

**Coordinating Team
Report to the Board of Trustees
March 2022**

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

Movement Back to In-Person Activities

By the time of your meeting, we will have gathered for our first open service in two full years. We will have welcomed all who are willing and able to attend, will have exchanged hugs and personal greetings, sung together, heard our Chamber Choir sing, lit candles of celebration, sorrow and remembrance, all while maintaining an intentional livestreamed presence.

We anticipate lifting our own request for masking in the coming days and hope to have sufficient trained volunteer support to be able to offer coffee and conversation in Freeman Hall following the service. We will monitor interest and participation to determine whether the need for a second service emerges in the coming weeks.

Along with the momentousness of open services, we're planning other ways for members and others to gather in person. An upcoming festival, a very special musical event, ARESD offerings and community building opportunities await us in the coming days.

Sexton Update

A candidate has been identified and has tentatively accepted the position. The role of Sexton will be part-time. This part-time role, allotting for 50 hours per month, will include being responsible for maintenance, repairs, room set-up and general upkeep of our physical space. In addition, responsibilities will include being available three Sundays per month serving as the point person for all building and grounds tasks and issues. This part-time position will not be responsible for cleaning.

Alesia is in talks with our current cleaning service to take on a more permanent role with increased responsibilities. In addition to cleaning the building, they will be responsible for the cleaning and/or maintenance of our carpeted and tiled flooring and other special cleaning tasks. By splitting these roles into two contract positions, we will see a slight net cost savings.

Proposed 8th UU Principle

Those who have participated in one of the three sessions we've offered on the Proposed 8th UU Principle may be interested in this state-wide event scheduled for UUs throughout North Carolina:

8th Principle Event for North Carolina UUs with Paula Cole Jones - Sunday, April 3rd at 8:00 pm. This spring, UU Justice NC is teaming up with [DRUUMM](#) to offer a virtual event for North Carolina UUs interested in learning more about the [8th Principle](#). We'll have the incredible opportunity to hear directly from the co-author of the 8th Principle, Paula Cole Jones. We'll also learn more about the process of adopting the 8th Principle from two lay-leader panelists who have led this work in their own congregations. [Register Here!](#)

Stewardship

The Stewardship Team for 2021-2022 is comprised of Franklin McClelland (chair), Erica Blake, John Burns, Elaine Camp, Chris Clark, Gwynne Movius, Mike O'Sullivan and Julie Smith with Kelly Greene, John Herrick and Alesia Hutto serving as staff liaisons. The canvassers include Lincoln Baxter, John Burns, Shelagh Gallagher, Ellen Holliday, Jane Kusterer, Debbie Marr, Cyndi Martinec, Franklin McClelland, Gwynne Movius, Mike O'Sullivan, Julie Smith, Jinny Sullivan and Paul Wilson.

The Stewardship team continues to encourage generosity at the 5% level across the board through direct messaging in marketing materials, peer-to-peer canvassing efforts, messaging through monthly stewardship captains who act as "cheerleaders" by offering testimony and encouraging financial commitment, through recorded monthly stewardship messages for Sunday services and regular notices in *Currents*. We thank members who pledge with a letter from the

congregation signed by the minister and stewardship team chair, and a handwritten thank you note to generous givers from the team and with handmade crafts from our CYRE youth. **Member Appreciation events** continue to offer a way to thank the community for their financial and volunteer support.

The Music and Stewardship teams are planning a special event for the community made possible thanks to the generosity of UUCC member Larry Bennett. The upcoming Spring Soiree taking place on Sunday, April 3 will be held inside our Sanctuary at 234. The 7 p.m. concert by Charlotte Symphony Principal Flutist Victor Wang and Principal Harpist Andrea Mumm will be preceded with a pre-concert reception at 6:15 p.m. in the driveway circle.

The Team began its "**Share the Plate**" initiative in February with a soft roll out on February 13. These ongoing monthly campaigns stipulate that we share half of our contributions (not payments on pledges) with organizations creating positive change in the broader community. The organization for [February/March is Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism \(BLUU\)](#). BLUU expands the power and capacity of Black UUs within our faith by providing access to spiritual support, meaningful connection and community with other Black UUs, religious education for Black UU youth and more. We will continue to identify opportunities in the coming months and make connections between the UUCC and organizations who share our passion for justice and transformation.

The strategy for the 2021-2022 congregational year has been to move the needle forward amongst those not considered our largest pledgers. Despite our best efforts, this year's campaign has proven difficult given that members are not as engaged in the life of the Community as expected. Existing pledges are down by \$51,244, but that reduction is offset by \$24,060 in new member pledges which equates to a \$27,184 loss compared to last year's pledge total as of March 8. More than 60% of the total amount of the reductions in pledges is due to member resignations and/or deaths. On the bright side, with an average monthly response rate of 60%, we have had more *member units* increase their pledges than decrease.

