

# **Unity Church – Unitarian**

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## Unity Church-Unitarian

Sanctuary Address: 733 Portland Avenue

Business Address: 732 Holly Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104

651-228-1456 • 651-228-0927 (fax)

unity@unityunitarian.org • [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org)

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Rev. K.P. Hong

Barbara Hubbard

Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt

Minister of Faith Formation

Executive Director

Interim Minister

### CHURCH STAFF

#### Program Staff

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Drew Danielson

Mark Dietrich

Vladimir Garrido

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Teresa Tierney

KrisAnne Weiss

Director of Music Ministries

Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries

Unity Choir Bass Section Leader

Sound Technician

Associate Minister

Youth Ministry & Nursery Supervisor

Nursery Coordinator

Choir Accompanist

Coordinator of Community Outreach Ministries

Video Technician

Coordinator of Children's Ministries

Sound Technician

Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality

Organist & Youth Music Coordinator

Children's Choir Director

Unity Choir Tenor Section Leader

Director of Finance

Hospitality Coordinator & Program Assistant

Unity Choir Soprano Section Leader

Unity Choir Alto Section Leader

**Administrative/Facilities Staff**

Heidi Birkholz	Facilities Maintenance Coordinator
Olendta Bryant	Facilities Specialist
Teresa Connor	Facilities Operations Coordinator
Delaney Daly	Facilities Specialist
Keenan Rust	Facilities Specialist
Song Thao	Financial Assistant
Martha Tilton	Director of Communications

**MINISTER EMERITA / EMERITUS**

Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs	Minister Emerita
Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs	Minister Emeritus

**STAFF EMERITA**

Ruth Palmer	Director of Music Ministries Emerita
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## **In Memoriam**

### **Elizabeth Shippee**

September 20, 1920 - January 5, 2021

### **Chauncey Wright Griggs, III**

January 5, 1937 - January 7, 2021

### **Vivian Stone**

May 11, 1921 – January 30, 2021

### **Susan Schafer**

May 21, 1945 – March 18, 2021

### **Nancy Paulson**

March 22, 1942 – April 24, 2021

### **James Dale Meisenheimer**

July 10, 1943 – May 26, 2021

### **Phyllis Peterson**

August 31, 1926 – June 21, 2021

### **Georgia Lindeke**

September 18, 1926 – July 21, 2021

### **Carol Robertson**

April 25, 1915 – July 2021

### **Donald Crannell**

March 10, 1928 – July 24, 2021

### **Marv Spears**

August 6, 1936 – August 5, 2021

### **Lynnanne Warren**

January 26, 1939 – September 9, 2021

### **Cay (Catherine) Emkovik**

February 23, 1934 - October 14, 2021

### **Greta Michaels**

March 11, 1929 – October 20, 2021

### **Charles (Charlie) Paule**

November 24, 1959 – November 5, 2021

### **Margaret E. Durham**

May 16, 1928 – November 17, 2021

## **Introduction to the 2020-2021 Annual Report**

The 2020-2021 church year began at the convergence of a pandemic, economic distress, political polarization, and a pivotal point in our nation's history of systemic racism and white supremacy. The congregation, staff, and ministers were all called to step back and look searchingly and creatively at the direction of the church. With the building closed for almost the entire year, we found new and creative ways to provide worship, programs, inspiration and strength to the congregation and beyond. This report will highlight some of the many ways staff and lay leaders stepped up to meet not just the trials but also the opportunities at hand.

We closed the building in March of 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the church remained closed until June of 2021. Worship services were livestreamed. Janne, Rob, KP and Karen provided daily minister's messages. Wellspring Wednesday programming, Chalice Circles, religious education classes, choir practices, and a variety of antiracism workshop opportunities all went online. The closed building gave us a chance to make repairs and improvements to the facility. Our dedicated and creative staff rose to new challenges and opportunities as they emerged. Throughout this time, we followed the guidance of our sources of authority, the CDC and the MN Department of Health to create COVID-19 protocols.

The murder of George Floyd in May of 2020 inspired a reckoning around systemic racism and white supremacy in what is believed to be the largest protest movement in American history, revealing the enduring legacy of racial inequalities not marginal but inextricably woven into the history of this nation. The work of faith formation and partnerships in racial justice and multicultural work were overarching and recurring priorities across programs and new initiatives.

Another priority was the impending retirement of our Senior Co-Ministers, Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs and preparations for ministerial transition. Janne and Rob graciously accepted the board's invitation to stay for an additional year to provide stable and seasoned leadership. They ministered to the congregation, and then said goodbye to the congregation without opportunities for embodied connection, nothing less than a labor of love.

Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality, and Rev. Karen Hering, Associate Minister, took on part-time responsibilities at the beginning of the church year in response to Rev. Lisa Friedman's departure. Karen Hering transitioned to a full-time position in pastoral care as Janne was leaving, and we hired Rev. Shay MacKay to assume responsibilities with our Community Outreach Ministries. Martha Tilton was made Director of Communications as she assumed technical director responsibilities for our live streaming and Vladimir Garrido joined the staff as our Sound Technician. Madeline Summers assumed the role of Zoom Coordinator.

Your appreciation for the role of the church in your lives during this year was palpable and made real by your participation, your words of gratitude, and your financial support. It is an honor and a blessing to serve this courageous congregation.

