

2020-2021 Annual Report



First Unitarian
SOCIETY OF MILWAUKEE
nurture. engage. inspire.

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The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Established 1842

ANNUAL REPORT

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ANNUAL REPORT

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

2020-2021 Operating Budget: \$1,074,000

Adult Members: 704

Church School Enrollment: 31

Contributing Households: 397

MEMBER

- Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)
- MidAmerica Region, UUA (MAR)
- Common Ground of Southeastern Wisconsin
- Southeastern Wisconsin Unitarian
- Universalist Council (SEWUUC)
- Interchange, Inc.
- Interfaith Council of Greater Milwaukee
- Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH)
- Wisconsin Unitarian Universalist State Action Network (WUUSAN)

CHURCH STAFF

SENIOR MINISTER

The Reverend Jennifer Nordstrom

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

The Reverend Dena McPhetres

MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Reverend Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Jean Johnson

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Lynne Jacoby

OFFICE MANAGER

Shari Wright

DIGITAL OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Molly Sommerhalder

FACILITIES MANAGER

Tom Schroeder

FACILITIES ASSISTANT

Jim Spice

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE WORKER

Art Sims

CHURCH STAFF CONTINUED

LEAD MUSIC DIRECTOR

Alissa Rhode

CHORAL DIRECTOR

Tristan Strelitzer

COLLABORATIVE PIANIST

Teresa Drews

YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Deb Solis

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Lillian Schley

NURSERY COORDINATOR

Lindsey Porter

PRESCHOOL COORDINATOR

Mariah Groshek

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 2020-2021 church year may not have resembled what we would've predicted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, operating this entire year in a completely virtual format, yet it resulted in outcomes that completely surpassed what we feared at the start of the year, in the midst of this pandemic.

Through virtual meetings and online collaboration tools the Board of Trustees was able to continue with year 5 of our implementation of policy governance methodologies (see <https://uumilwaukee.org/governance>) while continuing to fulfill our fiduciary responsibilities. As you may recall of our story thus far, the Church and Board had previously identified our values and mission, and worked together to envision our aspirational goals (our Ends). Two years ago, the Board drafted and adopted the official policies which govern how the Board and Senior Minister operate in pursuit of those goals. Just last year, Reverend Jennifer worked with the Board to validate her interpretation of those policies, how we planned to measure them, and establish our very first baseline measurements – all while making the shift to virtual worship. Which brings us to this past 2020-2021 church year in which a second year of measurement gave us our very first view into the progress we've made towards achieving compliance with our policies and realizing our goals. Not a clickbait headline: the results will shock you!

Personally, I expected a pandemic year to be a year of treading water at best, or a year of major setbacks at worst. While the year has been a major tragedy for the world and for many of us and our loved ones, it hasn't been all bad news. Our second annual congregational survey showed this congregation feels what our data has shown – This beloved community continues to make significant progress toward what we set out to accomplish together, and we continue to connect with more and more people with whom these Ends resonate.

The Board's Strategic Planning Team made great progress towards understanding our current financial health and developed options to lead us towards continued growth and financial sustainability. Additionally, the Board approved our Socially Responsible Investment Policy (developed by the Finance Team and Social Justice Council) ensuring that our financial growth will also serve to further our Ends.

2020-2021 may not have been the year we wanted, but what we accomplished together during this pandemic is a testament to the strength of our values, the clarity of our principles, and the connectedness of this community.

All my best,

Mark Bender, Congregation President, 2020-2021

ENDS STATEMENTS

We, the people of First Church, build community where we:

1. Value, develop, and celebrate the gifts that come from authentic connection across difference, emphasizing racial, ethnic, and generational difference.
 2. Recognize power differences and challenge injustice where it arises.
 3. Follow the leadership of people most affected by injustice, partnering to move the Milwaukee community toward justice.
 4. Generously give and receive support, connection, and care in times of joy and challenge.
 5. Promote Unitarian Universalism and our shared values in the world.
 6. Open ourselves to wonder, making ourselves vulnerable and available to find meaning, inspiration, and transformation.
 7. Create communal experiences celebrating our interconnectedness.
 8. Create accessible, courageous, and innovative welcome to people who might find a sense of belonging and a spiritual home with us.
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VALUES

At the heart of First Church, we value:

Wonder

Authentic Connection

Love

Justice

MISSION STATEMENT

We gather together to:

Nurture the Spirit. Engage the Mind. Inspire Action.

2019-2020 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Overview

In compliance with Board policies 4.4 and 4.5, the Finance Team oversees the financial condition of the church by:

- Monitoring/Managing financial performance of investments to determine if it is in compliance with the budget;
- Analyzing financial data and developing alternatives and strategies when necessary;
- Preparing the budget for each new fiscal year;
- Serving as a resource for teams, ministries, and the Board concerning financial matters.

The Finance Team closely monitors the financial results of our church and keeps the Board of Trustees and the congregation informed of any significant developments. We generate projections to help forecast the financial condition of the church over the near and long term and to assist with the formation and maintenance of a balanced budget. We develop strategies to help improve the financial status of the church as needed, while trying to fulfill the diverse program goals established to pursue the church's Ends.

I would like to thank the team members: Tom Briscoe (Treasurer), Gordon Mueller, Trent Muller, Ron Oshima, Al Jaberg, and Holly Patzer, and the staff lead, Jean Johnson for their many hours of hard work and valued input. Without their dedicated involvement, this team could not accomplish its important responsibilities.

The 2019-2020 FY is the first year of the COVID19 pandemic. Online services began in March 2020 and are continuing through the end of the 2020-2021 FY. It is not clear what Fall 2021 will bring.

Income and Expenses

July 1, 2019 — June 30, 2020

The following page shows the budget and final income statement for the 2019-2020 church year. The first section shows the income while the second section shows the operating expenses for the year. Ideally, the income should balance the expenses to yield an Income Net of Operations of \$0 or a balanced budget. The Finance Team projected a negative balance of \$125,641 for the church year. Final numbers for "Income Net of Operations," not including extraordinary income, show a negative balance of \$106,129 – almost \$20,000 better than expected. Total income was \$36,789 below budget and the total expenses were \$56,301 below budget.

- Income**
- Total income was 4% (-\$36,79) below budget.
 - Pledges were down 2% (-\$16,891); Bequests were down 65% (-\$16,268).
 - Total activity income was -21% (-\$8,991) due to COVID restrictions.
 - Investment income was up 25% due to high interest rates.
 - The apartment income was up 39% (+\$8,729).
- Expense**
- Total expense was 5.16%(-\$15,301) below budget.
 - Human Resources expense were down 5% (-\$35,961) due to open positions.
 - Building expense and Committees were down 10% due to COVID restrictions.
 - Capital Maintenance was up 51% (\$7,339).
 -

Income Net of Operation was -\$106,129, a 16% decrease from the budgeted deficit of -\$125,641. The pledges in future years must increase to cover this cost for First Church to become fiscally sustainable.

Unrealized Gain on Investments of \$7,186.

FUSM 2019-2020 INCOME & EXPENSE HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

ITEM	'19 - '20	'19 - '20	Variance	
	BUDGET	FINAL	Amount	%
Contributions				
Pledges	703,000	686,109	(16,891)	-2%
Bequest Income	25,000	8,732	(16,268)	-65%
Other Contributions	35,200	32,777	(2,423)	-7%
Total Contributions	763,200	727,618	(35,582)	-5%
Transfer from Fund Balance	118,060	112,065	(5,995)	-5%
Activity Income				
Feast for Funds	25,000	18,563	(6,437)	-26%
R E Fees	10,000	6,975	(3,025)	-30%
Other Sources	6,900	7,371	471	7%
Total Activity Income	41,900	32,909	(8,991)	-21%
Investment Income	20,500	25,551	5,051	25%
Apartment Income Net of Expenses	22,330	31,059	8,729	39%
TOTAL INCOME	\$965,990	\$929,201	(\$36,789)	-4%
Human Resources				
Salaries, Wages & Minister	582,459	567,623	(14,836)	-3%
Professional Expenses	25,240	18,734	(6,506)	-26%
Insurance - Health & Disability	76,059	66,013	(10,046)	-13%
Retirement Savings - all staff	48,198	48,290	92	0%
Payroll Taxes	28,650	25,722	(2,928)	-10%
Other	13,584	11,847	(1,737)	-13%
Total Human Resources	774,190	738,229	(35,961)	-5%
Budgeted Contributions	22,881	22,506	(375)	-2%
Building Expenses	72,525	64,960	(7,565)	-10%
Basic Operations	71,146	67,145	(4,001)	-6%
Religious Education	7,152	7,170	18	0%
Committees	25,725	23,255	(2,470)	-10%
Extra Operations				
Capital Maintenance	14,252	21,591	7,339	51%
Krug Projects/Thaney/Music Fund	98,760	85,614	(13,146)	•
Mortar Lecture Committee	5,000	4,859	(141)	-3%
Total Extra Operations	118,012	112,065	(5,947)	-5%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,091,631	\$1,035,330	-\$56,301	-5.16%
INCOME NET OF OPERATIONS	-\$125,641	-\$106,129	\$19,512	-16%
Extraordinary Income				
Gain/Loss on Investment	\$0	\$7,186		
Bequests, Unrestricted	\$0	\$0		
EXTRAORDINARY INCOME	\$0	\$7,186		
NET INCOME	-\$125,641	-\$98,943	\$26,698	

Investment Report

In compliance with Board policy 4.6.10, the Finance Team actively monitors our investments and manages the funds per our investment policy goals and objectives. The full investment policy is available on request.

On June 30, 2020, First Church had three CD's valued at \$324,473. This money satisfies the safety net of 15% of budgeted expenses as well as the additional 15% to mature in less than 3 years. The remaining funds in the General Fund as well as the Memorial Trust Fund were invested in the UU Common Endowment Fund which is managed to approximate 60% bonds and 40% equities. The UUA Common Endowment Fund had a return on investment of -3.0% for the Fiscal YTD. This was a particularly volatile year with quarterly returns ranging from -14.5% and +13.5%. Additional investments include two Landmark CU's CDs with 2.47% and 1.98% interest, and Brewery CU CD with 2.5% interest.

Balance Sheet

June 30, 2020

Total net assets decreased as compared to previous year by \$130,914 (5.3%). The assets decreased by \$98,943 due to the income deficit shown in the Income and Expense Summary as well as a decrease in unrealized gains from the UUCEF.

Description of Funds

Restricted (by donor) Funds

- Morter Fund: This fund was established in accordance with a bequest of a former member. The funds are designated to sponsor seminars on individual responsibility.
- Memorial Trust Fund: This fund contains unspecified bequests. Money placed in the fund can be expended or borrowed against only by a super majority of the congregation. The Finance Team manages it. A fixed percentage of the fund's assets provide quarterly income to the church's operations.

Designated (by Board) Funds

- Capital Maintenance Reserve: This fund contains unrestricted bequest and donations that the Board designated for capital improvements.

Unrestricted Funds

- Unrestricted Fund Balance: This fund is the amount retained after payment of expenses or the allocation to designated funds. It increases during fiscal years in which there is an operating surplus and decreases during years in which there is an operating deficit. For fiscal security, the Board has adopted a policy of maintaining a balance in this fund that is equal to or greater than 15% of the operating expenses for the most recent fiscal year. If the balance drops below this 15% level, the restoration of the fund becomes a fiscal priority.
- Krug Special Programs Fund: This fund was designated by the Board in March 2019 to fund special projects in 2019-20 through 2021-22.

