

Ministers/Executives Ends Statement Highlights

June 2021 – November 2021 (summary from our monthly reports)

Overview

Acknowledging that we are NOT out of pandemic yet, we want to lift up how comparably well our congregation is doing through this traumatic, unprecedented time. We have stayed relatively intact, financially and in membership. Our people have shared both that the virtual church did not “work” and others that our virtual church utterly sustained them. People in both camps were glad to return to in-person services. We are renewing our partnerships with local organizations, reforming committees to serve our members, and showing up for Unitarian Universalists nationally. We are adding members, some new to us and others who are returning. On a deeper level, we are instilling a more collaborative model of shared ministry (between ministers, professional staff, and congregants.) We are also communicating with increased transparency.

We also have some hard work to do. Continuing disagreement about how we are living (or not) our 8th Principle, ministerial authority and accountability are concerns. Below is just some of what we have accomplished over the last six-months. This list is not exhaustive but are highlights from our monthly minister reports to the Board of Trustees.

Global Ends Statement

The UUCA exists to create the Beloved Community by inspiring and empowering all souls to live bold and compassionate lives.

- **(June)** Reopening Team was formed to figure out the safest way to begin worshipping in-person and virtually.
- **(June)** Ministers discussed their interpretation of the End Statements & goals with the Board.
- **(June-Nov)** Our FUNdraising Committee's work has been stellar. The coin collection raised \$2,200 early in the year and this year's auction raised over \$10000 to support the 2021 budget.
- **(June-Nov)** Pastoral Care - The ministers continue pastoral care virtually and in-person, including hospital visits, social media outreach and phone calls. We have also officiated 4 Memorial Services and 2 weddings in this period.
- **(July)** The ministers re-formed the Personnel Committee and meet monthly.
- **(Aug)** We eliminated the reservation system on Sundays and added more chairs. We are averaging about 30 people in the building on Sundays but expect that to increase starting on September 12 during Ingathering. We continue to follow local and national guidelines asking people and families to sit at least two seats apart from their neighbors on the row; and to wear masks in the building. Masking outdoors while fellowshipping is at the discretion of the individual(s).
- **(Aug)** Rev. John announced that he will take a sabbatical in April.
- **(Sep)** We are now meeting with the Reopening Team on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. We are averaging about 90 people in the building on Sundays. Performance singing--masked, is allowed, but we are actively steering away from congregational singing. We have had engaged conversations about our air quality and circulation. These improvements will make it safer to gather but are not significant enough to make other changes (like congregational singing) available at this time.
- **(Sep)** Coffee Hour is now managed by UUCA's small groups. Member Jackie Alex is keeping the Sunday servers organized. We have moved our coffee hour refreshment tables outside

- **(Sep)** The Wellness Care Team was formed and began training for 2022 debut.
- **(Sep)** Stonework in Memorial Garden was completed.
- **(Sep)** The letter of credit for the building permit was successfully completed and we now have the permit. Phase 1 Construction is underway!
- **(Oct)** We are averaging about 100 people in the building on Sundays. We continue to open windows, require masks, and are making high-quality masks an available and recommended option. Performance singing--masked--is allowed, but we are actively steering away from congregational singing. We have had engaged conversations about our air quality and circulation and are purchasing 2 portable HEPA air filtration units (to start) with the focus of supporting our children and youth faith formation programs as they move in doors due to weather. These improvements will make it safer to gather but are not significant enough to make other changes (like congregational singing) available at this time.
- **(Sept – Nov)** The UUCA Choir is feeling positive as it returned to in-person performances. There's a good vibe in rehearsals, and although we still have folks who are out due to covid, we also have gained some new members in the last few weeks. Attendance is still sporadic with people being careful not to come to rehearsal if they are not feeling well or think they may have had a covid exposure. We are adding a few extra rehearsals to prepare for our Choir Sunday material.
- **(Sept – Nov)** Our Worship Ensemble is also back, with some adjustments, such as a weekly rehearsal. They are adjusting around the live-streaming technology so that their broadcast performance is as solid as possible. They added a guitar player and are advertising to replace some who left the ensemble.
- **(Nov)** Reopening Team is meeting almost weekly to discuss whether changes are needed based on new circumstances. We have updated information about how well masks reduce the spread of aerosols during singing. We also recognize that positive infection rates are rising, the risk level of our specific county, and that children five and older are now eligible for vaccinations and adults for booster shots. The cold weather is also making having the doors and windows open uncomfortable for some congregants. Lastly, we have standardized the 6' spacing between rows, but there is inconsistent spacing (zero to five seats) between households.
- **(Nov)** 4 new HEPA filters have been placed in the following areas: Young Room, Angebrandt Room, Faith Formation Sanctuary, Library/Main Office. These can be moved to other rooms. We will ask the reopening folks again if they recommend these or other filters for the sanctuary.
- **(Nov)** Sabbatical update - Rev. John will take a sabbatical April 1 - June 30. This date may change by some days depending on when the celebration for the completion of the new renovations is set. In July he will be on study leave to reacclimate back to the ministry; but he'll be in the office, sporadically. He plans to update the Sabbatical Team in December. Money has been put in the new budget to support guest ministers, but some preaching responsibility will go to congregants.