The Unity Church Executive Team  
K.P. Hong, Minister of Faith Formation  
Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director  
Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt, Interim Minister

# Unity Church Unitarian

## Executive Team Interpretation of the 2019-2023 Ends with Strategic Priorities

*Written on August 3, 2020*

Working within ourselves, among our church community, and beyond in the larger world, we the people of Unity Church-Unitarian:

### **1. Create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships.**

#### ***Interpretation:***

*The Beloved Community is inherently multicultural and always aspirational. It grows from holy relatedness and requires deep humility. We acknowledge that we need help navigating what, for us, is uncharted territory. Authentic relationships begin when we recognize and root out our assumptions and deepen through active curiosity and growing friendship. This work asks us to confront systems of oppression, disrupt white privilege and fragility, build bridges across differences, and embrace an ever-growing repertoire in every dimension of our ministry. We promise to stay engaged despite discomfort and inevitable failures.*

#### ***Strategic Priorities:***

In close consultation with Team Dynamics, we will:

- Promote and curate an expanding multicultural experience of worship, focusing on the *Minimization Orientation's* developmental task of deepening cultural self-awareness as necessary groundwork for recognizing and appreciating wider cultural differences.
- Expand on iterations of the IDI work, scaling it to greater number of congregants and ministry areas, integrating learning from group feedback sessions into current programs and augmenting its impact through accountability structures.
- Evaluate and implement new Religious Education curricula that situates our Unitarian Universalist faith within a multicultural framework. Continue curriculum review across all RE programs, with next focus on Year 2 of Rotation curricula with a racial justice and multicultural lens as guide.
- Strengthen chalice circles and small group ministry with a deeper emphasis on cultural self-awareness as necessary work in building authentic relationships.
- Coordinate Year 2 contractual resources with Team Dynamics, building on areas where coaching, facilitating, and training remain both critical and effective, including: congregational training series as part of "next right action," consulting in the ministerial search process, and shaping emerging possibilities of the congregational survey to serve more effectively as a metric for intercultural work.
- Clarify and strengthen the covenant between Unity and Above Every Name, with an emphasis on shared program planning and regularly scheduled leadership gatherings.

- Convene a group of people of color connected to Unity Church to consider multicultural outreach and determine what invitation we could offer and what outcome we would hope to create.
- 2. Ground ourselves in personal practice and communal worship that grows our capacity for wonder and spiritual deepening.**

***Interpretation:***

*Both personal practice and congregational worship ground us in our relationship to the holy, inspire reverence, and prepare us to engage change as it comes. Individual spiritual practice and communal worship are essential expectations of church involvement. Consistent practice expands our capacity for wonder and fosters spiritual development. When we bring our full selves into the worship experience, our particular stories, practices, and insights enrich communal worship, awaken the welcoming spirit among us, and help us realize holy relatedness.*

***Strategic Priorities:***

We will:

- Structure faith formation as an overarching priority across existing programs and emerging initiatives, facilitating lifespan faith formation and intergenerational opportunities.
  - Structure Wellspring Wednesdays into greater alignment with faith formation, increasingly shaping an intergenerational worship service, with involvement from youth and families.
  - Review and winnow the wide array of WW programming typically offered, while exploring creative initiatives towards adult faith formation.
- Advance the work of the faith formation team, particularly attentive to nurturing spiritual practice through innovative access points in an online world, including the daily minister's messages.
- Develop a short-term Chalice Circle experience for newcomers to introduce them to the experience and expectation of spiritual practice in membership.



**3. Articulate our Unitarian Universalist faith identity, teach it to our children, share it with others, and live it courageously in the world.**

***Interpretation:***

*We know and feel part of the unfolding story of liberal religion and use our stated principles as tools for self-reflection and action in the world. We understand teaching as a spiritual practice and cultivate the salvific potential of learning together as a multigenerational community. Together, we disciple ourselves to our living tradition through ritual and worship, in stories and by example. We confidently claim our faith and testify to its transforming power.*

***Strategic Priorities:***

We will:

- Structure faith formation as an overarching priority across existing programs and emerging initiatives, facilitating lifespan faith formation and intergenerational opportunities.
- Develop year 2 of the Teaching Associates program, deploying associates who will integrate spiritual-theological reflection and attend to faith formation across strategic ministry areas.
- Advance the work of the faith formation team in mapping faith formation across adult programming—from membership to meaning to ministry to mission of the church in the greater world—and implementing it in congregational life.
- Strengthen growing opportunities for intergenerational faith formation within existing RE structures and practices, including: the UU Families Initiative’s family covenant workshop embedded into the COA curriculum, and strengthening parental involvement in seminal programs from Our Whole Lives and Coming of Age to the Boston pilgrimage and Tower Club parent council.

**4. Know each other in all our fullness and create an ever-widening circle of belonging for all people**

***Interpretation:***

*We acknowledge the fullness of being human by embracing the messiness, complexity, and beauty of our existence. Our hearts contain the capacity for good and evil and all that lies between. Religious community helps us align ourselves toward the good, welcoming both gifts and wounds across a diversity of human experience. We claim a faith that breaks past fear and leads toward Beloved Community.*

***Strategic Priorities:***

We will:

- Lift up the importance of radical hospitality and increase our capacity to embody it.
  - Continue the work with Team Dynamics with the Welcome Teams to cultivate radical hospitality and their understanding of and commitment to this work.
  - Integrate radical hospitality into our on-line ministry.
- Build on the increased capacity of the new database for making connections with visitors and members.
- Clarify the role and processes for the establishment of Fellowship Groups.
- Strengthen and build small groups and other connections between people to bridge their isolation, particularly in this pandemic. Includes:
  - Strengthen the Congregational Connectors Program, which we would expect to be useful even after the pandemic ends.
  - Strengthen Chalice Circles: Cultivate on-line chalice circles and a cadre of committed facilitators equipped to lead the circles in theologically deep ways. Grow the leadership capacity of the facilitators.
  - Develop a short-term version of Chalice Circles for newcomers, that would include an equal number of experienced members, to help newcomers learn the spiritual practices of Unity Church and explore whether membership at Unity Church is what they want for themselves. Consider whether this could provide a natural mentoring connection.
  - Deepen the Mentoring Program: find ways to nurture an organic connection between the mentor/mentee matches

**5. Generously give and openly receive compassionate care in times of joy, sorrow and transition.**

***Interpretation:***

*Our pastoral ministry reflects a growing understanding of relational theology and its ability to transform lives. We accompany one another during threshold moments and times of transition. We are eager to be present in joyful times and able to stay present in the face of suffering. The Holy reveals itself in a tangible way in our mutual care for one another.*

***Strategic Priorities:***

We will:

- Build the capacity of the laity and clarify staffing to ensure continuing quality of the pastoral care program. Incorporate pastoral care information at every level of congregational life and create channels for people to express their care for one another.