Noreen Gilbertsen
Finance Committee Chair

FUSM BALANCE SHEET FOR FY 2019-2020

6/30/2020

ASSETS		
	June 30, 2019	June 30, 2020
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$21,182	\$16,121
Money Market	\$154,091	\$155,448
Other	\$8,981	\$3,994
Total Current Assets	\$184,254	\$175,563
INVESTMENTS		
Memorial Trust Fund - UUCEF	\$340,178	\$328,554
Calvert 1.5%	\$11,041	\$11,427
CD's	\$314,682	\$324,473
General Fund - UUCEF	\$1,115,889	\$1,022,113
Total Investments	\$1,781,790	\$1,686,568
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,966,045	\$1,862,131
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Prepaid Pledges	\$40,284	\$33,044
Apartment Security Deposit	\$3,565	\$3,583
YRUU Account & Mission Trip Savings	\$5,283	\$5,605
27th Pay Period Accrual	\$15,334	\$17,034
Sabbatical Accrual	\$5,184	\$5,184
PPP Note Payable		\$118,300
Other Liabilities	\$7,979	\$2,155
Total Current Liabilities	\$77,629	\$184,905
RESTRICTED FUNDS		
Morter Fund - Donor Restricted	\$74,106	\$69,247
Tom Thaney for the Arts	\$480	\$980
Memorial Trust Fund	\$340,178	\$328,554
Minister's Discretionary Fund		\$2,959
Total Restricted Funds	\$414,764	\$401,741
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS		
Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$783,932	\$1,043,567
Net Income	\$260,920	-\$98,943
Capital Maintenance Fund	\$38,186	\$16,595
Krug Special Programs Fund	\$390,613	\$310,020
		\$4,246
Total Unrestricted Funds	\$1,473,652	\$1,275,485
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	\$1,966,045	\$1,862,131

BOARD COMMITTEE AND TEAMS

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

As a committee of the board, the Nominating Committee is charged with nominating members for the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee.

The members of the Nominating Committee continued to reach out to both new and established members of the congregation via one-on-one relational meetings to identify skill sets and areas of interest so that we could guide members toward meaningful engagement with First Church, and also identify potential candidates for the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee. This year, the five members of the Nominating Committee conducted 30 virtual one-on-one meetings. We find this process to be a valuable way to become acquainted with members of the church and to hear their thoughts on lay leadership.

We connected with current President Mark Bender to determine anticipated needs for Board of Trustees, and connected with committee chairs, Director of Membership Lynne Jacoby, Director of Administration Jean Johnson and Senior Minister Jennifer Nordstrom to identify people in our church community that we should talk to about church involvement and potential leadership.

In addition to myself, Nominating Committee members this year were: Scot Henry, Tracy Kreuser, Vashti Lozier, Tom LeBel and staff liaison, Jean Johnson. We offer deep gratitude to those many generous and talented members who have responded to the call of leadership.

Michelle Boehm, Chair

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM (PMT)

Team Members: Erik Alexander, Mary Ann Fisher, Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Melinda Vernon (Chair), Patricia Witt.

With the ending of the Lu Krug Gift Acceptance Team (KGAT) in late Fall 2019, the Project Management Team was formed to complete two specific tasks. The first task was to appropriately honor Bettie Zillman for her generous bequest and to then advise the board on how we might recognize future large donors to our church. The second task was to evaluate the thirteen Krug projects and to report on their success as well as lessons learned from the process of requesting pro-

posals and approving these projects.

In tribute to Bettie Zillman, a contribution was made to enhance a landscape renovation project around the perimeter of the church. This work has been completed. An acorn finial has been installed and a plaque will soon be placed outside of the sanctuary, near the corner of Ogden and Astor Streets.

Unfortunately, the pandemic seriously impeded the plans for several of the Krug-funded projects in the 2020-2021 church year. Plans for a Boston Youth Pilgrimage, a second year of funding for Choral Scholars, the Social Justice Intern, the Social Justice Singers, and Sound System Improvements were put on hold with the closing of the church building. The Expanded Music Ministry project was able to present several offerings in a virtual format. With uncertainty around when the church would be able to resume to in-person services and other activities, the team submitted a status report with recommendations to the Board and Strategic Planning Team (SPT) in December 2020 and moved to inactive status. It is anticipated that decisions about renewing funding for the projects will be folded into the work of the SPT at the appropriate time.

Melinda Vernon, Chair

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

The Strategic Planning Team (SPT) was chartered by the Board of Trustees in Dec 2019 to consider the overall strategic direction and long-term vision, growth, and sustainability of First Church and advise the Board and congregation. The team was specifically tasked with addressing the structural budget deficit and to make a recommendation for a sustainable model of funding to achieve our mission and ends within our financial means. Team members are Mark Bishop, Ben LeFort, Amanda Panciera, Dale Skaggs, Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, and co-chairs Julie Bock and David Becker.

The SPT has met regularly since April 2020, generally every two weeks. Initial discussions yielded these areas prioritized for strategic consideration: Growth, Financial Planning, External Threats & Opportunities as well as Sustainability. In

(STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM, continued on page 11)

order to guide the process of framing the strategic question and eliciting congregational feedback, the SPT created and issued a Request for Proposal in order to choose a consultant. Proposal submission review and interviews took place in August 2020.

After this thorough search process, the Strategic Planning Team engaged professional consultant Rev. John Wimberly. In November and December 2020, Rev. Wimberly conducted interviews of key church leaders and staff and provided both a financial report and growth potential report to the SPT and Board. From January through February the SPT along with Rev. Wimberly conducted 14 Listen and Learn sessions involving nearly 200 church members and staff to share the information from these reports and solicit feedback from the participants.

Participants were asked to choose among the following three options to balance the budget and stop the drain on financial reserves:

1. Make dramatic cuts (up to \$150,000) in the short term;
2. Continue to take significant withdrawals from the financial reserves until they are exhausted; or
3. Grow income to close the budget gap

Unanimously, all Listen and Learn sessions chose option #3: Grow church income. This recommendation, as well as a summary of all feedback from the Listen and Learn sessions, was reported to the Board in March 2021.

The STP will present their findings to the congregation at the Annual Meeting and put forward a motion for the congregation to affirm our sustainability strategy. Then the SPT can proceed to finalize the financial stability plan as well as the timeline for benchmark achievement while working with the Board and staff to put the plan into motion. As time permits, the SPT will begin to evaluate other areas prioritized for strategic consideration.

David Becker, Co-Chair

Julie Bock, Co-Chair

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES: May 17, 2020

Call to Order

Congregational President Mark Bishop called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m. and noted that this is our first virtual congregational meeting (via ZOOM technology), due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He urged patience with the technology, outlined options in case of difficulties (continue with a time delay or re-schedule later in May), and said questions would be submitted and addressed using ZOOM's Q&A function. At the meeting's start, 117 members were in attendance, and a quorum was achieved (note: attendance grew to a peak of 135).

Approval of Minutes, 2019 Annual Meeting

Motion of approval by Kathy Porter; second by Terry Wiggins; motion passed.

Remarks from the President

Mark Bishop reported progress with First Church's policy governance model, noting that the Board of Trustees (BOT) focused on policy and monitoring, including limitations and compliance by the senior minister and staff, as well as measures and metrics to assess progress in meeting our Ends. He noted the BOT is very pleased with the nimbleness that policy governance provides First Church leadership—a prime example is the rapidity with which the staff was able to obtain a CARES Act (PPP) loan to help with First Church expenses during the pandemic.

Mark stated that the BOT worked with the Finance Team to develop a sound, prudent and cautious investment policy and also noted that First Church's required financial safety net has been met.

The BOT approved a re-structuring of the Lu Krug Gift Acceptance Team into two new teams: 1) project management team, with Melinda Vernon as chair; 2) strategic planning team, co-chaired by Dave Becker and Julie Bock, which will, among other tasks, develop a plan to achieve financial sustainability.

Mark reminded the congregation that we include children and youth as sources of authority for First Church leadership decisions, as a result, the BOT approved the addition of two youth positions on the Board, to serve in a non-voting capacity. This fall BOT will work with the Youth Steering Committee on implementation.

Mark concluded his remarks by thanking Reverends Jennifer and Dena for their superb leadership in a very unusual and stressful church year.

Congregational Vote on Ordination of Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

Rev. Jennifer talked about the meaning of ordination, saying it is one of the most sacred acts that a congregation can perform and only a congregation has the authority to ordain. She stated that the question is, "is this person (to be ordained) a minister?"

Kimberlee said that she is very appreciative of First Church and its religious education staff, and humbly requested that the congregation ordain her as minister of religious education, as a final step in her ministry. "I am so grateful for your trust and sharing of your children," she added.

Mark Bishop noted that the BOT reviewed First Church policy for ordination, as well as materials submitted by Kimberlee in support of her ordination, and the BOT wholeheartedly supports Kimberlee's request. He also said that no motion was needed by the congregation, but we will vote electronically on whether to ordain Kimberlee as a minister of religious education.

126 members (with no abstentions) voted to ordain Kimberlee Tomcak Carlson as a minister of religious education.

Nominating Committee Report

Beth Bender reported on the incoming and outgoing BOT members. Chris Aitken, Mark Bishop and Jeremy Koenen will be retiring from the Board. Joining the BOT for a 3-year term are Rollie Hanson, Mike Hogan and Ben LeFort. Mark Bender, Jane Cliff, Dianna Dentino, Mark Miller, Jane Peterson and Melinda Vernon will continue on the Board.

Motion to accept nomination of new BOT members by Tom Briscoe; seconded by Michelle Naples; passed.

Beth also shared nominees for the Nominating Committee for a 3-year term, expiring in 2023: Tracy Kreuser and Tom LeBel. Continuing members are Michelle Boehm, Heather Hanson, Scot Henry and Vashti Lozier. Beth Bender will be leaving the committee.

Motion to accept nomination of new Nominating Committee members by Bob Porter; seconded by Andy Agacki; passed.

Financial Condition Report

Noreen Gilbertsen, Finance Committee chair, presented highlights from the 2018-2019 church year (CY) annual financial report that is printed on pages 9-12 of the First Church Annual Report for 2019-2020: 1) income net of operational expenses was almost \$-62,000, which was about \$45,000 less than anticipated. Net income, after a very generous bequest and gain on investments, was almost \$261,000; 2) total income was very close to budget, but pledges decreased 6% from the prior CY; 3) total expenses decreased almost 5% from the prior CY; 4) pledges in future years must increase to reach a financially sustainable budget; 5) Assets as of June 30, 2019 were over \$1.96 million, compared to almost \$1.76 million as of June 30, 2018.

Questions and answers followed: 1) Question: Are the losses on paper or realized? Answer: All losses are on paper; we haven't sold any assets. 2) Q: What does losses on investment mean? Is it dividends or principal? A: Losses are on principal due to management fees and/or stock market fluctuations. 3) Q: please expand on comment, "pledges are on track," given virtual services, extraordinary income (bequests), and PPP loan. A: Pledges continue to come in via autopay and we hope that continues. The PPP loan was obtained in March-April 2020; if this money isn't used, it becomes a 1% loan. The PPP loan will not affect our bottom line this CY. The PPP loan will appear in CY 2020-2021 figures, once the loan is forgiven. 4) Q: Without the PPP loan, would we be in financial trouble in the 4th quarter? Where do we stand with income and expenses? A: We don't expect expenses to increase much in the next two

months; we are losing some income from not having religious education and child care fees. For the coming CY, we're holding the line on human resources expenses (our most costly budget item) and will thoroughly review budget status in December 2020 - January 2021. The PPP loan does cushion the situation somewhat. 5) Q: What are we investing in? How well do our investments reflect UU values? A: Our investments are in the UUA Common Endowment Fund, which reflects UU values. 6) Q: What is our year-to-date net expense number relative to revenue? A: As of April 30, 2020, net expense to revenue is \$-14,734. 7) Q: Why are we now 8 years out from being financially sustainable, when last year we were 7 years out? A: We haven't gotten our desired increase in pledges (6%/year), and therefore, it will take us longer to become financially sustainable. Without increasing our income, First Church will continue to operate with deficit budgets. 8) Q: What is the status of funding for social justice issues? A) Social justice issues are addressed in our budgeting process and guided by our Ends statements. If we want to put more money into social justice causes, we need more income, because have fixed expenses we need to cover. In the BOT's opinion, our financial position is definitely a revenue issue, as opposed to an expense question. The new Strategic Planning Team will address the question of how do we grow our income and become financially sustainable.

