for all decisions. Registration for the 2021-2022 school year continues and enrollment is going very well. Most classes are full and is on target to meet our desired goal of 97% enrollment.

The ODS Managing Team in 2019-2020 received a grant from the Memorial Endowment Trust for up to \$10,000 in matching funds for the Sue Riley Scholarship Fund. This ODS/MET Matching Grant Campaign is now underway. The first leg of the campaign consists of "advocates" canvassing targeted members of the Unitarian Universalist Community of Charlotte (UUCC) who have an established connection with Open Door School. In the coming weeks, the campaign will provide a blanket "ask" via Currents. As of March 31, 2021, their efforts have raised \$4,900. The second phase of the campaign will focus on ODS families. It will begin in September 2021, once the school is back in full capacity. The deadline for donations is December 31, 2021.

Interim Director of Lifespan Religious Education search

The Interim Search Group—Craig Harbold, Melissa Schropp, Julie Smith along with ministers Jay Leach and Eve Stevens—have now conducted three interviews with a diverse group of applicants. This Group will be meeting on Friday, April 16 (a meeting to be held after the completion of this report) to assess next steps in our process.

Charting Member Participation

Sunday services remain the activity with the highest participation. However, total views captured were down to 340, with an average of 85 per service. Since each represents a device and does not account for more than one person watching on a device, we expect the number of people participating was higher. Members continue to participate in coffee hour, Credo, Discovery Circles, adult classes, affinity groups, core group and team meetings, etc. We recorded 53% of members participating in at least one activity, with approximately 21% participating in more than one activity.

We had at least 30 visitors and eight new people signed up to receive Currents. The Membership Coordinator met with three visitors who indicated they would like to become members and is waiting to receive their completed paperwork to finalize the process. Visitors have been invited to an in-person, outdoor event to learn more about our congregation and to meet our ministers on Saturday, April 17.

The Membership Team did not get responses from non-participating members they contacted. We will proceed with sending letters to those who have not contributed in the last 18 months or more.

UCC CARES Fund

As of March 31, 2021, the CARES Fund balance is \$27,272.21. There have been no requests for assistance in the prior month.

Core Groups

Member Participation in Core Groups

Membership Coordinator Kelly Green recently aggregated all of the rosters from core group participation to date. As a reminder, this intensive programming was launched in September 2017 to comply with specific aspects of the Board's then newly created "Call to Action." Offered on a rotating basis, we have invited members to participate in Cultural, Economic, Environmental and Racial Justice Core Groups, a commitment requiring a significant investment of time and

thought over a nine or ten month period. Groups have been led by members of the professional staff, at times assisted by lay leadership.

To date, we have had 84 members participate in at least one of these four core groups. Twenty of our participants—almost one-fourth of our total—have opted to participate in at least one additional group. Of that number, 15 have participated in two groups, three in three groups and two of our members—Margie Storch and Kathryn Whitfield—are now in their fourth core group experience.

•Cultural Justice

The group is rescheduled to meet for the seventh time, Tuesday, April 27. In this session we will discuss imagery and rhetoric that depicted the American colonies as the “New Israel.” We’ll learn more about how this narrative of white European colonizers as God’s chosen people claiming the land God intended for them was used to justify violence toward and social marginalization of others. We’ll study the influence of the Doctrine of Discovery on colonization in North America and the concept of Manifest Destiny on our political history as a country.

Additionally, participants will present what they learned from an article detailing the confluence of white-protestant supremacy and nationalism as well as an article discussing the effect of varying interpretations of the Bible on the institution of slavery.

•Economic Justice

The April gathering of this group included remarkably well-researched presentations from group members Neal Sigmon, Althea Clark and Linn Martin. Neal invited us to consider the intersection of economic and environmental injustices and the ways in which environmental injustice always includes elements of economic injustice. Both Althea and Linn offered presentations on aspects of economic justice in education funding. Althea gave a comprehensive report on the injustices inherent in property tax-based funding of public education while Linn provided a careful exploration of the ways in which the pandemic has exacerbated economic injustices within public education.

Group members have taken the call for personal presentations very seriously, significantly enhancing the value of this group for all participants. In each exploration of contemporary issues we are discovering the patterns explored in the early part of our time together, systemic evidence of economic injustices that have been present from before our founding as a nation.

The May session will include additional member presentations as we move toward aggregating our learnings and reviewing and potentially revising the “Guiding Principles” intended to direct the work of our engagement groups.

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 As mentioned above, we have experienced a distinct decrease in viewers in services in the past month, with one notable exception. The service offered on Sunday, April 04—“. . . the disquieting complexity of ourselves:’ A Service in the Spirit of Passover and Easter”—has had 250 views to date, the most viewed service since Christmas Eve. However, the prior week’s service on March 25—“What are you anchored on or in?”—has had 159 views and the subsequent week’s service on April 11—“Love and Liberation Beyond Borders”—has had 70 views.