We are entering budget season and as we prepare for the upcoming 2022-2023 congregational year, we are trending toward a 6% decrease in annual pledge income. Moving forward we will be [returning to services for everyone](#), gather for

workshops on March 20 that [bid farewell to winter](#), engage in several [ARESD](#), [CYRE](#) and [Community Building](#) programming opportunities, offer a Member Appreciation event, [Share the Plate](#)...and did we mention the [UUCC Choir is back!](#), we hope that this helps the community to regain those connections the board is calling for. This robust scale of ways to get involved hopes to see everyone energized and excited about engaging in connection, community and supporting the UUCC.

Memorial Endowment Trust

The Memorial Endowment Trust (MET) of the UUCC 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. Members of the 2021-2022 MET board include Fred Dodson, Mary Ann Hendrick, Ellen Holliday, Patrick McNeely, Tom Nunnenkamp (chair) and Rita Heath Singer.

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. The Memorial Endowment Trust awards grants for worthy projects that might not fit cleanly into our operating budget, but which support our Community's Vision and Mission.

For the 2021-2022 year, we have four grant projects that are still outstanding:

1. [Updating Interior Signs and Banners](#): The signs are complete, and we are coordinating installing them.
2. [Technology Upgrades to Create Hybrid Meeting/Learning Opportunities](#): We have heard back from Charlotte Sound and Visual and they hope to finish this project in the next few weeks.
3. [Updating the Aesthetics of the Worship Experience](#): This work is underway under the leadership of John Herrick and Judy Love.
4. [Marketing Grant](#): This project is on hold.

The Endowment Trustees announced in January that there is \$44,000 available for potential grants for the 2022-2023 congregational year. They invited recognized UUCC Teams and groups to apply for projects that meet the grant program's [guidelines](#). Staff members are currently collaborating with their teams to finalize their grant proposals. Applications are due by March 31. The grants awarded will be announced at the annual Congregational Conversation in June.

Charting Member Participation

In February, as in January, 44% of our members were recorded participating in our offerings. Sunday service attendance averaged 104 for each, with an average of 90 before we started offering them in person and 121 per service after. We noted 42 visitors. We have not yet added any new members in 2022.

UUCC CARES Fund

Now, with open services and with an overall organizational approach that is based around the assumption that the most negative impact of the pandemic may finally be behind us, the CT is suggesting that we announce the availability of this Fund to help support members with needs directly related to the pandemic for the final times in April and then transfer the remaining Fund Balance to the Minister's Discretionary Fund at the end of the month.

As a reminder, in the initial message to the community announcing the establishment of this Fund we stated:

When this crisis has ended, and we determine that the pandemic is no longer imperiling the wellbeing of our members any remaining money in the Fund will be added to our "Ministers' Discretionary Fund." (The Ministers' Discretionary Fund exists because of extra-budgetary contributions of our members and currently has a very nominal balance. Over the years it has helped meet pressing needs for members and in the larger community.)

Fund Balance: \$23,772.21

Ongoing Activity

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

•Sunday Services

The movement to open services now tests our commitment to offering fully “hybrid” services in a new way. In the coming weeks, we may at last have more people present for a service than are watching it either in its livestreamed or archived formats. And yet, we know that there are members who are reliant upon the livestream if they are going to continue to be a part of this worshipping community. We also know that creating and archiving our services in this way offers an important portal for interested guests and potential new members.

Our energies in the coming weeks we’ll be bifurcated. We’ll be planning and offering services intentionally designed to create an experience for those gathered in our Sanctuary on Sunday mornings. But, we’ll bring forward all we’ve learned in the past months about how best to create a service that offers an experience for, as we’ve been saying, “the UCC everywhere.”

To that end, you’ll experience ongoing efforts to enhance our space aesthetically to the benefit of both those present and those viewing. Deeper exploration of the technology needs that will enable us to take significant strides now suggest a longer-term commitment to an approach that will offer staged enhancements in the coming years. We anticipate the first step will be to upgrade the quality of the cameras in use, including adding a third camera. This will be a part of an impending Memorial Endowment Trust request for the 2022 – 2023 congregational year.

•Adult Religious Education/Spiritual Development

As we move into this newly opening chapter in the life of our community, we do so aware of the debt of gratitude owed to Sharon Baker, ARES D Coordinator, and to the ARES D Team. Over the course of the past many months, they have continued to create offerings that have comforted, challenged, informed and inspired our members.

Sharon and this Team are excited now to be able to offer a new array of religious education offerings for adults that can help foster the “connections” that the Board’s call prioritizes.

•Children, Youth, and Families

We have determined that CYRE classes have the option of meeting inside, for now with masks in well-ventilated classrooms, regardless of weather. However, our SpiritPlay and Elementary classes have continued to meet outside whenever the weather allows both because younger children find the playground more engaging and because a few families are only comfortable attending when class meets outdoors. Our youngest classes also have access to a number of pre-recorded lessons through our website and YouTube channel in an effort to reach those families who have yet to return to in person class. Much like our Sunday services, views of these lessons have increased during the week after they are posted.