Stewardship Report

Membership Development Coordinator Lynne Jacoby presented highlights and referred members to pages 33-36 of the First Church Annual Report for CY 2019-2020 for specifics. The Pledge Team goal was \$735,000, 5% above the prior year. Of members who pledged last CY and this CY, 154 increased their pledge; 161 left their pledge the same, and 40 decreased their pledge. There was a 3.43% overall increase in pledges between the two years. Lynne predicts a pledge total of \$703,000 this church year. She also noted there are plans to contact First Church members who haven't been as active.

Feast for Funds raised over \$21,000 through bids on over 130 items. The number of bidders declined by a third, compared to last year. Funds raised decreased by more than \$4,000.

Lynne thanked everyone involved with stewardship and membership, especially the Pledge Team and outgoing chair, Fred Gutierrez.

Remarks from the Associate Minister

Reverend Dena McPhetres said she loves and misses the congregation in this time of COVID. She noted that First Church is a community of kind, inspiring, caring, wise, resilient, compassionate (and more adjectives) people who have done many hard things before and can come through this pandemic. She reminded us of all the historic challenges First Church has faced: abolition; the Civil War; building 3 churches; World War 1; Spanish flu; women's suffrage; World War 2; Vietnam War; 9/11.

Dena gave thanks for "this being in transformative moment, together," and urged us to use the glue of kindness to get through these extraordinary times.

Rev. Dena also thanked Pastoral Care Associates (including some former PCAs) who contacted 166 members who are at high risk for COVID-19, as well as Pastoral Care Providers (and 8 younger adults) who helped members with COVID-related errands.

Remarks from the Senior Minister

Reverend Jennifer Nordstrom stated that it's been a wild, intense year that opened with a sense of abundance due to a generous bequest from Bettie Zillman, and is closing with a sense of tragedy and loss due to the pandemic, but also a sense of beauty and love as we grow connections, show up for each other, and participated in the historic ordination of Kimberlee Tomzack Carlson.

Rev. Jennifer addressed the question of, "What will church be like in the time of COVID?" Noting that we need each other more now than ever, she said First Church will continue on-line services and business at least through summer 2020. First Church will follow UUA guidelines, the best science and advice of public health experts, as well as the Wisconsin Badger Bounce Back Plan, with its aggressive contact tracing and testing. Jennifer said that First Church may not be able to meet again until there is a vaccine, which might not be before May 2021. Her priority for First Church is member and community health and well-being, and encouraged us to reach out to each other, stating that she's sure we will weather this situation together.

Rev. Jennifer ended by thanking Jean Johnson and Shari Wright for their work in getting a PPP loan; the IT Team, Financial Team, and Social Media Team for doing everything to help move us to a virtual community; and the BOT, especially outgoing president Mark Bishop, for incredible leadership.

New Business (Comments from the Congregation)

Question: Can we do closed captions for ZOOM meetings? And what is the status of the First Church accessibility audit? Answer: We will work on getting closed captioning for ZOOM meetings, and we plan to name a team this spring to do the ac-

cessibility audit.

Question: How many pledging units does First Church have? Answer: Around 360 this year. 13 members indicated they wouldn't be pledging this CY, due to changing life circumstances, and there were 17 total new pledges this CY.

Comment: Encourages the BOT to consider the interrelationship between all our Ends statements—for example, social justice (End 1) and spirituality (End 4) and the profound inequities in our society.

Comment: recognizing the Forum Committee for providing 50 years of continuous presentations.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 2:45 p.m. by Rod DePue, seconded by Kathy Porter; passed.

2020 - 2021 CHURCH LEADERSHIP

CONGREGATION OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Mark Bender
VICE PRESIDENT
Jane Cliff
SECRETARY
Mike Hogan
TREASURER
Tom Briscoe

BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Bender
Jane Cliff
Dianna Dentino
Rollie Hanson
Mike Hogan
Mark Miller
Benedict LeFort
Jane Peterson
Melinda Vernon

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Michelle Boehm
Scot Henry
Tracy Kreuser
Tom LeBel
Vashti Lozier

TEAMS, MINISTRIES, AND GROUPS

ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

ANTI-RACISM TEAM

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

AUDIO

Mike Paulson

BOOK DISCUSSION

Chris Linder

BOOK SALES

Barbra Lancelot

BUDDHIST STUDY GROUP: GATHERING WATERS SANGHA

Mark Miller

BUILDING & GROUNDS

Russ Drewry

CHANCEL CHOIR

Tristan Strelitzer

CHILD CARE

Sonya Fitak

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Thea Watters
Stacey Theime

CHRONOLOGICALLY GIFTED (TCG)

Pat McFarland
Barbara Collignon

COFFEE, CHRISTMAS

Lynne Jacoby

COLLECTION COUNTERS

Shari Wright

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Barbara Rasman

DEFEND DEMOCRACY

Kathy Rivera

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

Bruce Wiggins

FEAST FOR FUNDS

Sue Thaney

FINANCE

Noreen Gilbertsen

FORUM

Lorraine Jacobs

GALLERY

Alisha Koneazny

HERITAGE SOCIETY

Lisa Koneazny

HISTORY/ARCHIVES

Linda Presto

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Allan Ries

MEMBERSHIP

Lynn Connelly

MISSION TRIP ADVISORS

Deb Solis

MORTER LECTURE

Lorraine Jacobson
Sally Lewis

OWL ADVISORS

Deb Solis

PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES

COORDINATOR

Jane Peterson/Jeri Pearcy

PASTORAL CARE PROVIDERS

COORDINATOR

Jane Dorweiler

PERSONNEL

Nancy Spransy

PLEDGE DRIVE

Mark Chambers

PUBLICATION ASSEMBLY

Shari Wright

PULPIT GUEST

Kristine Hansen

SHAWL MINISTRY

Patti Agacki
Connie Georgenson

SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Rollie Hanson
Chris Aiken

STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Lynne Jacoby

SUNDAY FLOWERS

Shari Wright

SWANS (Seasoned Women Are Naturally Social)

Barbara Collignon
Camille Johnson

THEME CIRCLES

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS UNDER FORTY DOING ACTIVITIES (UUUFDA)

Angi Krueger
Erik Islo

USHERS

Cheri Briscoe

UU'RE HOME

JoAnn Bishop

UU+ STUDY

Chris Linder

WORSHIP ASSOCIATES

Jobey Clark
Paul Geenen

WOMAN SPIRIT

Janet Nortrom
Barbara Lancelot

YOUTH STEERING

Bizzy Schultz (adult)
Gus Pointer-Mace (youth)

FAITH-BASED PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

COMMON GROUND

Jerry Fredrickson

INTERCHANGE FOOD PANTRY

Beth Bruch
Susan Mitten (partial year)
Tim Ottman

INTERFAITH CONFERENCE OF GREATER MILWAUKEE

Patricia McFarland

MICAH (Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope)

Pete Koneazny
Bob Monahan

OTHER LEADERS

THEME CIRCLE FACILITATORS:

Jeanne Durnford
Candice Haight
Eric Heilig
Diane Horne
Juanita Mast
Patricia McFarland
Katy Phillips
Nancy Spransy
Robert Szymanski

PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES:

Andrew Alden
Julie Hamrick
Bob Kollmeyer
Donna Moberg
Susan Nolte
Jerilyn Percy, Coordinator
Sarah Richards, Co-Trainer
Dale Skaggs, Co-Trainer
Jen Vargas

SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Kenyatta Yamel

BLACK LIVES MATTER 2 WIUUs

Mary Devitt

CIRCLES OF SUPPORT

Paul Geenen

EARTH JUSTICE MINISTRY

Bruce Wiggins
Barbara Leigh

IMMIGRATION ACTION ISSUES TEAM

Pat Geenen
Birger Pahl

SHARE THE PLATE

Bob Monahan
Nancy Spransy

UU THE VOTE

Joan Hansen

First Church
Organizational Chart
[CLICK HERE](#)

2020-2021 Sermon Schedule

JUNE 7

“Play as a Spiritual Resource”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

JUNE 14

“Reducing the Play Deficit”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

JUNE 21

“Sacred Complexity”
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

JUNE 28

General Assembly Sunday Service

JULY 5

“Learning from Milwaukee’s Bronzeville”
Paul Geenen, Member

JULY 12

“Character and Politics”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

JULY 19

“After the Pilgrimage”
Omega Burckhardt, Member

JULY 26

“Salvation by Character”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

AUGUST 2

“What We Owe the World”
Beth Monhollen, Member

AUGUST 9

“Going to the Sidewalk”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

AUGUST 16

“When You Were the Stranger”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

AUGUST 23

“Extending the Bridge”
Amy Wilbourne, Member

AUGUST 30

“And Then I Come Home: Sustaining Our
Commitment to Social Justice”
Jeff Percy, Member

SEPTEMBER 6

“Nap, Pray, Love”
Monica Kling-Garcia, Member

SEPTEMBER 13

“Making Things New”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

SEPTEMBER 20

“Renewal By Fire”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

SEPTEMBER 27

“Repair and Renew”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

SEPTEMBER 29

“Expectations Bound by Time”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

OCTOBER 4

“Dwell in Possibility”
Lois Lowry, Pulpit Guest

OCTOBER 11

“Vote Love for the Future of Democracy:
UU the Vote”
The Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

OCTOBER 18

The Ordination of Kimberlee Tomczak
Carlson
Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

OCTOBER 25

“Listen to the Quiet”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

NOVEMBER 1

“They Are With Us Still”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

NOVEMBER 8

“Healing Hurts”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

NOVEMBER 15

“We Can’t Heal Alone”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

NOVEMBER 22

“Beautiful Band-Aids”
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

NOVEMBER 29

“Healing Connections”
The Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti, Pulpit
Guest

DECEMBER 6

“Stillness Within”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

DECEMBER 13

“Stillness In Tempo”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

DECEMBER 20

Multigenerational Holiday Pageant
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

DECEMBER 24

CANDLELIGHT SERVICES
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom
The Rev. Dena McPhetres
Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

DECEMBER 27

“Pressing Pause”
Beth Monhollen, Member

JANUARY 3

“The Running Jump”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

JANUARY 10

“Imagination Can Change Your Life”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

JANUARY 17

“Imagining Justice”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

JANUARY 24

“Imagination and Creativity”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

JANUARY 30

“Imagination Is a Gift”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

2020-2021 Sermon Schedule

FEBRUARY 7

"Beloved Community on the Horizon"
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

FEBRUARY 14

"The Welcome Table"
The Rev. Rebeca Hinds, Pulpit Guest

FEBRUARY 21

"Building the Beloved Community"
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

FEBRUARY 28

"Beloving Community"
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

MARCH 7

"Striving & Thriving: Youth Sunday"
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

MARCH 14

"How Do We Decide?
Discerning Commitment"
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

MARCH 21

"Commitment Makes Us Stronger"
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

MARCH 28

"Choosing Love:
Commitment to Relationship"
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

APRIL 4

"Death & Resurrection, Pandemic-Style"
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

APRIL 11

"Becoming Is Aspirational"
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

APRIL 18

"Becoming Biophilic"
The Rev. Dena McPhetres
Aly Tharp, Pulpit Guest

APRIL 25

"I Can't Imagine"
Rev. Nancy McDonald-Ladd

MAY 2

"Finding Our Song Line"
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

MAY 9

"Stories Tell Us Who We Are"
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

MAY 16

Religious Education Sunday
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

MAY 23

"Truth vs. Truthiness"
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

MAY 30

"Repentance, Reparations,
Reconciliation"
Rev. Ranwa Hammamy

JUNE 6

"Roots Hold Me Close, Wings Set Me
Free"
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom
The Rev. Dena McPhetres
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

Wheel of Life

May 30, 2020 - May 11, 2021

Deaths

Judith C. Anderson
Norman J. Fons
Jeanne Marie Lowry
Joan Willard Moore
Valerie Jaan Pogue
Lisa Radtke
Florence Waterston