- Plan for the continuity through ministerial transition of the monthly caregivers support group, monthly grief group, monthly support group for members and friends who are related to someone living with mental health challenges.
  - Grow and strengthen the Pastoral Care Associates program. Honor long-tenured associates while bringing on new team members with greater capacity.
  - Expand the capacity of teams who support an individual or family in need and explore the potential of systematic care structures for people without family support.
  - Enlarge the capacity of Caring Circles who provide direct services to congregants in need (meals, rides, etc.)
  - Enlist music ministries in pastoral care.
  - Create a Pastoral Care Ministry Team to consider the program at depth, including its programs and theological underpinnings. Team members will also have pastoral responsibilities.
- 6. Discover and pursue our individual and collective work to advance justice, wholeness, and equity for people and our Earth and all life on it.**

***Interpretation:***

*We encourage and challenge ourselves and one another to live out our faith in the world with a personal and collective commitment to justice, equity and healing. We invite the power of this commitment, deepened by our spiritual practices, to change our hearts and lives and to help us discern what we need to let go of in order to make room for what needs to grow. We will linger in the discomfort of not knowing long enough to find our place, personally and congregationally in the wider movements seeking justice, equity and ecological wellness in the world.*

***Strategic Priorities:***

We will:

- Encourage and reinvigorate our community outreach teams by further developing the capacity for spiritual reflection and connection to the work they do in the larger community.
- Sustain our commitment to the Sanctuary movement through an established team tasked with this work of protecting and supporting immigrant and refugee communities.
- Support the Act for the Earth Team's efforts to help coordinate the congregation's efforts to take an educational, practical, activist, and spiritual approach to protecting our world, and to become a "green sanctuary" congregation.

- Engage more fully with multifaith justice efforts, in particular supporting the efforts of the Minnesota Multifaith effort and monitoring the progress of Interfaith Action's program Opportunity St. Paul.
- Make best and highest use of worship and the arts to become receptive to emergent possibilities as an ever more effective justice seeking community.
- Investigate the possibility of a rapid responses system to respond nimbly and creatively to emergent needs.

## **7. Create brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture.**

### ***Interpretation:***

*As an expression of covenant, brave space invites us into authentic relationships that allow us to imagine and experience new ways of being and help to heal old wounds. Informed by the history of racism and patriarchy, we learn to confront racist behavior in ourselves and in others, make mistakes, and enter into accountable relationships that lead to change. In brave space we turn down the volume of the dominant culture and amplify voices that fight to be heard.\* We will learn to be together in new ways, practice sharing power, sing new songs, pray new prayers.*

*\*This sentence drawn from the work of Micky ScottBey Jones.*

### ***Strategic Priorities:***

We will:

- Embed ongoing education holistically throughout congregational life, drawing people increasingly into structures of accountability.
- Undertake a renewal process to align the work of the community outreach teams with Unity's antiracist and multicultural ends, especially attentive to community organizations led by people of color and prospective proximity in the work of racial justice.
  - Revitalize the work of the Racial and Restorative Justice Team and their community partnerships.
- Revitalize the use of restorative circles for surfacing and managing conflict and for sharing power.
- Explore opportunities for group confession and rituals of reconciliation.
- Closely calibrate and position the work of the BCST in its role of *coordinating* antiracist and multicultural work across multiple areas of ministry and *conducting* innovative and emerging programming.
  - Promote and establish the Beloved Community Staff Team webpage or other on-line site as the central site for the collection, distribution, and archive of resource

information, actions, and ongoing narrative for racial justice and multicultural work.

**8. Sustain and steward the church and our larger Unitarian Universalist movement for the future.**

***Interpretation:***

*Gratitude rests at the heart of our faith. When we embrace the gifts of the church and put them to work in the world, we understand the significance of the church in new ways. As disciples to our faith and its teachings, we hold the church in trust, testify by example, and steward its resources as an expression of the promises we make to each other and the world. Our gratitude extends to and undergirds our commitment to the larger Unitarian Universalist movement and our shared mission in the world.*

***Strategic Priorities:***

We will:

- Re-establish the Stewardship Ministry Team to advise the Executive Director on issues of canvass, investments, budget, facilities management, long-term debt, and future planning in light of the pandemic. They will help the Executive Director and through her the Executive Leadership:
  - Ensure the future of the physical church, including the duplex, by creating a life cycling system and by improving IT systems,
  - Expand the congregation's capacity to embody generosity as a central expression of their faith.
  - Strengthen financial giving through a compelling message and accessible means, with a focus on better use of technology,
  - Strengthen existing financial, investment and endowment policies and practices, mindful of values and the goal of ongoing financial strength,
  - Begin an on-going assessment of the viability of the pledge-based model for funding the church and consider alternatives.
- Operationalize and plan for resource development and management in light of present staffing.
- Engage the board at depth around the board nomination process, board wholeness, and discipleship.
- Assess our relationship with the larger UU movement and reinforce the ways in which Unity Church supports and strengthens it, locally and beyond.

## Policy J: Antiracism and Racial Healing Commitment October 2021

The Executive Team shall not take actions or otherwise conduct the affairs of Unity Church-Unitarian in any manner that does not comport with its commitment to becoming an actively antiracist institution. The Executive Team shall not:

1. Engage vendors in an amount greater than \$2,500 annually without assessing and educating any such vendor using a matrix of values which includes, but is not limited to antiracism, anti-oppression, multiculturalism and class inclusion.