Our Middle and High School classes are delighted to be back inside their familiar classrooms. For the first time in months, our High School youth will have an opportunity to socialize this month outside of a Sunday morning. We hope this helps build connection and morale with a group that has had low attendance all year.

For the first time since the pandemic began, we will offer nursery care for children 6 months through 3 years old, starting March 13th. The effort is also underway to secure paid volunteers interested in providing childcare upon request for all of our programming. We are grateful to Melissa Schropp for putting in much effort to get these wheels turning again.

We are excited to now have all age groups entering through the main vestibule doors and hope this leads to more multigenerational interaction and a renewed sense of our community.

Our Coming of Age (COA) youth were able to have their spring retreat which included an extended “vision quest” inviting youth to walk, meditate and journal about what they hold most dear and what matters most to them. We are grateful

to Lisa Walls and Michael Amy Cira, along with all COA volunteer adult mentors, who put much time and effort into creating a meaningful and fun experience at Camp Canaan in Rock Hill, SC.

A survey of UUCC families revealed that there is enough interest and enough trained facilitators to offer at least one, possibly two, series of the sexuality education program, Our Whole Lives (OWL), beginning in April. The hope is to hold both Middle and High School levels of OWL, but participant interest and volunteer capacity still need to be finalized.

The Parent Discovery Circle continues to meet monthly, allowing parents to offer one another emotional support and space for spiritual reflection.

•Community Building

For the month of March, we are hosting Coffee Hour outside in the traffic circle. Our first attempt was a success with many people lingering past 1 p.m. and enjoying catching up with one another. We are in the midst of recruiting volunteers to help with coffee service in Freeman Hall in hopes that we can offer that experience sometime next month. Attendance at our monthly virtual coffee hours has been lower and if there is not enough interest, we will consider discontinuing them in April.

There are a number of small group events this month with participants attending a poetry slam and a member-led conversation about the wonders of space. The Family Ministry Team is also hosting the Farewell to Winter Workshops event later this month. Six workshops will be offered including the opportunity to create a vision collage, learn to crochet, honor big feelings through mindfulness practices, learn more about welcome as a spiritual practice, spring inspiration for weeknight meals and preparing your garden for spring.

•Discovery Circles

The Small Group Ministry Steering Team met to finalize the March and April sessions and will meet again next month to discuss what form Discovery Circles might take next year. Two Discovery Circles continue to meet each month, one on Zoom and the other has returned to in-person gatherings in the Bernstein Room.

- Congregational Care

Our Congregational Care Team continued to make phone calls, visits and to send cards and deliver meals to members in times of crisis and celebration this month. A few members of the team went above and beyond offering rides to and from surgery and other medical appointments for multiple members. Our ministers and other professional staff continue to reach out to our members in times of crisis, celebration, and simply to check-in.

- Building and Grounds

The Building and Grounds Team for 2021-2022 is comprised of Roy Smith (chair), David Johnson, Judy Love, Dan Maples, Tom Moore, Charles Pilkey and Ginny Sullivan with Alesia Hutto serving as staff liaison.

In the month of March, the Team met in-person to help finalize its work on submitting a grant application to the MET for adding awnings over the exterior doors leading to the vestibule and adding lighting on the Memorial Garden side of the building. The Team has also agreed to co-sponsor a grant on behalf of the Open Door School Managing team to replace the aging sheds on two of the playgrounds.

The Team continues to work toward applying for a grant through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Included in the Act is a pilot program for making federal grants to tax exempt 501(c)(3) organizations to upgrade buildings to achieve more energy efficiency. The Act specifically addresses the installation of materials on buildings that reduce the building's use of fuel and other energy, such as upgrades to roofing material, lighting systems, windows, doors, and HVAC systems. The Act provides up to \$50 Million Dollars in grant funds annually through the year 2026. An organization can receive up to \$200,000 in grant proceeds. We plan to gain more traction on this work after submitting the Team's grant to the MET.

For the month of April, the Team is planning its annual Spring Grounds Day. The plan is to invite members of the community to join the Building and Grounds team to spruce things up for spring and address some minor maintenance

projects. The date will be announced in an upcoming issue of *Currents*. We hope that members of the Board can join us.

- Intersectional Justice Team

The Team recently met with Richard Pratt who is now coordinating the work of our Intersectional Engagement Group. Richard reported on three meetings of this Group as they work to organize themselves and to begin to assess opportunities for UCC members to embody our shared commitments in engagements in the larger community. The Group is currently vetting five different possibilities; the Team provided additional input on others.

At this stage, the Team is urging the Group to prioritize opportunities for engagement, even those that may not optimally synch with our longer-term approach. The Team finds value in “getting in the arena,” and believes that by doing so new opportunities may emerge.

The Team also discussed its role in fostering shorter term ways for members to engage. These may take the form of petitions to sign, one-time actions to attend, or other ways to engage that are not based on the need to build more substantial connections. As an example, both *Currents* and our member Facebook page are now inviting us to sign a petition circulated by Green Faith addressing the funding of the fossil fuel industry. We anticipate other opportunities in the coming days.