Graduating High School Seniors

Zoe Gulbranson
Paul Lindroth
Sam Mulvey
Adena Saigh

Dedication of Parents And Children

Liam Robbins & Ava Robbins
Children of Caroline & Justin Robbins

James Lanell Aubrey Taylor
Child of Cheri and Anthony Taylor

Maarya Joy Hilgeman & Bennett Alan Hilgeman
Children of Tammy and Brian Hilgeman

New Members

Fall 2020

Nancy Dunham
Debra Klepp
Jack Klepp
John Meister

Spring 2021

Deborah Conta
Becca Donaldson
Annie Denison
Tristan Gross
Wanda Hurr
Jeanne Kowalski
Tim Ottman
Katie Sorg

Heritage Society

Judy Anderson
Keith & Paula Anderson
JoAnn Bachar
Bob Balderson
Christian Becker & Christina
Zawadiwsky-Becker
Mark & Jo Ann Bishop
Patricia McFarland &
Nick Bokas
Rod Botts
Tom & Cheri Briscoe
Paul & Susanne Carter
Deborah Conta
Susan Comstock
Judith & James Ford
Jerry Fredrickson & Jill Erickson
Scot Henry & Laura White

Sally Heuer & Steven Culver
Mary Houseman
Nelson Kading
Drew Kennedy & Lois Wesener
Tina Keppel
Pete & Lisa Koneazny
Hank Kulesza
Jeanne & Michael Lewis
Loren Leys & Adele Kaferly
Bob Moore & Liz Irwin Moore
Mark & Lonni Mueller
Ellyn & Mike Newman
Marlowe & Janet Nortrom
Mimi Notestein
Patrick & Barbara Patterson
Holly Patzer

Kathy & Bob Porter
Bronze Quinton & Will Fellows
Tom Radoszewski
Lisa & Michael Radtke
Miriam Reading & Dick Miller
Kathy Rivera & Sally Lewis
Max & Patricia Scharmach
Dale Skaggs & Lynda Lambert
Dick & Nancy Spransy
Jane Stoltz
Robert Szymanski
Melinda & Kit Vernon
Don Weimer & Chris Linder
Bruce & Terry Wiggins
Jacki Zandi

Staff Reports

MINISTRY

SENIOR MINISTER

It has been a wild year, dear ones. We never imagined spending a year like this, physically distanced and online, finding new ways to connect, processing collective trauma, and grieving individual and collective losses. But we have also been learning what really matters, letting go of things that don't, and prioritizing life and love in new ways. It has been a year of loss and surrender, perseverance, and adaptation. We are shedding what no longer serves and recommitting ourselves to the core of who we are. We are becoming new: learning and building new ways of being and loving one another and the world, while retaining and building on the best of who we have been.

This year, the Senior Minister's primary areas of focus have been: Worship; the Staff; the Board of Trustees; Financial Sustainability; The Future of Church; and preparing to Re-Open the Church safely.

WORSHIP: NURTURE, ENGAGE, INSPIRE, AND SHARE

Our entire 2020 – 2021 worship year was online. The lead minister was live almost every Sunday, mixed with music, worship associate and all ages stories, and stewardship moments recorded and/or edited earlier in the week. We broadcast a Zoom webinar to YouTube, where our members joined live at 10:00 a.m. and engaged with one another in the chat. The services stayed up on our YouTube channel after the live Sunday morning broadcast, and we shared the sermons and worship associate stories on our First Church Facebook pages and groups.

As of the writing of this report in April of 2021, we averaged about 168 computers watching each Sunday service live at 10:00 a.m., with an average of 462 views of each service by the end of the day on the Sunday it was broadcast, and a total of 553 views / service overall, 423 of which were unique (which eliminates multiple views of the same service by the same computer). Our Sunday morning live online attendance is probably similar to last year's Sunday morning in-person attendance, assuming one computer = between

1.5 and 2 people (168 computers = between 252 and 336 people). Our Sunday morning average in-person attendance in 2019 – 2020 was 283. Our views per Sunday service, however, is much larger than our in-person average attendance from 2019 – 2020, which means we are having a much wider impact with our online services. Going forward, we will want to continue to maintain and build our online audience, providing them with meaningful ways to engage with our congregation. Our Christmas Eve service has had over 2,300 views (1,900 unique views) online, and our Ingathering Service has had over 1,900 views (1,700 unique views) online.

We revamped our Worship Associates program to work entirely online. Our Worship Associates continued to develop our monthly Soul Matters themes into Sunday Services in retreats with the ministers and music directors. They also continued their magnificent and transformative story-telling, but adapted it to the online format.

STAFF

The Staff Team continued working from home in the 2020 – 2021 church year, with a few staff coming in to the office briefly for periodic essential functions. In October, we revised our operational policy on building use to allow a single staff member at a time to work in the building as needed. Over the course of the year, First Church staff settled into new patterns of working from home and revised their programs to work online. We have continued to meet weekly as a staff on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m., and each staff member meets with their supervisor and respective staff teams to do the work of church. Our Staff COVID Team disbanded, as we moved from the acute response stage of the pandemic into a regular work pattern.

We added Molly Sommerhalder as our Digital Outreach Coordinator in November 2020, for a year-long position to help us build our online audience during the pandemic. Our Religious Education Administrative Assistant, Lillian Schley, departed for another position in May of 2021 after 4 years of dedicated and loving service. We will miss her and we wish her well as she continues her career.

Staff Reports

BOARD: ENDS, LIMITATIONS, AND COLLABORATION

The Senior Minister continued her relationship with the Board of Trustees, supporting their work and building the relationship between the Board's work of Governance, and the Senior Minister's work of Operations. The Board continued its work of monitoring operational adherence to the Board's Policy Limitations. Last year (2019 – 2020), the Senior Minister developed and the Board approved interpretations of how the operations of the church proposed to work within those Policy Limitations. This year (2020 – 2021), the Senior Minister submitted evidence of the church working within those Limitations, and the Board monitored if church operations did work within the Policy Limitations. See the Board of Trustees' report for more details on the Board's work.

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

There has been a lot of First Church work in denominational affairs this year, in anticipation of the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly (GA) coming to Milwaukee in June of 2021. We had a large First Church attendance at the virtual 2020 GA in anticipation of this, and our very own Elizabeth Lentini was named as the Local Area Coordinator for the Milwaukee GA. Sadly, mid-church-year, we learned GA would be virtual again in 2021. At the virtual GA, we have four channels in a Milwaukee Spotlight on Wednesday, June 23 at 12:30 p.m. (and available later On Demand), where we will broadcast:

- a Milwaukee-area-congregations-led worship service;
- a Reggie-Jackson-led workshop about segregation in Milwaukee
- a video showcasing social justice in Milwaukee; and
- a video showcasing arts and healthy communities in Milwaukee.

These four programs are the result of much work by First Church members working on General Assembly, led by Elizabeth Lentini and produced and edited by our Lead Music Director Alissa Rhode. Bruce Wiggins, our Denominational Affairs Team leader, is leading our First Church delegates to the General Assembly.

Additionally, as a result of the work many local UUs collaborating with the UUA, the GA Sunday Morning Worship Offering will go to our First Church social justice partner, MICAH (Milwaukee Inncity Congregations Allied for Hope). We are

very excited to be able to direct these resources to MICAH, to help them hire a second organizer for the important social and racial justice work in Milwaukee.

Finally, Senior Minister Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom will be leading the Opening Worship Celebration at GA this year, which is a huge honor and undertaking.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Senior Minister collaborated with the Strategic Planning Team to develop a path forward for First Church's sustainability. When the Senior Minister arrived at First Church in August of 2016, she immediately began working with the Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee on the church's financial sustainability. At that time, we developed a Predictive Model and have been using it since then as our financial plan for sustainability. The Predictive Model includes both increasing income goals for each fiscal year, as well as limits on expenses each fiscal year, with the plan that over a period of years our income would gradually outpace our expenses. While we did keep expenses within the limits for each year, we missed our income increase targets several years, including last fiscal year (2019 – 2020). While we made our income targets in some of the years, the pattern was not consistent, and the Senior Minister determined we needed a more robust plan for financial sustainability. Working with the Krug Bequest Team and the Board of Trustees, the Strategic Planning Team was created to consider the situation. Please see the Strategic Planning Team report for details of their work this year, including their proposal for a congregational vote to affirm the strategy of raising more funds to move towards financial sustainability.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE: MULTIPLATFORM CHURCH

In the winter of 2021, the Senior Minister led our staff in explorations of "multiplatform church," or church that will operate both in-person and online, through multiple platforms. We attended nation-wide multiplatform church trainings and brainstorming with colleagues from other large congregations, and colleagues and lay leaders throughout the denomination. We brainstormed in our own staff teams about how to create accessible, innovative welcome to people in-person and online simultaneously. We have some initial ideas for making our online worship service more engaging when we return to in-person worship, and we will keep learning as we go. We are in

Staff Reports

a new era of church, and this is an adaptive problem that will require experimentation and regular re-attunement based on what we learn from our members, friends, and community about what is most useful, accessible, and engaging.

RE-OPENING CHURCH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Senior Minister, Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, has gathered an advisory COVID Church Re-Opening Team to work with her on the following:

1. Develop guidelines for re-opening and re-closing First Church:
 - Define the criteria for circumstances under which we will re-open (and re-close) church;
 - Define the levels at which we re-open (including types of groups and maximum capacities);
 - Identify safety pre-cautions to use when we re-open (ie, masks, distance, ventilation);
2. Develop policies and procedures for the above, liaising with appropriate First Church staff, teams and committees;
3. Communicate Policies and Procedures to the Congregation; and
4. Advise the Senior Minister on an Ad-Hoc basis for additional COVID policies and procedures if and when the need arises.

In addition to the Senior Minister, the Team members are: Lisa Koneazny (RN); Stacey Koenen (healthcare administration); Eric Alexander (MD); and Trudy Watt (Prof of Architecture, UWM); and Jean Johnson (Director of Administration).

After several rounds of input and feedback from relevant First Church teams, the staff, and the Board of Trustees, the Team is bringing a draft policy to the congregation at the May 16, 2021 Annual Meeting. The Team will revise the policy as needed, and it will likely go into effect in June. The policy is written in ink, not stone. It is revisable, based on the evolving science, circumstances, and needs of the congregation. The COVID Re-Opening Team will continue to adjust it as we learn more and as circumstances continue to change.

CONCLUSION

I am so grateful to be in this with you, First Church. You have shown up for each other, for your staff and ministers, and for the world during this incredibly difficult time. You have shown up for your own emotional and spiritual work, even when it has been hard, even when it has floundered. You have dug deep and found compassion for yourselves and your people, and shared that compassion with the community and the world. This has been an incredibly difficult year. You have survived it. And we have come together as a community, showing up in worship, in pastoral care, in the pledge drive, and in our ministry teams, to do the work of caring for our community and making church happen. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. We have made community, held each other in suffering, and pulled meaning out of struggle. We have done this together, and it is no small thing. I am so grateful.

With love,
Rev. Jennifer

SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

It was a full year for the Social Justice Council, and our Social Justice Teams. The Council is composed of the leaders of each of our Social Justice Teams. Each Team is created by five or more members of First Church coming together to work on a specific justice issue. Teams initiate their work by submitting a proposed new Team application to the Council, including the Team's proposed purpose, leadership, spiritual practices, and activities. Teams can conclude their work if and when they deem it appropriate to do so.

The Social Justice Teams of the 2020 – 2021 church year were: Black Lives Matter, Black Lives Matter to Wisconsin UUs, Circles of Support, Common Ground, Defend Democracy, Earth Justice Ministry, Immigration Issues Action Group, the Interchange Food Pantry, the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, MICA, Share the Plate, and UU the Vote. Members of First Church are also active in providing meals to the Guest House and Cathedral Center, but the folks working to provide these meals do not attend Social Justice Council meetings. In addition, the Council may initiate new work on additional issues, as it did this year with the Socially Responsible Investing initiative, and becoming members of Wisconsin UU Social Action Network (WUUSAN). The Senior Minister may also participate in Milwaukee movements for justice, as she has done

Staff Reports

with participating in the 80% Coalition for Common Sense Gun Legislation. Some highlights from the Councils work below are followed by reports from individual teams.