*The ET's plan in response to this limitation has been to:*

1. *Develop and implement a matrix of criteria that expresses the church's stated values and ends.*
2. *Survey current contractors and vendors to evaluate their compliance with our criteria.*
3. *Create required goals for our current vendors and contractors who are not in compliance, thus challenging and educating them;*
4. *Apply the criteria to all future processes for the selection of contracted services and vendors.*
5. *Report results to the Board of Trustees and the congregation annually in an effort to be accountable and transparent.*

*We have developed criteria (see below) but we have not surveyed current contractors as proposed. We do, however, apply these values and criteria with new contracts that are above \$2,500.00. Most recently, we used the criteria when interviewing snow removal companies, chancel apron repair companies, carpentry companies for the cabinetry rebuild, and American National Bank while renegotiating our long term debt.*

<b>Matrix of Criteria for contracts and vendors (weighted):</b>
1. Minority hiring practices - resulting in a 31%* employment of people of color and women. <b>(25%)</b>
2. Sustainability practices – demonstration of a commitment to healing the earth. <b>(15%)</b>
3. Local engagement – demonstration of a commitment to the community's overall health and well-being. <b>(15%)</b>
4. Worker's Equity in fair compensation, inclusive benefits and healthy work environment. <b>(20%)</b>
5. Competitive fees for goods and services <b>(25%)</b>
*Keyed to Ramsey County requirements.

2. Allow the Board to be uninformed about diversity of staff on payroll, including the percentage of positions and salary paid to people of color.

*As of June, 2021 our staff was comprised of 31.6% people of color (6 of 19), and 31.6% of salaries were assigned to people of color (\$239,991 of \$823,339).*

*Please note that we used January – June budgeted staffing and salaries for this analysis, since the report covers the 2019-2020 church year. Changes to staff were made in the summer 2021 in the areas of senior ministers, community outreach and finance.*

3. Allow staff members to be uninformed about how to conduct their duties in alignment with the antiracism, anti-oppression, multiculturalism and class inclusion values of Unity Church-Unitarian.

*In 2016, the Beloved Community Staff Team was formed at Unity Church to strengthen and coordinate Unity's anti-racism and multicultural work, and to share the stories of this journey with the wider community. The BCST has members from the executive leadership, program staff and the laity.*

*In conjunction with Team Dynamics, we offered opportunities for staff members to participate in the Equity and Justice 7-Part Series. Most, but not all staff have completed the IDI. Some have participated in the group feedback session with a Qualified Administrator, have had an individual session, and have created an Intercultural Development Plan.*

*We recognize that new learnings and growth call us to develop new ways of integrating our learnings into our staff dynamics and the church culture. We are taking steps to create venues for this integration.*

4. Interpret the Ends statements without consideration of the antiracism commitment of Unity Church-Unitarian and how that commitment is implemented in covenant with local communities of color.

*As you can see from the ET's Interpretation of the Ends, our commitment to antiracism is woven throughout the ministries and programs of the church.*

5. Allow the congregation to be uninformed about the work being done to live out the anti-racism, anti-oppression, multicultural and class inclusive values of Unity Church-Unitarian, and the measurable outcomes of that work, including the percentage of Sunday Offerings that go to organizations with an anti-racist agenda and/or that serve communities of color.

*The Beloved Community Staff Team has a Communications Team that reports on the work being done to live out the values of the church in the area. Our annual report to the congregation in November will include a summary report.*

*From July of 2020 through June of 2021, 91.8% of the organizations that received a Sunday offering serve communities of color and 49.0% of the organizations include an antiracist agenda in their mission.*

## **Policy J**

### **Offering Recipient Analysis**

<b>Church Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b># Serve Comm of Color</b>	<b>%</b>	<b># With A-R Mission</b>	<b>%</b>
2014-2015	51	37	72.5%	23	45.1%
2015-2016	49	39	79.6%	35	71.4%
2016-2017	47	39	83.0%	24	51.1%
2017-2018	44	32	72.7%	21	47.7%
2018-2019	48	36	75.0%	20	41.7%
2019-2020	46	37	80.4%	22	47.8%
2020-2021	49	45	91.8%	24	49.0%



## Board of Trustees: Year in Review

Greetings Fellow Congregants,

Happy 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Unity Church Unitarian!

Presented here for your review is a summary of the highlights of the work undertaken by your trustees during the 2020-2021 church year.

When the decision was made to close the church in March of 2020 because of the pandemic, the board invited co-ministers Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs to stay another year and they generously agreed to delay their retirement. The Ministerial Search Team process came to a halt and was picked back up during late summer of 2021. It is the board's responsibility to present the congregation with a slate of twenty or so candidates for their consideration and vote. The board received 80 applications and the transitions sub team, with the support of Team Dynamics, narrowed the pool to around 30 candidates. From there the full board agreed on twenty for presentation to the congregation. Following the congregational vote the team of nine was named in the fall of 2020 and they began their work in earnest at the beginning of this year.

The transition sub team, with the assistance of the UUA, was responsible for the recruitment and selection of the interim minister. Before I joined the board, there was robust discussion about whether Unity ought to have an interim for one or two years; or perhaps transition immediately to a new settled minister. The decision was to hire an interim for one year. An offer was made to Reverend Doctor Kathy Hurt and we were delighted that she accepted.

A few members of the board and Barbara Hubbard, with the assistance of Team Dynamics, engaged in deep conversation about the development of policies related to how Unity makes financial decisions in line with its values. The discussions will carry over into the new year to address how best to use the Currier Fund for Racial Justice to make real our work in creating a brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture.

Another area of focus was to turn the spotlight on our board practice to examine in what ways the characteristics of white supremacy culture (from *Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups* by Jones and Okun) showed up during our meetings. We did this by individually answering the following question before closing out the meeting:

*Take a moment to call to mind your Intercultural Development Plan, or the practices at the growing edge of your antiracist multicultural work. In what specific ways did you tune in and engage with those practices during today's meeting?*

We had several generative conversations about the board's responsibility to engage in the important work of linking to organizations with whom we share values. There is still more to be done and we are eager to come up with a plan for moving this work forward.

The year ahead will offer many more opportunities to look within and consider what spiritual practices will support each of us to find and keep our balance in the face of momentous change in the life of our church. In 2022, the Ministerial Search Team will be hard at work interviewing prospective candidates and will present one to the congregation. It is the members of our church who hold the responsibility for calling a new settled minister. Whether or not you have considered joining Unity Church as a voting member, perhaps now is the time. Your vote really does matter.

