

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

It is worth noting that for the first time since February 2020, we are enjoying a month in which all of our activities have the option to be offered as in-person opportunities. Sunday services, coffee fellowship, CYRE, ARES offerings, Team meetings, Discovery Circles, Affinity Groups, Community Building and other special activities like the recent Sunday concert are all occurring now in-person.

It is also worth noting that our access to technology and dramatic increase in technological proficiency among our members also continues to make virtual and hybrid gatherings an option. Freeman Hall, the Bernstein Room and the Conference Room all now include technology upgrades making them viable hybrid options going forward.

**“Share the Plate”**

The Stewardship Team introduced its "Share the Plate" (STP) initiative in mid-February. Where we pledged to share half of our plate contributions with organizations creating positive change in the broader community for a designated period of time.

Our initial effort to help create a more generous community by engaging in a “Share the Plate” effort proved very successful. The UCC made a **\$1591.18** contribution to help support the important work of Black Lives UU (BLUU). Many of our members voted with their resources to endorse BLUU’s challenging efforts.

For the month of April we’re dividing the collections gathered in the baskets on Sundays (and through our electronic giving portal) with GreenFaith, headed locally by UU minister, Rev. Amy Brooks. GreenFaith is a worldwide coalition

where people of faith and conscience collaborate for climate and environmental justice. You can find more about this month's STP campaign [here](#).

### **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. 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.

The Endowment Trustees announced in January that there is \$44,000 available for potential grants for the 2022-2023 congregational year. The deadline for grant applications for the 2022-2023 congregational year was March 31. The Endowment Trustees received over \$50,000 in grant requests. The Trustees will review grant proposals at their April and May meetings. The grants awarded will be announced at the annual Congregational Conversation in June.

### **Communications**

The Communications Team, which consists of David Dixon, Erin Manness (chair), Debbie Rubenstein, Scott Smith with Belinda Parry (staff liaison), is finalizing a survey to be sent to UCC members at the end of April for the purpose of understanding how our current communication platforms are performing and what improvements or additions are needed. We anticipate that communications will be crucial during the upcoming transitions and also hope to gain insight that

will be useful when we are ready to continue the marketing work started by the now disbanded Focus 2020 Task Group. The team is small but is hoping that the current volunteer recruitment efforts will fill out our ranks.

### **Charting Member Participation**

Sunday service attendance increased to 657 or an average of 164 per service. Approximately 35 people visited in person and virtually. Attendance might have been impacted by masks becoming optional. We resumed having coffee hour in Freeman Hall and had our first visitor session in the building in two years. New people continue to find us though none have joined us yet this year. Well-attended activities included the concert by Charlotte Symphony musicians and the End of Winter workshops.

### **UUCC CARES Fund**

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.)

In keeping with this intention, at the end of April we will be transferring the remaining balance of \$23,772.21 to this Fund. While removed now from direct connection to the impact of the pandemic on the lives of our members, this Fund will still help offer support in times of crises for our members.

## 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

We've now enjoyed the first month of fully open services in over two years. Attendance in our Sanctuary on Sunday mornings has been modest thus far. We're hopeful that more of our members and especially our leaders will opt to be present in the coming weeks.

Services continue to be planned and led with attention to both the in-person and virtual experience being created. Each of the first open services we've offered have had over one hundred views, some of which occur well after the Sunday on which they were offered. It is essential that we be mindful that the services are reaching many outside of the sanctuary. For certain services it appears that the virtual participants will still outnumber those present in the Sanctuary.

### •Adult Religious Education/Spiritual Development

The option to offer in-person opportunities means that our list of ARESD offerings has increased. Throughout the past two years the devoted work of this Team has helped sustain and support the life of the UUCC. Now, as we're returning to sessions being offered at 234, this is now a potentially vital source of connection among our members. The coming weeks include a robust array of options.

### •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 Jinny Sullivan with Alesia Hutto serving as staff liaison.

In the month of April, the team held is annual spring workday. On Saturday, April 9, twelve volunteers, tackled the following tasks:

- Pressure washing walkways

- Removal of a dead tree on the property
- Securing the fire escape stairway leading to the 2's playground
- Cleaning the drainage system in the traffic circle
- Cleaning and clearing the fenced in areas around playground #1
- Other minor clean-up and maintenance tasks

Building and Ground workdays are a wonderful way to participate in a small commitment tasks, which make a significant impact. A special thanks goes out to those who participated.