THE 2020 ELECTION

Our congregation was active in the 2020 Election. Dozens of our members and friends worked on the November election in some way. Our UU the Vote team helped people access voting, collaborating extensively with Common Ground's GOTV work. Our Defend Democracy Team worked on poll-watching. Some members were poll workers, and others were poll watchers. Our UU the Vote Team worked hard on getting out the vote, including calling every single member of our congregation to make sure they had all they needed to vote. More than 20 members of the team participated in phone bank efforts with UU the Vote and Common Ground. First Church also collaborated with the two other large congregations in Wisconsin—First Unitarian Society of Madison, and First Unitarian Society of Appleton—to ask every single member of our congregations to volunteer for at least one two-hour shift with UU the Vote. We hosted a UU the Vote worship service on October 11. Senior Minister Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom served on an Election Defenders "A Team" with several other clergy trained in de-escalation. After the election, the UU the Vote Team and the Defend Democracy Team called on our officials to Count Every Vote, and Rev. Jennifer spoke at a Count Every Vote press conference on Wednesday, Nov 4.

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

A new Defend Democracy Team began in October of 2020, with the initial purpose of employing a variety of non-violent tools to demand a legitimate election result and to stop a coup, should a coup be attempted. See the Team's report below. Then on Jan 6, 2021, our nation faced the unprecedented experience of an attempted coup at the US Capitol. That evening, our ministers worked with our administrative team and lead music director to create an online Vigil for Democracy, that over 60 attended, including members, friends, and visitors. Senior Minister Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom collaborated with the First Unitarian Society of Madison to create a Faith Leaders Letter calling for Trump's impeachment and conviction and the resignation or expulsion of those who voted to object to our free and fair US election results. The letter and related

press conference was covered in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

First Church members and other UUs, marched together in that protest.

Circles of Support started with five participants at our first Circle in January of 2020. It has grown to fourteen team members who rotate in, three at a time, every month, so that we give our returning citizens opportunities to tell their stories. In addition, our team members have been lobbying our state legislators for certain incremental changes to Wisconsin's Criminal Justice System.

Our **Milwaukee Innerscity Congregations Allied for Hope (MICA)** team continues to support MICA's work in the city, with three First Church members serving on the MICA Board of Trustees. Excitingly, this year our work in **Denominational Affairs** has been able to direct the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly Sunday Morning Worship Service Offering to MICA! It should be a significant amount of money, that will go to MICA's effort to hire a second organizer.

NEW SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT POLICY AND INITIATIVE

The Social Justice Council worked with the church's Finance Team to develop a new socially responsible investment policy for church funds. This new policy includes a means to make investments in Milwaukee, called "community investments," to simultaneously advance the church's social and financial goals. After the Board of Trustees approved this new policy, and members of the SJC and Finance Team investigated alternatives for making community investments, the Finance Team, the SJC, and the Board of Trustees approved making an initial \$10,000 investment with WWBIC, the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation. First Church's investment will be matched by an equal investment by the Unitarian Universalist Association's Common Endowment Fund, doubling our impact in Milwaukee's underserved communities.

Staff Reports

WISCONSIN UU SOCIAL ACTION NETWORK (WUUSAN)

The Social Justice Council voted to join the new Wisconsin UU Social Action Network (WUUSAN), with SJC members Kathy Rivera and Jerry Frederickson acting as liaisons. WUUSAN is going to be working on Wisconsin Fair Maps this year, among other things.

THE INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF GREATER MILWAUKEE

The Interfaith Council of Greater Milwaukee continued its annual luncheon series this Spring, supported by our Interfaith Board Member, Patricia McFarland. It was themed “Onward with Hope: Inspiring Courage to Create the World We Want.” Rev. Jennifer gave the opening prayer at their March 2 luncheon, with 100+ attendees. With the Interfaith Council and the 80% Coalition, Rev. Jennifer spoke at a vigil to support our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, “Standing Up Against Asian American Violence,” at City Hall on Thursday, March 18, 2021, following the hate crimes against 6 Asian American women in Atlanta, Georgia, the week prior.

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

It’s been a wild year, unlike any we’ve ever known. I appreciate everyone who keeps the fabric of our community strong, compassionate, and connected.

PASTORAL CARE

Someone once said, “grief shared is halved, joy shared is doubled.” It’s been challenging to lighten each other’s burdens and increase each other’s joy from a distance during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the support we give and receive from each other, both formal and informal, makes a world of difference to our well-being. Our team of nine Pastoral Care Associates (PCAs) are serving the final year of their three-year term. We are currently recruiting a new team who will be trained this fall. PCAs offer a quiet listening presence to members who face significant life events including illness, accidents, surgeries, death of a loved one, separation and divorce, parenting challenges, hospice, homebound elders and the stress of caregiving. PCAs made multiple contacts with 25 members since

last May, in addition to ongoing relationships from the prior year. Rev. Jennifer and I made 139 pastoral care contacts with 85 members. Much gratitude to PCA Coordinator Jane Peterson and Lead Trainer Laurie Petersen who concluded their leadership roles in December after many years of service. We welcomed Jeri Pearcy as PCA Coordinator and Co-Trainers Sarah Richards and Dale Skaggs in January.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we added 10 former PCAs to our team in order to reach out to 156 members in high risk demographics for coronavirus. The Wellness Check phone calls were appreciated, even by those who said they didn’t need further calls. This year we continued making wellness checks quarterly or more often if people desired. Our two Phone Pals for social connection chatted with nine folks who didn’t need pastoral care, yet wanted connection during pandemic isolation.

We continued the ritual of lighting the COVID Candle during Sunday worship for any church member who lost a loved one to COVID or any other cause. We lit the COVID Candle at least 12 times for 20 losses. Thanks to Elizabeth Martorell and Katy Phillips who assembled Home Grief Kits, we began distributing the kits this winter to those who wanted supplies and instructions for a simple home ritual to mark the loss of a loved one, in lieu of gathering in person for a memorial service. Since December, we distributed ten kits. We also resumed the Shawl Ministry in March, mailing two baby blankets and four shawls. About 12 members and friends knit or crochet these offerings of love.

Our Pastoral Care Provider (PCP) Team was reshaped at the beginning of the pandemic, with younger folks offering to help so that those in higher risk demographics could stay safe. Our team of 18 PCPs provide practical help for short term needs. They provided contactless meal delivery to three households, prescription pick-up and delivery to one household, snow removal assistance to one household, and delivery of three Christmas Eve kits. Big thanks to Jane Dorweiler, PCP Coordinator, who skillfully adapts our PCP practices with pandemic developments.

Staff Reports

ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Adult Spiritual Development (ASD) Team, (Javier Dorantes, Lisa Gies, Pete Hill, Diane Horne, and Nancy Pajewski), continued to meet online to support a variety of opportunities for spiritual development.

Over 275 adults attended 12 ASD programs online this church year, including Beloved Conversations, Big History, Advent and Lenten Lectio Divina, Connect & Reflect, Geography of Grace, Getting Your Ducks in a Row, Poetry Contemplation, Sanctuary Reflections, Tai Chi, Theme Circles, and ongoing Yoga sessions. Big thanks to Lynne Jacoby and her team who keep the Poetry Contemplation Group going weekly. Much gratitude to Diane Horne and her team who keep Sanctuary Reflections and Connect & Reflect opportunities going weekly.

SMALL GROUPS

Five Affinity Groups were active online this year including Book Discussion, Gathering Waters Sangha (Buddhist Study Group), Chancel Choir, The Chronologically Gifted, and UU+ Study Group. SWANS (Seasoned Women Are Naturally Social) and UUUFDA (Unitarian Universalists Under Forty Doing Activities) went on hiatus until we meet again in person. UU Parenting group dissolved as Rev. Kimberlee led family ministry. WomanSpirit dissolved when Janet Nortrom moved to Tennessee. These Member-Led Ministries gather around shared interests or demographics to find friends and deeper belonging. Affinity Groups are open to everyone to come and go as they please.

Theme Circles completes its third year this summer, where members and friends gather in groups of eight with a trained facilitator to delve deeper into our monthly worship themes. Theme Circles include homework with spiritual exercises, questions for reflection, and multi-sensory resources, which can be done at your convenience at any level. Participants make a commitment to attend once a month October – June. Theme Circles served 60 members and friends, plus nine Facilitators in eight circles this year. Registration for next year begins in late August.

SUMMER SERVICES

Summer worship services and religious education programs continue to be a vital ministry of year-round church. I work

closely with the Pulpit Guest staff-led team to plan and coordinate summer services. I also provide one-to-one coaching for each member who leads a service. We held 13 summer services online in 2020, including 3 guests, 4 member-led services, 6 services from me and the livestream General Assembly closing worship.

CONCLUSION

Finding purpose and making meaning with you through this challenging year has held me together, lifted me up and kept me going. I hope and trust that I returned at least a measure of that to you. Thank you for the privilege of serving First Church.

Yours, Dena

ADMINISTRATION

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Reporting to the Senior Minister, I am responsible for overall administrative functions of the church including financial management, human resources administration, communications, and facilities management. I manage these areas with a combination of talented staff, expert volunteers, and contract services. I supervise our wonderful Office Manager, Facilities Manager, and Digital Outreach Coordinator. As the church's administrator since 1998, I have a long and broad overview of church operations. I help provide staff a larger context for our work and occasionally historical perspective.

Here are some highlights of an extraordinary pandemic year.

OFFICE/ADMINISTRATION

Office Manager Shari Wright is responsible for general operations of the office so that it operates efficiently and smoothly. In addition to general office and admin processes, her responsibilities include technology integration, events planning, IT and database management, contributions accounts and data, and along with our Communications Team, publications and communications.

Last spring, Shari worked intensively on technology needed to make Sunday Services and other programs happen remotely

Staff Reports

via Zoom, increasing overall Zoom capacity and user knowledge, as well as the Zoom meeting reservation procedure. Shari also developed a secure and automated method for people to get Zoom links for programs promoted in announcements and the website.

Through the church year, Shari and the Communications Team provided admin and technical support, and promotion for online programs including: the Morter Lecture, Kimberlee's ordination, Christmas holiday services (and Christmas kits), two concerts, Defend Democracy activities, strategic planning listen and learn sessions.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications staff currently includes Office Manager Shari Wright and Digital Outreach Coordinator Molly Sommerhalder, and me. In spring, the Comm Team strengthened communications about Sunday services and programs as all programs shifted to online. Summer brought a change to the Worship Service format and an increase of other online programming, requiring more adjustments for communications. We implemented website improvements to search, readability and the calendar with additional improvements coming. Comprehensive communications policies were approved and posted in February. The Comm Team is working on an upgrade to the Chanticleer so it is more user-friendly online, to launch summer 2021.

In late summer, Rev. Jennifer and I developed a Digital Outreach Coordinator position to meet people where they were meeting during the pandemic – on the internet! The DOC provides support to sustain and grow the First Church community through various platforms, including strategic, consistent posting, reviewing, and engagement on our Facebook and Instagram accounts. The objective is to engage our community online for current members and share our mission, beliefs, and ends statements to attract new members.

Since her start in December 2020, Molly has provided fresh content for our social media platforms that are in line with our First Church branding and Ends. She worked to build engagement on our social media platforms: January-March 2021, the First Church Facebook Page gained 14 followers and 9 likes, the Facebook community group added 9 members, and Instagram gained 64 followers. Molly provided support to the Communications Team with images and branding materials, and used our social platforms to support campaigns such

as Christmas holidays and Pledge Drive. She also created workbooks, guides, and how-to videos for staff, members, and lay leaders to share their story and write compelling content so we can work to engage our members and non-members in our social justice outreach and other church mission-based offerings.