Yours in gratitude,  
Clover Earl  
Chair of the Board of Trustees

## **Interim Minister Report**

I began this interim year with Unity Church on August 1, 2021, with the particular mandate from the Board of Trustees to support the congregation as it grieved the ending of a long and vibrant ministry, to question norms as a way of opening the church systems to possible new ways of operating, and to invite reflection on what is permanent, and what is transient, in church life. Since that August beginning, along with integrating myself into church processes and practices, I have provided ongoing support for the Ministerial Search Team in facilitating staff work needed to help the team, and reviewing the documents the team prepares for describing what the church is seeking in a new minister.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt

## Ministerial Search Team

Thanks to all the members of this congregation for entrusting the nine of us in this search process. We are honored to be in this role, and we are working to be good stewards for our church. To this point in the search process, we have focused on building a relationship with each other, mapping out the complete process, and engaging the congregation. All of the information we learned in the engagement process will help shape the information provided to potential candidates, and will help us understand the type of minister the congregation wants and needs.

In September and October 2021, we conducted a congregational survey and hosted a series of listening sessions. We did not know what to expect in terms of congregational response, given the long-term separation from the church building during the pandemic and ongoing restrictions and concerns for health and safety. We were gratified that 371 people participated in the online survey. A report on the survey results is included at the end of this annual report.

We also conducted 21 listening sessions, 12 in person and nine via Zoom. Eleven listening sessions were open to all, and 10 others were directed to specific groups within the church. These included groups whose work is most directly related to ministry and the ministerial role: worship associates, teaching associates, pastoral care, religious education, community outreach, and former board chairs. Others were affinity groups of LGBTQ and BIPOC members. In total, 239 people participated. At this writing we are conducting listening sessions with staff, and arranging for listening sessions with the youth of the church.

We could not have conducted these listening sessions without the support of members of the congregation and staff. We would especially like to thank the following individuals who helped take notes during the listening sessions:

George Anastos  
Debbie Cushman  
Sherry Essen  
Cara Letofsky  
Terry Linskey  
Susie Macpherson

Deborah Carter McCoy  
Angela Newhouse  
Brian Newhouse  
Bob Peskin  
Barb Svoda  
Charlie Vanek

In addition, we would like to thank the following members of the staff who offered support in many different ways:

Heidi Birkholz  
Olentda Bryant  
Teresa Connor

Delaney Daly  
Barbara Hubbard  
Madeline Summers

Lastly we want to recognize and thank The Reverend Jen Crow for her support as coach in this process and Carole Burton of Radiance Resources for her excellent facilitation of our two day session to review and synthesize the information we received from the congregation during this initial phase of the process.

As we enter into a “quieter” phase where we will be reviewing and reaching out to prospective candidates, we will build on a firm foundation, feeling gratitude for all of the love that has been poured into the process by the congregation, thus far.

## **Congregational Survey Results**

We did not do a typical congregational survey at the end of the 2020-2021 church year, instead incorporating the questions about progress on our ends into the Ministerial Search Team survey in the fall of 2021. Please see the attachment at the end of this booklet for the results of that survey and find it online at

[https://www.unityunitarian.org/uploads/6/1/0/3/6103699/unity\\_unitarian\\_mst\\_survey\\_results.pdf](https://www.unityunitarian.org/uploads/6/1/0/3/6103699/unity_unitarian_mst_survey_results.pdf).

In addition, you can find Bill Etter's analysis of these responses at

[https://www.unityunitarian.org/uploads/6/1/0/3/6103699/2021\\_ends\\_tracking\\_via\\_mst\\_survey\\_final.pdf](https://www.unityunitarian.org/uploads/6/1/0/3/6103699/2021_ends_tracking_via_mst_survey_final.pdf).

In particular, he explores possible reasons the ratings are lower this year, and provides a fascinating quadrant map that brings together how we think we're doing on the Ends, how important the Ends are to us, and how engaged we are with each End.

## Administration

When the church was closed, most staff were provided with options to work remotely. We provided tech grants of up to \$500 per individual to upgrade or replace computers, cell phones, internet services, cameras for Zoom, second monitors, etc. The administrative staff, which supports literally every aspect of church life, did a remarkable job of responding to the challenges of the 2020-2021 church year with resilience and creativity.

Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director, has been on staff since 1998. Her role has grown over the years. She serves as a member of the Executive Team, oversees administration and operations, finance and resource development, and manages church business operations in general. She and the other financial staff were able to remotely facilitate the annual review of our 12/31/2020 financial position with Schechter, Dokken, Kanter CPA staff in the spring of 2021. While closed, she was honored to be the official bell ringer on Sundays.

Martha Tilton has served in the role of Coordinator of Communications since 2004. She manages all written communication, our website, orders of service, social media and our database. With the pandemic, Martha retooled her work to include livestreaming worship services, daily minister's messages, and much more. We responded to the expansion of her job responsibilities with a change in her title to Director of Communications and an increase in salary. We were truly blessed to have Martha's skills, creativity, and willingness as we navigated the challenges and opportunities in this year.

Song Thao, our Financial Assistant has been on staff since 1995! Song is a true asset to Unity's administrative operations. She handles contributions, disbursements, payroll and other administrative projects with calm and order. This is a real gift to the church. Song worked both remotely and onsite during this church year, preparing check runs and taking your generous contributions to the bank!

Vernon Sowell was hired as our part time Director of Finance at the end of February, 2020 with the plan that he would assume responsibilities for oversight of day to day fiscal management, preparation and analysis of financial statements, and budget control. Vernon worked remotely until the summer of 2020, and focused primarily on financial statement preparation. Vernon brought a wonderful depth of perspective to our (Zoom) staff meeting and gatherings.

Our paid staff is grateful for the generous support of our dedicated and hard-working front desk volunteers. We missed their help and friendly interactions over the course of this year, and were happy to welcome them back to the front desk in the summer of 2021.