We do not think this decline reflects diminished quality of the services offered, a perspective shared by the members of our Worship Team who continue to tout both the creativity and content of our virtual services. Without being able to assess fully what motivates members and guests to participate or prevents them from doing so, we recognize among all of us a distinct weariness with accessing our services virtually. We are hearing anecdotal evidence that both the delightful spring weather we are enjoying and the opportunity for fully vaccinated members to travel and engage in other kinds of activities both contribute to this decline in service participation.

•Adult Programming Recent ARESD offerings included a two-part exploration “Developing Intercultural Competence” offered by our member Joe Hoff. Surveys of class participants show deep appreciation for the experience and a hope that we will offer additional opportunities for this kind of learning.

Our largest class in the prior weeks offered a discussion of “The Zo” videos from the Marshall Project offering a perspective on life inside prison through the words of prisoners themselves. The class was led by Melissa Mummert and included guest presenters who are formerly incarcerated people from the larger community. It invited participation from both the UUCS and from the UU congregation in Hickory where Melissa is minister. Responses to surveys from class participants were highly complimentary.

The initial group of participants in the six-week “Transgender Inclusion in Congregations” course created by the Transforming Hearts Collective expressed appreciation for the experience led by David Flynn and Ron Spake. David, Ron and ARESD Chair Sharon Baker met with Eve and Jay to urge the participation of the professional staff in this course. Staff is now committed to do so.

These facilitators hope that more of our leaders can participate in the coming months. While they appreciate our initial efforts to create a welcoming congregation for our transgender members and visitors, they expressed concern about the depth of both understanding and commitment.

•Discovery Circles Our Small Group Ministry Steering Team continues to assist lead content writer, Camilla Mazzotta, in creating each upcoming Discovery Circle session. These groups continue to be a meaningful source of support and spiritual growth for our members who participate.

•Children, Youth, and Families Our Coordinator of CYRE, Lisa Walls, has continued to take the lead in organizing volunteers and coordinating lesson planning and communication with families related to CYRE classes for each age group. Lisa finds ways to go above and beyond, including organizing our participation in an elaborate virtual Easter egg hunt earlier this month. Lisa’s attention to detail and long-time experience with and love of our CYRE program continue to make her a wonderful asset in this transition time between Kathleen

Carpenter's retirement and the hiring of an Interim Director of Lifespan Religious Education.

Our youngest CYRE participants have continued with hands-on activities—provided through Activity Bags prepared by CYRE volunteers—while engaged in virtual class each week. Teachers are collaborating to create an in-person Sunday morning for our elementary age kids in honor of Earth Day later this month. Our Middle School youth primarily meet in Boyce Park each Sunday for class. Attendance has been consistently higher since making the choice to meet at a social distance each week. The youth sit on yoga mats to indicate social distancing and enjoy structured conversation followed by opportunities to hike, bike and play games.

Our High School youth have been meticulously planning a virtual version of their annual Charlotte Con (an opportunity to bring together youth from multiple Unitarian Universalist congregations for programming and social connection). Sadly, they have not felt that registration numbers were high enough to go forward with the event and it has been cancelled. Though the youth are disappointed, leaders of the planning group have been grateful for the chance to connect with other UUCC youth in a meaningful way as part of the process.

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 Virtual opportunities to socialize have continued with a virtual game night designed to appeal, in particular, to young adults, a pirate-themed virtual treasure hunt with brain teasers at every turn, and Social Suppers on Zoom that invite participants to make the same meal in advance before sitting down together virtually for dinner.

In-person, socially distanced opportunities have included Friday evening Firepit Fun. Members, Althea Clark and Joe Spencer have done a wonderful job of creating an inviting and fun atmosphere, seeing different people in attendance each week. Carol Hartley hosted two “Art in the Park (ing lot)” gatherings, inviting members to bring their unfinished arts and crafts projects to the UUCC parking lot for conversation and communal crafting.

This month and next, over thirty members are scheduled to participate in small group museum visits to the Mint Museum Uptown, the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts + Culture, the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, and the Levine Museum of the New South.

Our social Affinity Groups continue to gather for ongoing outdoor fun, including hiking, biking and walking groups.

•Congregational Care Our Congregational Care Team delivered meals and cards to members in times of crisis and celebration.

Healing Threads continues to meet at a social distance and to share hand-knitted blankets/shawls for congregants who experience loss, serious illness. 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. In addition, all staff continue to check-in with members who we have not seen participating in congregational offerings to see how they are doing.

•Building and Grounds The Building and Grounds Team this year is comprised of Roy Smith (chair), Dick Kistler, Judy Love, Lee Martinec, Tom Moore, Charles Pilkey and Jinny Sullivan with Alesia Hutto serving as staff liaison.

The Building and Grounds Team with two additional volunteers on March 27 worked to complete some outstanding maintenance and repair tasks on our grounds. The team and volunteers were able to:

- Waterproof the dumpster
- Repair the steps of the fire escape at the two-year-old playground
- Repair the roof of one of the Open Door School (ODS) toy sheds
- Remove invasive ivy and weeds
- Pick up large sticks and branches
- Seal vulnerable areas outside the building to prevent pests.
- Remove of our old sign at Gaynor Rd.

Our final major task for the congregational year is the installation of our new exterior signs. The sign companies have been identified and we are finalizing the installation plans.