FACILITIES

Facilities Manager Tom Schroeder is responsible for managing building use and directing our friendly and capable Facilities Assistant Jim Spice. Because we did not meet in-person for the year, we did not hire a second Facilities Assistant and Jim has helped with tech of some online programs. Tom and Jim have been inspecting the building regularly while we are not meeting there in-person. Tom manages repairs and improvements of our facilities with the assistance of part-time Maintenance Worker Art Sims and the talented Building and Grounds Staff-led Team, headed by Russ Drewry. Tom and the B&G have done a great job managing numerous projects this year's highlights include:

- Managed installation of the new landscaping on the north and west side of the church with Johnson's Nursery. Tom facilitated installing the lovely acorn sculpture in honor of Bettie Zillman. Jim Spice did a lot of watering last summer!
- Managed a certified contractor to clean and sanitize the front offices after a fly infestation from death in the apartment above.
- Staff replaced the boiler room sump pump and the blower motor on the #1 package boiler, saving the cost of a contractor.
- Staff replaced the dishwasher relief valve on the pre-heater as well as re-piped the drain on the dishwasher to dump to floor drain, saving the cost of a contractor.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Our excellent IT Team is dedicated to updating our computer systems, security data, and managing our reliable network infrastructure.

The IT Team was busy last summer. They did a major wiring upgrade to make our entire network connections more secure,

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reliable, and scalable into the future. In the front office area (apartment building), included replacing old wiring with industry standard Cat6 Ethernet cables and finding new pathway to the server room. A new pathway from the boiler room to the server room was also established. A connection to the front entryway for a security camera was made, camera to be installed in April.

The IT Team also had a great opportunity to connect with fiber optics for a reliable connection and greater upstream speed to allow us to support increased online programs. We collaborated with Immanuel Presbyterian Church and we share the monthly service fee. Steve Culver and our Building and Grounds Team installed a small microwave dish (see image) to connect the internet gateway.



In July 2020, the IT Team migrated our Microsoft applications, email services and data storage to Microsoft Office 365 cloud services. This reduces Microsoft and server costs and offers better document sharing for remote access and team collaboration. With the building closure and the need to provide more robust network services to staff, the IT Team moved quickly to implement this project one year earlier than planned. Each user's files were migrated from the building servers to Microsoft OneDrive and some of the files were migrated to SharePoint for team collaboration. The "shared file" from our building servers is slowly migrated to SharePoint as needed and as training is performed on the use of our new sharable sites.

The new annual cost of Microsoft's Office 365 for our current staff is \$0.00 because we qualify for Microsoft's non-profit pricing. It will take us more time to migrate our building office files and servers to Microsoft cloud services. The IT team will evaluate the server room needs in the upcoming year. Team members are Steve Culver, chair Allan Ries, led by Office Coordinator Shari Wright.

FINANCE

Working with the Finance Team, Treasurer, and Shari, I provide accurate monthly financial statements and reports and lead the development of the annual budget.

With all the uncertainties of the pandemic, we agreed to

hold the budget similar to last year, and revisit our financial condition after the second quarter to adjust the budget as needed. We kept a close eye on contributions and I provided the Board new monthly contributions reports. Pledge payments and other contributions have come in ahead of our usual pace from the beginning of the church year. No adjustments to the budget were necessary. It is a wonderful endorsement of the church's ability to pivot to meaningful online worship and programming and the need for our spiritual community in this trying time.

Members of the Finance Team and Social Justice Council were inspired by a Community Investing info session presented at GA last June. With strong support and approval of the Finance Team and Board, this team developed a Socially Responsible Investment Policy, adjunct to our regular Investment Policy. The church subsequently invested \$10,000 in WWBIC (Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corp.) and the UU Common Endowment Fund will be matching our gift to WWBIC.

We received a CARES Act Payroll Protection Program loan April 2020. We recently filed a simplified application for loan forgiveness and expect to have the entire \$118,300 loan forgiven. Please also find a report from Finance Team chair Noreen Gilbertsen in this annual report.

This year has been filled with unimaginable challenges and joys. Our connection as a church community, even as we are currently isolated physically from one another, is so very precious, essential, and strong. I'm honored to serve First Church.

Jean Johnson
Director of Administration

Staff Reports

MUSIC

LEAD MUSIC DIRECTOR

SUNDAY SERVICES

Lead Music Director Alissa Rhode and Choral Director Tristan Strelitzer continue to strive for Sunday programming that inspires wonder and transformative experience in a communal setting, while simultaneously seeking to provide a full spectrum of musical styles designed to engage and welcome a diverse range of people and perspectives. As services remained online this church year due to COVID-19, Collaborative Pianist Teresa Drews contributed piano solos on video for the Sundays that she would have otherwise been accompanying the Chancel Choir. Indeed, throughout this church year, the music staff's programming efforts have remained focused on both curating and creating pre-recorded video content for Sundays. Notable among those efforts were homegrown virtual choirs, a virtual band, and all ages virtual ensembles. Thus, we have continued our practice of featuring a combination of guest artists, staff, and member musicians.

CHORAL SCHOLARS

The Choral Scholar program was put on hiatus for the 2020-21 church year, as only one year of program funding remains. We opted to defer spending that Krug Project money until such time as it is safe for the Chancel Choir to consistently rehearse and perform together again.

EXPANDED MUSIC MINISTRY

While COVID-19 prevented further expansion of in-person music programming, we pivoted by offering two large Zoom events featuring guest artists in different time zones. "Sending You Light: An Evening with Melanie DeMore" took place in November, and "Heart Wide Open: SoulFolk & Song with LEA" took place in February. Attendance at each event exceeded 100 screens, with a significant number of guests logging—some even from other countries and continents.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMMING

Lead Music Director Alissa Rhode assisted and collaborated in curating and producing the "Milwaukee Spotlight" programming effort for General Assembly.

SINGERS IN THE STREETS

This project remained on hold during 2020-21; however, we hope to pick up and continue the work when it is safe to do so.

CHORAL SCHOLARS

The Choral Scholar program continued to prove as a successful anchor and support to our Chancel Choir. While the choir was unable to rehearse in the traditional sense during COVID-19, the Choral Scholars remained engaged as a musical support to the community.

Alissa Rhode
Lead Music Director

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

This has been an extremely challenging year for our Religious Education program at First Church and throughout our denomination. The pandemic has been particularly hard on our families, most of our families had to adapt to both isolation and school at home. This shift caused an increase in children's screen time and a decrease in parent's free time that directly affected participation in religious education students and volunteers.

Our RE program pivoted and rose to the challenge of providing high quality religious education and opportunities for our families, children, and youth. Utilizing new tools, methods and means to help us not only help the families in our church community but in the larger Milwaukee community. I am proud of what we accomplished and learned this year and am so grateful for the families, children and youth who joined us in RE this year. I look forward to building on our newfound knowledge as we continue to stretch what we can do in the future.

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MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Vision: Rooted in the church's mission, we envision a church community modeling and teaching children and youth to embrace a strong core of Unitarian Universalist (UU) values, influencing their way of being in the world while serving the needs of our world.

Mission: Children's Religious Education Ministry Team's mission is to nurture spiritual growth by engaging and inspiring our children, youth, and volunteers. ~Rev. 2017-18

2020-21 Goal: Children's Religious Education Team's 2020 goal is to openly explore innovative ideas that welcome and connect families.

2019-20 CHURCH YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

RE Structure

This year, the religious education classes for children and youth, multi-generational worship and all other additional RE church activities were reimaged and transformed to be offered virtually. We choose to focus our work on innovative interactive learning, inclusivity and nurturing relationships with families and the larger church community. We utilized ways of teaching and new formats such as Zoom, Padlet, Google Slides, Jamboard and YouTube.

To accommodate a variety of needs and age ranges, our Sunday classes met at different times on Sunday. Our RE Sunday classes included PreK-2nd grade at 9:15 a.m., Families Together at 11:15 a.m., 2nd-5th grade at 12:00 p.m., Crossing Paths for middle schoolers at 2:00 p.m. and Youth Group at 4:00 p.m., (in January Youth Group changed to Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.).

Mariah Groshek and Lindsey Porter provided a time for our youngest students ages PreK-2nd grade to gather for ritual, story, and play related to the church's monthly theme. I led our Families Together interactive sessions that explored our faith through the church's monthly themes, offering ministry and ways for families to build religious education into their home life as well as connect with other families in the church community. I also created and taught the 2nd-5th grade RE classes that featured a chalice lighting, check-in, stories, and experiential small group activities to engage participants and build relationships.

Crossing Paths is our interfaith learning program for middle

schoolers that help youth build and clarify their own UU identity through engagement with other faiths. This interfaith journey included Unitarian Universalism, Judaism, Christianity, Quakerism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. I led this class with the assistance of Deb Solis and we were so impressed by the dedication our group of six youth showed throughout the year.

It was our goal to have RE classes and activities led collaboratively by RE Staff and the wider faith community. However, the majority of our classes were led by staff due to the lack of RE volunteers and challenges of teaching virtually on Zoom.

Children's RE Team

The Children's Religious Education Team met monthly throughout this year to help generate lesson ideas on our church's monthly themes, and to plan and work together to create events and programming for RE. The CRE team has been instrumental in helping organize and lead many of the multi-generational social action projects we implemented this year as well as teaching RE classes when needed. Our CRE team includes co-chairs Thea Watters and Stacey Theime, Laurie Baker, Stacey Koenen, and Sarah Richards. I thank them dearly for their dedication and service.

Intergenerational Social Action

Throughout the fall we worked with Milwaukee Children and Youth Center to learn how we can support their work with families in need. They asked that we create art supply kits for children. With the support of the congregation we were able to assemble and donate 62 Art Kits and 16 Prayer Shawls to the Milwaukee Center for Children and Youth, Inc.. I am deeply grateful for the many people who donated items and for Laurie Baker, who co-led this effort.

Our church's theme for March was commitment and to highlight our commitment to help those experiencing food insecurity in our community we worked with K.I.C. (Kids Impact Community) to make sandwiches again this year. Lunch Pack and Love had fifteen families who prepared lunches and inspirational notes that were delivered on March 23. Special thanks to Sarah Richards who helped us connect and coordinate with K.I.C.!

Multigenerational Services

On October 18th I had the great privilege of being ordained by the congregation. It is the ordinate's responsibility to shape all aspects of the worship team in collaboration with the church and my ordination team. I am forever grateful to the

Staff Reports

congregation for recognizing me as a minister, our staff, my partner Rev. Erik Carlson and my ordination team: Dale Skaggs, Bizzy Schultz, Sarah Richards and Beth Monhollen.

In November 22, I worked with our church staff and Worship Associate Nick Hayes to create a multi-generational worship service called Beautiful Band-Aids which featured a child dedication, new member ritual and homily.

RE Extras

Most Sundays, I provide stories for our Time for All Ages during worship. This involves collaborating with our Worship Team to choose a story that will connect with our worship topic, then producing, recording the editing the videos each week. Each week we send the RE Weekly Update that provides all the information needed to get involved in RE activities, as well as curated resources for families to utilize at home, from tools to talking to children about COVID-19 to ways to help our community.

In anticipation of our Morter Lecture guest Lois Lowry, we created a Lois Lowry Book Club with 2-6th graders reading *Number the Stars* and a 7-12th grade group reading *The Giver Quartet*. Our Lois Lowry Book Clubs had the privilege of meeting with Lois Lowry on October 4th and it was such a highlight for us in religious education! Lois was a generous and engaging guest, lovingly answering all the children's prepared questions, and telling stories about her life. We are so grateful to our church and the Morter Lecture Team for creating this opportunity for our children

During December and January, we had our first winter RE book club, we read *A Dreadful Fairy Tale* by member Jon Etter, who was gracious enough to meet with the group on January 31st, answer our questions and share how the story connected with our UU principles.

Once again Valentine Day Cards were created for our church community by our children and families. This year we sent out 120 Valentine greetings to congregants who might need and appreciate a loving message. Lillian Schley was instrumental in this enormous mailing endeavor.

Mystery Friends had twenty participants of all ages who got to know one another through exchanging letters throughout February and March this year. We created letter templates for the children this year to assist the process of communication and relationship building. The identity of the Mystery Friends

was then revealed during a Zoom party on March 28th, that included games and riddle solving.