The other team that was furloughed during the 2020-2021 year was the memorial service reception team, led by Barbara Ford.

## **Archives Team**

Given that our building has been closed, our Archive Team has been on furlough this past year. They are looking forward to starting their work again, and to the work that we have funded at the Minnesota Historical Society to catalogue Unity Church's materials.



## Art Team

Submitted by Paul Rogne, Chairperson

2020-21 has been a challenging year for the Art Team, just as for all. When the pandemic hit, the Art Team was in the middle of 12 months of art exhibits scheduled for the Parish Hall. We were also in the early stages of working with an artist to create an art installation – probably a mural – on the north wall of the Foote Room with the help of the youth of the congregation. All of that activity stopped. Instead of going into hibernation the Art Team found several activities to work on.

1. Simone Spruce, a talented Black artist, was the last to exhibit in the Parish Hall before the building closed in March 2020. The Art Team purchased her impressive painting dealing with the theme of immigration, based on a song by the vocal group, Sweet Honey in the Rock. The song “Are We a Nation” has a chorus that says in part, “I care, do you care? Stand for justice, if you dare. . . Come together heed the call.”
2. The Art Team received a significant donation of funds from the estate of long-time church member, Eva Cross. It was expressly dedicated to add art to Unity’s permanent collection to diversify its ethnic and multicultural representation. The Art Team established a committee to seek artists from our region to explore with the intent of purchasing art. After months of research and viewing of art, the team added two impressive pieces. The first is a diptych painting, “Spring Promenade” by Heather Friedli. She expresses in her paintings her Anishinaabe and Mexican heritage. The second purchase is a powerful painting by Rose Smith, a local Black artist who grew up in the Rondo neighborhood. Her painting reflects the images and impressions she got from visiting Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina.
3. The Art Team continued to recruit artists to exhibit in the Parish Hall and selected several who are ready, now that the building is open, to bring their excellent work for view. November, 2021 is the first of those exhibits, which changes every month.
4. The Art Team recently concluded a fine Parish Hall exhibit in September of works of art by members of the congregation. The incredible quality and variety shown in this exhibit clearly proves the wonderful talent of the people in our beloved community.
5. And now, new art exhibits as well as the art in the halls and rooms of Unity Church are ready for all to see when visiting the Parish Hall and the Elliot Wing.
6. The Foote Room mural project is expected to start up in the coming new year. Something wonderful to look forward to.

## Beloved Community Staff Team

Submitted by K.P. Hong

### Reflections and Highlights

Protests and call for systemic change were intensified by compounded dimensions of economic loss, enforced isolation, political polarization, election year politics, racist criminal legal system, and more adding to the unrest of this disorienting historical moment. Yet the intersectionality of struggles drew a larger and more diverse cross-section of society in the movement for racial justice and call for a fundamental reimagining of American democracy. And at the epicenter was the murder of George Floyd:

“The Beloved Community Staff Team (BCST), like many of us, thought that the pandemic was our biggest challenge in 2020 but everything seemingly changed on May 25, 2020, with the killing of George Floyd. Not only did the world explode with anger and action, so did Unity Church. Within days of Mr. Floyd’s death, the BCST delivered a video statement and organized a two-night event, *#WeCantBreathe* and *Next Right Action*. With this, the team began what BCST member Erika Sanders called ‘the most impactful change in the past year’ in establishing the Next Right Action framework.

Determined not just to hold one or two meetings and then go back to ‘normal,’ the BCST expressed determination to continue efforts to include antiracism and multicultural work in every area of the church.”

*(from the Beloved Community Staff Team 2020 Year in Review, by Merrill Aldrich and Shelley Butler, December/2020)*

So from across various ministry areas of the church, *Finding our Next Right Action* brought together a series of coordinated initiatives, from donations and hands-on volunteering, to legislative action and peace circle conversations on reimagining public safety, to some 200 participants in a seven-part *Equity+Justice* training series with Team Dynamics focusing on identity and bias, communications and conflict, community organizing and social change, and understanding power and racism. In discerning next steps and enlarging our prophetic imagination in the work of racial justice, actions clustered around notable and emerging dimensions:

- Ongoing education embedded holistically throughout congregational life, and as a covenantal community, drawing people increasingly into structures of accountability.
- Augmenting the Intercultural Development Inventory’s (IDI) impact through accountability structures to expand intercultural capacities.
- Reorganizing the work of the community outreach ministry teams and their community partnerships.
- Conjoining the work of *faith formation/spiritual practice* with *antiracist multicultural work* as an overarching priority across ministry teams and new initiatives—a double helix model in which antiracist work is deeply spiritual work, and vice versa; parallel helices mutually entwining a constitutive whole.

As we closely track the multiple edges of this work in the life of the congregation, and however much the pandemic will reshape plans and schedules, our collaboration with Team Dynamics formulates core expectations for advancing this work in the coming year, including support for the Ministerial Search Team, examining financial policies and investments, and furthering diversity-equity-inclusion in Unity's organizational culture.

**Members of the Beloved Community Staff Team:**

Drew Danielson, Pauline Eichten, Karen Hering, K.P. Hong, Barbara Hubbard, Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs, Laura Park, Erika Sanders, Angela Wilcox

## **Congregational and Community Engagement**

### **Membership**

In February 2021, Unity Church certified 871 voting members with the Unitarian Universalist Association. From July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, Unity welcomed 32 new members and their families. Finding Yourself at Unity continued as a year-round, drop-in weekly Sunday class, led online by the Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality with staff presenters. The Mentor Program offered active visitors and new members an opportunity to be matched with a mentor for six months to help them connect more deeply with the congregation.