Faith Development Ends Statement

UUCA creates meaningful opportunities for deepening spirituality for all persons within a safe and challenging environment.

- **(June-July)** UUCA youth and children begin using outdoor locations due to covid.

- **(June-Nov)** Small Groups continue to be robust with over 100 participants. For the Fall, we are intentionally selecting our themes to support our Beloved Community Global Ends Statement. This will impact our small groups, but the plan is to provide them with a Soul Matters theme that closely matches our chosen monthly theme(s).
- **(June)** In-person After Hour resumed on Sunday, July 11.
- **(Aug)** The Executives purchased two top-notch cameras and other equipment to broadcast our Sunday services live. We also hired two audio/visual expert engineers to set them up and train volunteers to manage this new process that debuts on Sunday August 22, 2021
- **(Aug)** Our childcare staff has returned!
- **(Aug)** Camp Beagle ran at UUCA on Monday, July 12 - Friday, July 16. Due to covid; the camp was completely outdoors and half day (9:00 am - 12:00 pm), all participants wore masks and the groups were smaller and more spread out. It was a successful week with 66 children and youth in attendance and 26 UUCA adult volunteers! Sarah Devlin-Tremble did an excellent job as the Admiral of the camp.
- **(Sep)** UUCA member Laura Schrank began as our Acting Membership Coordinator.
- **(Sep)** Rev. Anastassia relaunched the Middle /After Hour team.
- **(Sep-Nov)** Our 8th Principle practice series continues virtually and in person.
- **(Sep)** The *Shared Pulpit* class began with Rev. AZ leading.
- **(Sept)** Covid Adaptations: Currently, all Sunday morning Faith Formation Programs are meeting outdoors, with masks on unless there can be 6+ feet of distance between participants. Groups with youth 12+ have the option, with all youth, parent, and volunteer consent, to meet indoors if everyone is fully vaccinated (currently our youth 12+ are at 100% vaccination rate) and masked. When the weather is good, FF will opt to meet outdoors because transmission rates are significantly lower. Groups of children younger than 12 years old will meet outside and in the cases of unsafe weather, families will be notified the night before or no later than 8:00 am that childcare for that day will be held indoors. At this time FF can't guarantee that programs can be run indoors for the younger children because they have several volunteers that do not want to be indoors. In the case of moving indoors FF will use the FF Sanctuary, open all the exterior doors and windows, require quality masks, and enforce keeping space between children.
- **(Oct)** "Parenting Faithfully" as well as the online "Parents as Primary Sexuality Educators" courses began. One goal is to support parents in their own spiritual development as they process and cope with challenges specific to parents; and to facilitate relationship building between families (as they are in a unique stage of life). Parenting Faithfully sessions are intended to guide parents/caregivers into discussion about relevant parenting topics while sharing their collective wisdom with one another.
- **(Oct)** We celebrate the returning of families; parents, youth and children on Sunday mornings! We currently have 57 families enrolled (pre-covid it was around 80). We recognize that we are still not "back to normal" and will continue to survey the parents and youth to learn what classes, holiday celebrations, service projects, and activities would be most meaningful to them at this time. The children are having fun outside (as you can hear on Sundays) selecting their Outdoor Exploration Station (K - 5th Grades), attending their Middle School Classes (Crossing Paths - exploring different religions and OWL) and High School Youth Group. The Outdoor Exploration Stations have invited people in the congregation, who are not parents, to share their passions or expertise with our children (ex. Chad Holmes from Drum Circle, or Bob Ertman from Mindfulness / Meditation).