•Children, Youth, and Families

We have been offering nursery care for a month now. We have a good crew of adult and youth nursery staff. At this point, there has only been one Sunday when there was demand for the nursery. We will continue to keep it up and running and hope interest expands in the coming weeks. We are grateful to Melissa Schropp for putting in much effort to get these wheels turning again.

Our SpiritPlay class continues with consistent attendance, continuing to meet outside when weather permits. Our elementary classes are continuing to build on their Windows and Mirrors art installation and look forward to sharing it with the congregation in May or early June. The elementary classes, inspired by earth month, recently helped to clear out some of the English Ivy on our grounds.

On Easter Sunday, Middle and High School youth will hide eggs containing coins for the younger classes to find on the playgrounds. When all the eggs have been collected, the kids will have a chance to count up the coins and vote on which organization in the Charlotte area they wish to donate the coins to. There will also be a visit from the Easter Bunny who will have treats to share.

Our Middle School youth continue to get together each Sunday with many thanks to advisors Eric Davis, Bryce Nielsen and Kristin Rogentine Lee. Our High School youth recently had their first social get-together outside of Sunday classes, enjoying a Friday evening at Optimist Hall together. There was enthusiasm from the group and excitement to continue these types of activities as often as advisor capacity allows and we're grateful to Michael Amy Cira for getting this going.

Thanks to the tenacious organizing of CYRE Coordinator, Lisa Walls, the Our Whole Lives program is underway for 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade, providing comprehensive sexuality education in a safe communal space. The Coming of Age program continues and will end with a long anticipated trip to Boston in July. The trip will include the current class as well as a few youth from the previous COA cohort who were unable to go in 2020. Again, much gratitude to Lisa Walls for working so hard on logistics and accommodating a myriad of schedules to pull this off.

Melissa Schropp organized three trips to The Mountain (a Unitarian Universalist retreat Center) in March, one for elementary (3<sup>rd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup>), Middle school (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) and High School (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>).

Eve met with our CYRE Coordinators for a retreat this month to plan a celebration in May for graduating families, shore up summer programming plans and expand volunteer recruitment for the fall with hopes of putting less pressure on our committed CYRE teachers who have stepped up in a big way this year, taking on many more Sundays than they had in the past.

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

#### •Community Building

Last month, Eve and Kelly hosted a coffee volunteer training for both veteran volunteers and newcomers who have stepped up to the plate to make coffee hour in Freeman Hall possible. Thus far we have five people willing to volunteer once a month and a few people willing to be subs as needed. We will continue to recruit in hopes of finding three additional volunteers willing to take a once-a-month shift. That said, April slots are full and thus far bringing coffee back indoors into Freeman Hall has been a success. We cannot overstate how grateful we are for our coffee volunteers who are making this long-time, beloved communal tradition possible again.

The Farewell to Winter Workshops included opportunities to learn to crochet, honor big feelings through mindfulness practices, learn more about welcome as a spiritual practice, and to prepare the garden for spring. Though attendance was lower than we'd hoped, we ended up with around 25 people which included a

handful of children and youth. Joe Spencer has reignited interest in Friday Firepit Fun with over a dozen attending the first gathering which included music, storytelling and sharing snacks. We'll have another Friday around the firepit this month as well as a field trip to the UNCC Botanical Gardens for a walking meditation on their beautiful grounds.

- 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.

- Discovery Circles

The Small Group Ministry Steering Team will meet this month to assess the commitment-level of the team and content-creators and determine what changes will need to be made to make it possible to sustain Discovery Circles with reduced staff capacity in the future. Team members agree that this year has been a particularly meaningful year in the life of Discovery Circles, creating groups with good chemistry who have found much needed emotional support and social connection with one another.

- Intersectional Justice Team

The Team sponsored an action with our partner the ReEntry Housing Alliance that garnered the kind of support needed. To date, every activity we've offered under this new model has been adequately supported by our members.

The Team heard a report from the Intersectional Engagement Group offering hopeful information about other opportunities in the coming weeks. In addition, we'll continue working with the ReEntry Housing Alliance as they create housing for those coming out of incarceration.