In April, we had our first Stuffey Sleepover with thirteen children sharing their beloved toys to us for a playful time at the church. We are so grateful for the children who trusted us; we had a wonderful time playing and posting pictures on social media of the toys in the church. It was a nice way to connect the congregation children and families with our church during this time of isolation.

Children and Youth RE Metrics

2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	Comparisons taken on average through the 2nd Sunday of March
31	118	134	Number of registered children and youth
21	56	54	Average attendance
70%	52%	50%	Average percentage of registered students attending

Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
Minister of Religious Education

YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Youth Program Coordinator (YPC) reports directly to the Minister of Religious Education (MRE) and is responsible for the planning and coordinating of programs for youth grades 9-12 by working with adult advisors, the Youth Steering Committee (YSC), staff, and parents. In addition, the YPC is responsible for coordinating the week-long Habitat for Humanity (HFH) service trip, the annual youth worship service, and all levels of Our Whole Lives (OWL) classes.

The 2020-2021 church year has been most challenging since our youth programming was all virtual due to the global pandemic. No fundraising took place and our YSC meetings were scattered throughout the church year. I additionally assumed responsibility of co-teaching our middle school virtual class Crossing Paths and assisted our Membership Coordinator during Pledge 2021 by making phone calls to new church members and people who may have forgotten to pledge this year or who have pledged in the past.

Staff Reports

As a part-time, 18-hour/week staff position, each year brings me joy and satisfaction knowing that I can make difference in the lives of our youth at First Church.

OUR WHOLE LIVES (OWL) PROGRAM

The COVID-19 pandemic required us to avoid on-site programming until it is safe for everyone to participate. Our Whole Lives (OWL) curriculums are not currently designed for online use. The Religious Education staff created a plan to ensure that all 8th and 9th grade youth have the opportunity to take OWL with an appropriate class group once meetings in the church building resume. During the 2020-2021 church year, we did offer a collection of sexuality education resources, curated for families and children and youth of all ages.

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the United Church of Christ (UCC) offered monthly OWL virtual webinars which I attended to keep informed as to how best to continue OWL programming once we are able to return to in person classes. Topics included: a five-part series called Taking Flight: How to Restart Your OWL Program after the Pandemic, Ending Gender Based Violence, New Ideas About Intimacy During a Pandemic, Parents and Caregivers as Primary Sexual Educators, Use of Gender and Related Language in the OWL Classroom, Racial Justice in the OWL Program, and OWL Curriculum Updates for Grade K-1.

YOUNG RELIGIOUS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS (YRUU: 9-12 grades)

In the Fall, our youth group met on Sundays at 4:00 p.m. however, by winter we switched our meeting time to Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. due to limited youth attendance. We added more structure to our youth group sessions by using Soul Matters Resources and then our youth group time together became an extended check-in and fun, community building activity time. Due to the pandemic we were not able to offer any in person YSC sponsored youth events for the 2020-2021 church year.

The annual youth service (March 7), “Striving & Thriving” was all virtual for the first time and required our MRE to edit and assemble this service. One year has passed since our world and daily lives have been changed by the pandemic. We

asked our youth to share with the congregation through video, prose, and images how the pandemic has affected their lives. What is it like to be a teenager today during this time of upheaval and unknowing? How have they continued to thrive and what are their aspirations for our future? Those youth who participated provided the congregation with a glimpse into their lives during this pandemic.

The youth selected The Milwaukee Center for Children and Youth (MCCY) as the March Share the Plate recipient. The MCCY’s mission is to end the suffering of abused children in Milwaukee County through comprehensive advocacy, education, and supportive services that heal trauma, build resilience, nurture the ability to thrive, and create a path toward eradicating the epidemic of child abuse in our community.

For the fifth year, we offered our four-part series for our high school seniors called Hearts on Fire, which provided them with the opportunities to reflect on topics of good and evil, humanity and salvation, UU identity and how to put together a Credo—all under the direction of our Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Minister of Religious Education, and myself.

Special thanks to all of our caring, supportive YRUU Advisor Team: Don Weimer, Bizzy Schultz, Rollie Hansen, Jessie Moffat, Nick DaVia and Jean Crandall-Jacobs.

LEADERSHIP

The Youth Steering Committee (YSC) consists of adults and high school youth that oversee the senior high religious education program. Members are: Gus Pointer-Mace, Dylan Duffy, Grace Hopkins, Paul Maynard, Zahni Gulbranson, Zoe Gulbranson, Anna Harris and Bizzy Schultz.

The YSC primarily implements the fundraisers and extracurricular activities for youth all of which did not take place this past year due to the pandemic. When we are able to return to in person church, we will once again offer our overnights, Youth Midwest Leadership School, HFH service trip, Boston Heritage trip and resume our weekly bagel fundraising during Coffee Hour.

Staff Reports

CROSSING PATHS: MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

Since my usual responsibilities with the all level OWL program were put on hold during this past church year, I assumed co-teaching responsibilities with our MRE, Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson working with our middle school youth in our virtual Crossing Paths class. Crossing Paths helps youth build and clarify their own UU identity through engagement with other faiths. It was offered on Sundays at 2:00 p.m. in self-contained, four-week units exploring faiths that are sources of wisdom for Unitarian Universalists. Faiths which we explored included: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Quakerism and Unitarian Universalism. Six youth regularly attended this class throughout the church year.

Blessings,
Deb

MEMBERSHIP/DEVELOPMENT

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

MEMBERSHIP TEAM

Team: Lynn Connolly, Paula Anderson, Susan Borri, Rod Botts, Cheri Briscoe, Dana Brooks, Lynn Connolly and Lynda Lambert.

Accessible Welcome

The Membership Staff Team struggled with connecting with the visitors we know are joining our services virtually. Some of the ways we attempted to do so are:

- A Virtual Visitor Welcome form
- A Virtual Visitor Coffee Hour
- A Virtual Welcome Brochure with links to accessible “drop-in” opportunities to connect
- Reaching out to people newly registering for our weekly email announcements via personalized welcoming emails.

The most successful and accessible way the Membership Team accomplished virtual welcome this year may have been the weekly drop-in Poetry Contemplation practice offered Wednesday mornings. Nine non-members participate regularly (four of whom have joined, or shown interest in joining and seven of whom were introduced to the congregation through the group). Developing other, interest diverse, spiritual development opportunities where visitors can connect with current members may be the most effective way forward in extending accessible virtual welcome.

Innovative Welcome

Team member Susan Borri created our wonderful video lead-in/welcome to our Sunday services as well as the slideshow of members at the end. The team’s current project is exploring how we might provide a similarly more personal video welcome on our website.

The Journey to Membership Class was revamped to better engage Zoom Room participation.

Numbers

Thirteen people joined First Church this year.

166 records were entered into our database for the first time this year (July 1, 2020 – April 26, 2021). 85 via Welcome Cards (online this year), Religious Education Families, Adult Spiritual Development programming or as Journey to Membership Registrations. The remaining were entered via registration forms (for the Constant Contact announcements or an event).

The Future

While Membership Team struggled with ideas for connecting virtual guests they have wisely spent the later part of the year focused on how can we welcome members back when we return in person; marketing to those who may be seeking community in a different way when we come out of the pandemic; and a more welcoming website. While this work has yet to reach reportable action, we are pushing this work forward.

Staff Reports

Many thanks to the whole team for setting direction when it was needed and for looking to the future. An additional personal thankyou to Chair Lynn Connolly for her patience and ongoing support.

STEWARDSHIP

PLEDGE TEAM

Team Members: Mark Chambers, Chair, Anne Alexander, Bob Balderson, Matt Byrnes, Jeff Hansen Deb Manske, Patricia McFarland & Jacki Zandi.

Goal

With the pandemic and other factors potentially influencing giving at First Church this year the Pledge Team decided to focus on a participation goal of 100% rather than name a financial goal. We have 371 pledges on file representing 96% of that goal to date. Financially, I am projecting a solid 6% increase in pledge commitments over last year, or \$748,623 in total commitments.

Members who have pledged to date responded wonderfully to the Pledge Drive's ask to consider raising their commitment, and within the group of members who pledged both last year and this year (349) pledges increased overall by 8%! Thank you all! The generosity of this community is amazing.

As in recent years our total increase does not match our community's generous increase due to a net loss of pledging households. Unlike previous years though, where the bulk of this loss was unaccounted for (members we never heard from) this year the difference is more effected by low new member numbers this past year being outweighed by moves and other life transitions. Connecting those who visit us virtually to a deeper level of engagement is challenge Membership is still trying to unknot.

On the positive side this year we saw a larger number of returning pledgers and significantly fewer households decreasing their pledge. I attribute both to steps taken to reach out more thoroughly with specific messaging to different groups. The Team will continue these strategies in the coming years.

Sustaining First Church

In addition to raising money (and awareness) towards the financial obligations we share to keep our beloved congregation a viable institution in Milwaukee, the Pledge Team is also tasked with helping all of us connect our pledge commitments to both gratitude and participation in something larger than our own lives. This year some of the ways we tried to accomplish this were:

Theme and messaging development of "All IN! Sustaining First Church" as connected to both Sustaining our Spirits and Sustaining our Values. It helped that this year we could point directly to our community's quick pivot to virtual worship and connection during the pandemic, as well to staff and member's continuing commitment to addressing injustice, even in the midst of this transition.

40 plus conversationally sized Zoom gatherings planned, inviting the majority our membership to share how First Church helps them sustain their own values. This effort was an attempt to take advantage of the convenience of virtual gatherings to bring more people into this Stewardship conversation. They were also designed to bring random members together, to both broaden our perspective of, and connection within, the larger community we share.

Invited members to send a picture with their pledge to be shared during services as a visual representation of the larger community sharing the pledge responsibility.

More personalized ask letters (in the form of Team member notes) to members who had fallen off our "pledge rolls" with an appeal to participation rather than an amount.

Pledge Team Thanks

Thank you so much to our Stewardship Training guru, Alexis Fielek and our Event Hosts: Dianna Dentino, Rod & Sharon DePue, Alexis Fielek, Candice Haight, Joan Hansen, BJ Ermenc, Sally Lewis, Mark Miller, Beth Monhollen, Mark Richards, Kathy Rivera, Sue Thaney & Nancy Spransy.

We gave this group the unenviable job of trying to engage members in a Zoom gathering, on Stewardship, a year into a pandemic when Zoom fatigue may have been reaching its zenith. We so appreciate their willingness and courage in supporting Stewardship at First Church. We are also grateful for their patience, understanding and forgiveness!

Staff Reports

Personal appreciation to a creative and dedicated Pledge Team and Chair, all who took on an already challenging job in strange times! In addition to hosting Pledge Zoom gatherings themselves the group created a successful socially distanced Pledge Drive with no road map of how that might be done. Plus they were just fun to work with.

FEAST FOR FUNDS

Chair Sue Thaney surveyed previous team members in the Fall and it was decided that in the midst of a pandemic organizing a fundraiser that centers on Member in-home events was not a good idea. As the Spring progressed and public health recommendations continued to warn of letting up our guard too soon Sue Thaney and I made the decision to give Feast for Funds a rest for this year.

HERITAGE SOCIETY

The Heritage Society, chaired by Lisa Koneazny, recognizes church members and friends who have included First Church in their wills and estate planning.

Our activities moved virtual this year. We hosted a two-part series, *Getting Your Ducks in a Row*, via Zoom. The first event featured an estate / family law attorney, Elizabeth Ruthmansdorfer. She joined us on February 23rd to discuss legal steps that are part of end of life planning. These included wills and trust, medical and legal powers of attorney and guardianship. Rev. Dena McPhetres presented a follow up program on March 23. Topics at that session included spiritual aspects of preparing for end of life, the dying process and how to plan for after death choices. Heritage Society members, Sally Lewis and Kathy Rivera shared why they decided to support First Church's future in their estate plans during both sessions.

Both sessions were recorded. We are looking into the best options to make the recordings and materials from these sessions available to members who were unable to attend. Details will be provided when available.