These are the people who joined Unity Church July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021:

- |                     |                       |                      |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Ben Aase         | 12. Clarence Harris   | 23. Bryan Lloyd      |
| 2. Alix Aase        | 13. Terri Hawthorne   | 24. Susan Macpherson |
| 3. Marjorie Ames    | 14. Jack Hawthorne    | 25. Rick Macpherson  |
| 4. Julie Angert     | 15. Curtis Johnson    | 26. Jay Mastrud      |
| 5. Sarah Armstrong  | 16. Zora Kinnee       | 27. Veronica Nordeng |
| 6. Heidi Birkholz   | 17. Cindy Kittok      | DeVillez             |
| 7. Joan Clarkson    | 18. Michael Kittok    | 28. Gary Perry       |
| 8. Pat Cleary       | 19. Steven Larson     | 29. William Pflueger |
| 9. Pat Diamond      | 20. Emily Lewandowski | 30. Juliana Tillema  |
| 10. Steve Ellsworth | 21. Taoyuan Li        | 31. Steve Vincent    |
| 11. Isaac Fried     | 22. Amy Lloyd         | 32. Mathew Williams  |

### **Welcome Teams**

Welcome Team Members worked at the intersection of hospitality ministry and the multicultural ends of the church. Ten Welcome Team members participated in an eight-week series with Team Dynamics in fall 2020, and 16 Welcome Team members participated in a four-week series reviewing the tools presented by Team Dynamics and applying them to specific Welcome Team scenarios. In July 2021, Rick McCormick, Mary Pickard, and Barb Cederberg joined the Welcome Team Leadership Group, an opportunity for experienced Welcome Team leaders to engage with staff in deeper conversation about hospitality ministry and the possibilities for Welcome Team work to advance Unity Church's antiracism and multiculturalism ends.

### **Adult Religious Education and Programming**

Adult Religious Education opportunities at Unity Church continued to span a wide range, from one time offerings to 10-month commitments, inviting church members and friends to strengthen their spiritual practices and faith, deepen their relationship with one another, and to share the fruits of both in the larger world. As the pandemic continued, Unity's adult programming primarily took place online with offerings both familiar and, in some cases, astonishingly creative, adaptive, and responsive to emerging needs and the challenges of the

day. In addition, Unity's ministers recorded daily minister's messages shared as brief videos, especially focused on spiritual practices of support in the challenges of the pandemic.

In its fourth year, the Chalice Circles program engaged over 100 participants in small groups meeting monthly online to reflect on the month's worship theme and to experience fellowship through the spiritual practice of conversation. Led by a core of trained facilitators and supported by monthly packets focused on the theme, the Chalice Circles served as an important antidote to the pandemic's isolation with their deepening of relationship and reflection.

Wellspring Wednesday, Unity's multi-generational weekly evening of meals, chapel service and programming, was adapted for the pandemic, moving online and no longer serving weekly dinners. (Although there were several creative food-based offerings, including four cook-a-long programs live-streamed from Unity's kitchen.) The Wednesday evening online adult programming offered the largest variety and number of the church's adult RE opportunities, each week year-round presenting 1-3 programs attended by groups large and small. Engaging spiritual practices and inviting participants into the personal and shared work required for racial justice and healing, the Wednesday evening programs were attended by several thousand participants throughout the year. Because the programs were online, they reached our usual local participants and also a growing number of members and friends logging in from across the nation and sometimes internationally. And some programs, such as the Art in Bloom in Zoom, attended by 180 people, rooted an online experience in our beloved church building, still closed due to the pandemic, by presenting artwork from Unity's permanent collection with floral art arranged by members to complement or dialogue with the art.

A two-fold emphasis on spiritual practice and antiracism infused the programs with Unity's commitment to the interrelated nature of spiritual growth and our capacity for the work of anti-racism. Some of the spiritual practices specifically highlighted in programming included: prayer, lectio divina, writing, singing, and meditation, Qigong/tai ji, Kung fu, and sustainable living. Some programs focused explicitly on Unitarian Universalist heritage and history. The antiracism emphasis included programs on community safety and policing, environmental justice, indigenous justice, the All-Congregation Book Read (featuring Imani Parry's book, *Breathe*), a four-month discussion series "The Black Film Canon," and the bi-monthly Anti-racism Literacy Partners program, pairing participants up to discuss books, articles, films, podcasts and other resources. As one participant noted of the latter, "Unity's ALP program has transformed my understanding of racism's deep and insidious effects on our culture and my awareness of the responsibilities I bear.... [T]hanks to these experiences, I have new tools, new connections, and new hope that I can in a small way help bend the arc toward justice.

Several series spanned a longer arc of time including the 10-month UU Wellspring Program engaging participants in spiritual deepening rooted in our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition, the Thresholds Group, for participants living through significant personal change, and minister-led series on death and dying and on prayer. In addition, the Teaching Associates program entered its second year, with its first cohort of 12 congregants continuing to meet monthly for minister-led education and practice developing the group as "lay theologians-in-residence"

equipped to support the collective faith life of the congregation. As that first cohort enters its third year, a second cohort will begin the multiple year program in the fall of 2021. Deep appreciation goes out to the many Unity teams, including Community Outreach, Library/Bookstall, Beloved Community Staff Team, Art Team, and other members who help make this rich and diverse learning possible.

### **Community Outreach Ministry**

Unity's Community Outreach Ministry Teams (COMT) invite church members and friends into the rich and challenging work of education, advocacy and service related to particular issue areas and community needs. Each team partners with one or more organizations addressing the team's focus area and the teams, in turn, engage the congregation in joining action with spiritual reflection to support transformation in the heart and in the world. This year's teams and the work they do was significantly impacted by the pandemic.

However, the teams were not idle during the year, as they began work on a newly developed "renewal process", led by Rev. Karen Hering. The COMT renewal process was designed to assist the teams in preparing to complete the application for continued COMT standing in winter 2022; to be better able to articulate the spiritual foundations of their work; and to connect their work to joy, wonder, openhearted engagement and courageous action. The renewal process strives to open teams to a deeper understanding of the intersection of spiritual growth and social action—to experience, know it and name it for themselves.