- **(Oct)** Adult Faith Formation & After Hour - We continue to have 1-2 Middle /After Hour team sessions most weeks. Attendance has grown with 5-15 folks joining per session. We will continue to grow this option, which may become more preferable to coffee hour outside in the cold. The *Shared Pulpit* class, led by Rev. Anastasia is finishing up, likely in December. Rev. John will offer one class in 2022 the date is TBD. He is currently committed to teaching membership classes until the end of 2021.
- **(Nov)** The Membership Coordinator has been focused on rolling out new membership classes, which replaces the Inquirers Series. To promote the new classes, she reconnected with visitors and prospective members, and reached out to some regular attendees that have yet to become members. She also communicated with some resigned members who are showing interest in rejoining the church. To date, that outreach resulted in 7 participants in the first Exploring UU class. In addition, members of the Membership Team participated in the Widening the Welcome training. This day-long workshop focused on developing more open and welcoming congregations. Looking ahead, we are preparing to implement the use of a Connection Card with the entire congregation with the hope of deepening engagement and identifying church attendees that are interested in membership and becoming involved in church activities.
- **(Nov)** The Faith Formation Director continues to integrate the 8th Principle into our Faith Formation program. Julie completed a training, through LREDA, to learn more about “Jubilee for Kids” an anti-racist program for children and is researching more to see if it would be a good fit for Faith Formation to purchase. There hasn’t been a good turn out by the FF volunteers to the BBC sessions, so we are going to offer multiple paths to completing antiracism training. Also, our LGBTQIA+ Youth had a coffee date at Bean Rush on November 13.
- **(Nov)** A high school youth group held a discussion and activity on ethics and yoga with a focus on gratitude, led by member Jessie Rhines.
- **(Nov)** 2022 Camino Pilgrimage - 30 people have registered for the 2022 Camino Pilgrimage. The wider congregation can also participate in planned local hikes, and there will be a worship series on the theme of pilgrimage, for reflection, and perhaps to prompt a second trip.

Social Justice Ends Statement

UUCA’s theological and spiritual culture calls us to put our principles into action by creating and supporting systems that address environmental and social injustices.

- **(June)** Anne Arundel Connecting Together (ACT) addressed the backlog and crisis presented by the number of people who qualify for but have yet to receive rental relief (as provided by the federal government during COVID). We raised up and identified ways to address some of the racial inequity in the feds program.
- **(June)** The Project Drawdown Action Team created three sub-teams: 1) how best to use our sacred UUCA land (ex. Forest canopy, food forest, permaculture design, composting, community plots. 2) Solar: installing solar panels around the church, educating the members about buying groups and potentially forming such a club, and helping members sign up for Neighborhood Sun. 3) Investments: Ethical investing and divesting investments in fossil fuel. These in addition to ACT’s potential involvement in public transit reform and expansion may make us eligible for Green Sanctuary recertification by the UUA. We will be looking into this application and process.
- **(June)** 18 members from UUCA attended the 2021 UUA General Assembly.
- **(June-Nov)** Volunteers continue support of the Woodside Gardens Food Pantry through the church's food collection. Our small groups have done a stellar job in providing weekly donations via the Fahs House bins as coordinated by Don Patterson.