We encourage you to check out more information about the Heritage Society and planned giving on the First Church website. Details are under Ways to Give - Planned Giving - Herit-

age Society. Heritage society members are listed in the Annual Report. If your name should be included in this list because you have already included First Church in your plans, please complete the form on the website. If you are ready to take the step to support First Church's future, please sign up!

I would like to thank Elizabeth Ruthmansdorger, Rev. Dena, Sally and Kathy for supporting our programming this year. As always, I am grateful to Lisa Koneazny, Chris Linder, Linda Presto and Eileen Harnett Teska for their work on this committee.

Lynne Jacoby,
Membership Development Coordinator

Member-Led Ministries Reports

BLACK LIVES MATTER

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) Committee faced the difficulty of trying to function in a year when systemic racism was front and center. George Floyd had been killed in Minneapolis and holding police accountable was the first thing on people's minds. Governor Evers had proposed a series of reforms. The committee discussed these ideas in a meeting in August. However, given the gerrymandered state legislature, those proposals stood no chance of being enacted.

But the economic collapse caused by the mishandling of the pandemic created an opportunity for BLM. Members of the committee participated in the discussions of the UU Black Lives Matter Collaborative around holding a reparations workshop as a follow up to the workshop that the Collaborative held in 2018. The Collaborative is waiting for a response from Rev. Marilyn Miller to our proposal about conducting a workshop on reparations in May or June. Funds from the Black Lives Matter Committee will be used to offset part of the cost of conducting the event.

The Committee communicated through email and social media. It attracts people to our Facebook page. Seven persons participated in the committee. We expect far more will take part in the workshop and being able to use all of our funds for the church year.

Kenyatta Yamel

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The book club met every month in 2020-2021 instead of just during the church year. In the summer we met in the park in order to practice social distancing and by Zoom during the colder months. Attendance was up compared to the past with over 12 people per session.

We choose all the books for the year in the early summer. People suggest books that they have read and participants vote on the choices. We read a mix of fiction and non-fiction. The book list is available on the church website.

All of the meetings are open to everyone, including people who are not members of the church.

The coordinator and contact person is Chris Linder
celinder@att.net.

CIRCLES OF SUPPORT

Circles of Support meets with citizens returning from incarceration, listening to their stories and offering support as they reintegrate into our community. We meet on Zoom monthly the fourth Wednesday of the month. Our team members feel the experience has been a reality check, an educational process, and is eye opening. One member described it as a grounding experience. Members are moved by the stories of African Americans dealing with systemic racism.

We value our relationship with Sylvester Jackson, our Circle Keeper and his wife, Lavansa Jackson, both of whom have been impacted. Lavansa is enjoying her new job with Aurora as a peer support healthcare advocate for returning citizens. We provide Sylvester support as he mentors those being released. He needs our support for the work he does with people entering supervision, especially those who were imprisoned at an early age and have spent decades in prison.

We have been having conversations with researchers, dozens of state legislators, members of the Governor's and attorney general's offices and even two conservative "think tanks" lobbying for incremental improvements to Wisconsin's complicated criminal justice system.

Currently thirteen First Church members are participating in the monthly Circles of Support Zoom meetings on a rotating basis. Members receive invitations to join Zoom meetings with decision makers in the legislature as we lobby for change in Wisconsin's criminal justice system.

Contact Paul Geenen if you would like to join Circles of Support and be invited to join one of our monthly Circles.

Paul Geenen

COMMON GROUND

Common Ground initiated these issue campaigns in response to the 2020 presidential election and pandemic, as well as continuing to work on existing longer-term campaigns. To view campaigns not listed below and the history of others, please visit <https://www.commongroundwi.org/>

Get Out the Vote

The First Church UUtheVote team partnered with Common Ground to contact every First Church family to ask them to reach out to people in their social networks to make sure

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that they were ready to vote and to offer assistance if needed. A dozen members volunteered to make the calls. Emails were then sent to those contacts, with a link to a GOTV on-line program developed by Common Ground. The program would register them and answer any questions they might have about voting. Common Ground committed to helping 13,000 people to vote in the November 3rd election.

Common Ground also initiated a Milwaukee school board GOTV effort in selected districts for the April 6, 2021 election. Several First Church members volunteered to make calls from voter lists.

Community Health Partners

Common Ground organized over 20 retired and current healthcare professionals to volunteer to make daily follow-up with patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 but do not require hospitalization. The trained volunteers ask patients to monitor their heart rate and blood oxygen levels and to check if they need other support in food, housing or access to childcare.

Education Campaign

In response to leader's concerns that not all students were supported at the beginning of the healthcare crisis, Common Ground pushed for the Milwaukee public schools to make sure that every student had the opportunity to engage in online learning. In conversations with Board Members, the Superintendent, and the Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction, Common Ground advocated for a system-wide learning plan and for every student to receive a chromebook and WIFI access.

We wish to express our gratitude to all of the First Church Friends of Common Ground who have supported our work through all of these years. Of all the Common Ground member organizations, First Church is one of the top contributors. Should you have any questions about Common Ground or wish to become involved, please contact one of our Core Team members: George Bledsoe, Lynn Connolly, Rod De Pue, Mary Ann Fisher, Jerry Fredrickson, Allan Jaberg, Russ Langford, Cathy Startt, and Mary Ann Steger.

DEFEND DEMOCRACY ACTION GROUP

This group was formed in October, 2020 in response to threats to the integrity of our election process. Initially we organized to publicly insist on legitimate November election results and to be ready to take collective non-violent action in the event of an undemocratic power grab or "coup."

Working with Zao MKE we offered virtual "Faith in the Street" civil disobedience training to more than 150 people. In the end, though, we did not take to the streets. There was no coup immediately after the November 3rd election and election officials and courts upheld the election results.

There were, however, continuing attacks on our right to free and fair elections. These coalesced into "the big lie," i.e. that the election was stolen. Then on January 6, incited by the president, there occurred a violent attack on the Capitol intended to prevent certification of the election results.

In response we decided on the following, going forward:

1. We joined the NAACP in publicly calling for impeachment of the now former president;
2. We began and are continuing specific actions to help strengthen and protect voting rights and to achieve fair maps in Wisconsin; and
3. We resolved to develop a plan to better educate ourselves as a faith community on our power and responsibility as citizens in a democracy.

Kathy Rivera and Nick Hayes, Co-chairs

EARTH JUSTICE MINISTRY

EJM has been quiet during much of this pandemic year, with the church closed and no official gathering allowed. We had to cancel the puppet-building workshops we had planned to create a parade of species at General Assembly, which was supposed to be in Milwaukee this year. We have continued to place articles in our *Chanticleer* newsletter monthly about goings-on and issues that members could educate themselves about and advocate for. We helped recruit Aly Tharp, staff lead at the UU Ministry for Earth, to share the pulpit for the annual Earth Day Sunday service, which was virtual this year.

Many of us are interested in building a multi-racial, multi-generational, interfaith environmental movement and have participated in a variety of on-line events or viewed relevant films that address our current circumstances.

Many of us have learned to use virtual media such as Zoom, for holding meetings. We recently held our "Spring Forward" planning session virtually and look forward to a variety of activities in the year coming including continuing our work to help pollinators, working with Beevangelist Charlie Koenen for all-ages

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religious education in the coming year, and acting as part of the Plastic-Free Milwaukee Coalition.

One of our co-chairs for the past couple of years, Tree Moore, moved to western WI late last year, and Barbara Leigh has stepped in recently to be a new co-chair. We look forward to the year coming with a variety of Earth Justice activities!

Bruce Wiggins and Barbara Leigh, Co-chairs

IRMA MORTER LECTURE TEAM

Lois Lowry, acclaimed children and young-adult author, was our speaker for the October 2020 Morter Lecture. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all events were virtual. This ended up broadening the audience attendance. Ms. Lowry's livestream lecture, "Dwelling in Possibility," drew on photos and stories from her life to illustrate how, over generations and lifetimes, possibilities become realities when someone takes a risk, is a careful observer, reaches out in compassion or friendship, or admits fear or loneliness. In the Sunday service, Ms. Lowry and Rev. Jennifer discussed ambiguity and uncertainty, and our need for resilience and a supportive community. Ms. Lowry also met virtually with two groups of First Church children who had joined the summer Lois Lowry Reading Club organized by Rev. Kimberlee.

The Morter Lecture is an annual event funded by a generous bequest to First Church from Ms. Irma Morter.

SUNDAY MORNING FORUM

The Sunday Forum Group members weren't unique in March, 2020, when safety considerations for the COVID virus closed gatherings. We asked each other, "What next"! Our last, in-person, Sunday Forum was March 8, 2020, "Healing in the Aftermath of Hate" with Pardeep Kaleka.

The Sunday Forum Group rallied, assessed their technology comfort level and made personal commitments to scheduling Forums. Then along came a new learning curve, Zoom meetings. With patience and careful guidance, Shari Wright, encouraged the Forum Team to become Zoom Hosts. Two of our members, Mark Mueller and Bruce Wiggins, stepped up to share the Zoom Host role every Sunday Morning from mid-April 2020, throughout the summer, and now Spring 2021. We re-connected with scheduled Forum presenters and recruited oth-

ers. Though not all of us were curious about Zoom, everyone was eager to continue offering the familiar and comfortable Forum experience. Zoom Forums included new and familiar topics, with presenters from the area, as well as International, country-wide locations. Attendance remained at 20 – 25.

A sample of topics includes: "Danger: Untreated Hearing Loss," "The ACLU 100 Years," "Small But Elegant: Frank Lloyd Wright's Affordable Homes," "Hip-Hop Helps: Culture and Community Engagement," "Militarism and Climate Change," "The Trial of Julian Assange and Its Implication for Press Freedom" (international speakers), "Science, Law and Criminal Legal System Reform" (Madison), "Public Safety: Top Priority" (Wis. Attorney General), "Keepers of the Flame: Starr King School for Ministry," "What's It Like to Run for the Assembly in Wisconsin?"

Sunday Forum Group includes; BJ Ermenc, Joann Bachar, Ann Batiza, Mark Mueller, Bruce Wiggins, Jean Groshek, Jerry Fredrickson, Thallis Drake, Patricia Witt, Dan O'keefe, Pat McFarland, Molly Shiffler, Christian Becker, Juliet Hills, Chris Schmidt and Janet Nortrom.

Goals for 2021-2022 year:

- We are eager to recruit a Technology Guide, who would dedicate and ensure that Sunday Forums accommodate technology platforms at church in ways most suitable for our familiar format.
- We extend a welcome to younger church members to join the Sunday Forum Group. It is a broad network and interests of our members which allows us to bring top quality variety each Sunday. We meet twice each year to select topics. As Hosts, our members invite, schedule, support, then welcome their presenter on the scheduled morning. Assistance is available.

Lorraine Jacobs, Chair

THE CHRONOLOGICALLY GIFTED

Since January, 2021, Pat McFarland and I have been co-chairs of The Chronologically Gifted. In January we met via Zoom and featured Katy Phillips reading from her book *Reasons for Remembering: Poems written in spring and summer of 2020*. Kari

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Gunderson provided violin and piano music from Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" and Weil's "The September Song." In February, we held an Open Poetry Mic via Zoom. In April, we met via Zoom and responded to the question, "How were you spiritually drained or nourished during the pandemic?". All three meetings were attended by 14 to 21 members.

Barbara Collignon and Pat McFarland , Co-chairs

UU+ STUDY GROUP

This group reads, views videos and meets to discuss various topics such as UU history, biblical scholarly works and social justice issues. During this church year we had two sessions discussing the book *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar. The June 2020 GA had sponsored the author's video presentation. Based on the interest inspired by the book, we may have future study groups about Native American issues.

Suggestions are welcome.

Chris Linder, Chair

The congregation of The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee affirms and promotes the full participation of persons in our activities without regard to race, color, gender, physical or mental challenge, sexual identity or orientation, age, class, national origin, or ancestry.

Indeed, we are interested in actively promoting more diversity within our congregation.