- **(June-Nov)** Widening the Circle of Concern: The Taskforce continues discussing the UUA's report and is developing, in an iterative fashion, specific recommendations for UUCA in implementing the report's recommendations.
- **(June)** Beloved Conversations -Around a half-dozen UUCA folks completed the Beloved Conversations program (an anti-racist, small group program developed and run out of a UU seminary (Meadville-Lombard Theological School) this Spring, with some very positive feedback.
- **(June)** Rev. John continues service on the UUA President's Council and he attended a meeting during the General Assembly.
- **(Aug)** Building Beloved Community BBC (antiracism)— The Board of Trustees agreed to the minister's suggestion to shift BBC's reporting from the ministers to the Board as a way of leading the congregation's anti-racism in a more direct way that will create better communication between the ministers and the BBC.
- **(Aug)** The ministers along with member Pat Fleearty began participating in "Winter Relief Lunches" with the Arundel House of Hope. We volunteered to make lunch for 50 homeless residents at the Red Roof Inn hotel on August 10 and August 24th.
- **(Aug)** The ministers gave member Thornell Jones permission to hold his Sailing Camp at UUCA for six weeks. Six African American boys from Annapolis successfully participated.
- **(Aug)** We continue to support BEEC2 in creating a racially equitable process for our planned construction work and financing. We moved financial resources to Harbor Bank (an African American owned bank) and began the financing process. We signed two contracts with All-N Construction (a minority-owned firm) for repairs of the Fahs and to finish the rest of our phase-1 building construction. We are thankful for this contact from Stan Keeve.
- **(Aug)** The Green Initiative Team created a Master Plan of recommendations for the executives to implement at UUCA
- **(Sep)** Endowment Committee announces it will give away small grants to local not-for-profits
- **(Sep)** New dates to the Winter Relief lunches have been set—October 5th, Saturday, October 16th and Nov 11.
- **(Oct)** Ministers met with ACT's new interim organizer.
- **(Oct)** We have signed a partnership agreement with Neighborhood Sun, an organization which helps people purchase green energy for their home at competitive prices. UUCA will receive a small amount of money (\$50-75) for everyone who names UUCA when they sign up with Neighborhood Sun. A representative came and talked with us on October 17.
- **(Oct)** Rev. Anastassia joined a DC action at the White House organized by People vs. Fossil Fuels, an interfaith group led by those on the frontline of our climate crisis.
- **(Nov)** Ministers agree to add Winter Relief lunches into the 2022 budget so that members do not have to personally fund it.
- **(Oct)** Rev. John, Linda Mundy, and Leo Penta (ACT's interim organizer) led a training for UUCA's Core Team on Oct 11.
- **(Nov) ACT** - Rev. John, a member of the ACT Strategy Team, is leading the audio/visual production for the upcoming hybrid annual meeting on December 1 at Asbury UMC. UUCA's goal is to bring at least 35 members. The launch of *Turn-around-Thursday* will be announced that evening which is an initiative that ACT helped foster. This job placement program is especially for the unemployed or underemployed who will receive job preparation training as well as a job with a living wage at the completion of their training. The program works in partnership with local businesses. TRT in Baltimore has found more than 1000 people jobs with a living wage!
- **(Nov)** The Director of Faith Formation coordinated with the Eastport Community Food Pantry for a monthly service project for youth and parents on the 3rd Saturday of each month.

- **(Nov)** Solar energy is now being made available to local low- and middle-income households in our area at discounted prices. We are letting folks know about this opportunity; if they sign up through UUCA, we will also receive a small amount of money (\$50-75).

Larger UU Movement Ends Statement

UUCA creates meaningful opportunities that encourage participation and leadership in the larger UU community to promote the growth of Unitarian Universalism.

- **(June)** Rev. John began mentoring BIPOC Albie Johnson through the UUA's Commissioned Lay Ministry program (CLM).
- **(June)** New church signs were installed off Bestgate and Dubois Road; and a new front galley sign was installed as well.
- **(June – Nov)** Rev. John continues as a board member of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Intramural Review Board. His term ends in January.
- **(June – Nov)** Rev. John continues as Co-chair of the County Executives Interfaith Advisory Council.
- **(Aug)** Rev. John was a panelist on a DRUUMM/ BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) discussion about second minister struggles as a POC.
- **(Sep)** Rev. John serves as a DRUUMM (Diverse Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries) Chaplain which represents hundreds of UU POC across the country. This chaplaincy consists of a monthly meeting, and pastoral care/worship for DRUUMM staff and calls to POC as requested by leadership
- **(Sep)** Rev. Anastassia began mentoring SarahRuth Davis as part of her seminary requirements.
- **(Sep)** We held a Volunteer Fair on September 19, with 11 groups participating.
- **(Oct)** Rev. John, Rev. Fred, and Jane Carrigan participated in the ordination of UUCA member Rev. Dayna Edwards while Rev. Anastassia preached at the ordination of Jamie -Hinson-Reiger.
- **(Oct)** Debbie Boudra connected us with Comacell Brown, local artist Black artist and he created a first rendition of what will be a timeless, beautiful art piece for the front entrance that will visually show our vision of unity and multiculturalism. These images are amazing, and we look forward to sharing them with the congregation.
- **(Nov)** UUCA Installation as Ministers of Equal Standing: We have begun planning our "Blessing of Our Ministry" installation service with a team of congregants. It will be held on Jan 22 at 4 p.m. at UUCA. We invited Revs. Annie Gonzalez Milliken and Elizabeth Nguyen to give a duet of sermons, mirroring our partnership in ministry. Rev. Fred Muir and Julica de la Hermann Du Fuente will be giving the charges to the congregation and the ministers, respectively.
- **(Nov)** Julie Burman, serves as the Secretary of the local JP-LREDA Chapter and attends monthly meetings to stay connected with what other local UU congregations are doing.