- **Affordable Housing Ministry Team**

***Community Partners:** Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, St. Paul Interfaith Action Project Home, and Faith Builders Habitat for Humanity Collaboration.*

- **Evergreen Projects Ministry**

***Community Partners:** The Family Place, Hallie Q. Brown Food shelf, Jeremiah Transitional Housing Program, Obama School*

- **Gun Sense Ministry Team**

***Community Partner:** Protect Minnesota*

- **Mano a Mano Ministry Team ("Hand to Hand" in Spanish)**

***Community Partner:** Mano a Mano International Partners*

- **Obama School Ministry Team**

***Community Partner:** Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary School*

- **Partner Church Ministry Team**

- **Racial and Restorative Justice Ministry Team**

**Community Partners:** Amicus (Second Chance Coalition), Rondo Circle of Peace, Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance, and Minnesota Second Chance Coalition

- **Act for the Earth Ministry Team**

**Community Partners:** Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light

- **Indigenous Justice Ministry Team**

## **Denominational Affairs**

Unity Church continued to deepen its covenantal relationship with the larger Unitarian Universalist Association. Unity once again increased its financial support on the path to becoming an Honor Congregation.

The staff and members of Unity Church volunteer for the larger movement and association in a variety of ways. Don Brunnquell serves on the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. Lia Rivamonte serves on the board of MUUSJA (the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance). Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs continued her years of service as a UUA Transitions Consultant to congregations in ministerial search and as a Board member of the Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program. Unity's ministers serve as mentors to colleagues in preliminary fellowship and support the profession of ministry in a variety of ways.

In its journey toward new ministerial leadership, Unity Church engaged The Rev. Jen Crow, a UUA Ministerial Settlement Representative, to guide us through the process. The UUA's Transition Office has provided guidance to our Board of Trustees in selecting and hiring our Interim Minister, Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt, and is providing guidance to our Ministerial Search Team as we look for new senior ministerial leadership.



## **Facilities**

Submitted by Heidi Birkholz

### **Staffing**

We offer thanks to our facilities team members in the 2020-2021 church year: Teresa Connor, Heidi Birkholz, Olentda Bryant, and a new addition to the team, Delaney Daly.

Believe it or not, the reduced facilities staff kept their pace with multiple projects that would have proved difficult to manage while open to the congregation and the community. With the retirement of Bill Lowell, our previous in-house floor-care expert, we had to go to school. Teresa called on our vendor from Bertelson's Business Essentials for a day of floor stripping and waxing. Teresa, Olentda (our new in-house floor-care expert), and Heidi took in best practices from Larry to ensure we continue to have shiny and well-maintained floors. The best tip of all was the rubber slip ons recommended to keep us from slipping on the stripped floors while maintaining a machine that has a mind of its own.

The staff worked through a punch list over the course of the year while the building remained closed. While most of the wider church staff could work from home, the facilities team could not. The closure not only allowed us to address some perennial issues that hadn't been able to be resolved, it also allowed us to become stewards of this beloved space. We maintained a presence in the building, keeping its care and safety at the forefront of our minds.

### **Covid-19: Reopening the building**

As the pandemic wore on, a team within the staff met frequently to discuss reopening the building and what that would entail. There was much discussion regarding accessibility, equity and of course anxiety about the virus. When vaccines became available, the Minnesota Department of Health's guidelines changed and we were able to reopen the building to small groups beginning June 1, 2021. As the first groups arrived at the Holly entrance, a gaggle of staff hovered around the reception desk, hungry for the first congregants to return to the church. As we were still maintaining a lighter workforce, we kept the building hours to weekdays for the month of June.

### **Facilities maintenance and upgrades**

With the help of Minnesota Waste Wise, an office within the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, we were able to obtain a grant to encourage recycling. The grant allowed us to upgrade our trash, compost and recycling site. With the addition of a compost dumpster, our waste collection site was now quite full with a total of three dumpsters. Snow became a complicating factor since the site had no roof. Moving the dumpsters to manage snow removal was a game of Tetris that we no longer wished to play. The grant allowed us to work with a carpenter to design a roof and enclosure that addressed our issues. We now have an attractive corrugated roof and beautiful cedar doors that can be locked to keep out unwanted comingling of waste.

Additional dollars from the Minnesota Waste Wise grant allowed us to purchase three trolleys for garbage, recycling, and compost. A permanent one is set up between Parish Hall and the

kitchen for ease of disposing of food waste after Wellspring Wednesday dinner (when we can finally feast together) while the other two are mobile for use on other floors.

In addition to the many maintenance projects, we put capital pledge dollars to work on acquisitions and repairs.

- A serious roofing issue was addressed at the parking lot entrance. Stone masons were hard at work to reconstitute original 1905 stone that had worn down over the years.
- We replaced the original roof ridge at the peak of the sanctuary, which was the cause of some blooming mold on the sanctuary ceiling. A second vendor was engaged to very carefully assemble scaffolding to reach the forty foot heights to remove this mold.
- One last roofing project for this church year included a leak discovered in the lobby. We engaged the original vendor for the 2012 lobby addition to address the problem.
- To accommodate the Christmas Eve services via livestream (and other night-time events in the sanctuary), we added more lighting to the chancel area of the church.
- In light of becoming a more equitable community, we installed two more spaces for accessible seating within the body of the pews instead of all the way in the front or back.

### **Gardening**

Unfortunately, Unity Gardeners said goodbye to Ethel Griggs right as fall was turning to winter last year. Stunned by the loss, the gardeners picked up Ethel's torch and worked diligently to provide beautiful landscaping. A special thank you to Sharon Merritt, Joan Laux, Hal Freshley, Jo Lucas, Mary Kerres and Stephanie Steel as they carried on Ethel's philosophy from Marcel Proust, "Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy: They are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom." These words will be commemorated in Ethel's memory on a plaque in the garden at the Portland Avenue entrance.

### **Building Tenants**

One Voice Mixed Chorus maintained their offices during the building closure, with an occasional visit in-person. All other renters suspended their in person operations, including Above Every Name as they were unable to hold in-person services in the Sanctuary based on our protocols.

### **Emergency Preparedness Team**

Although the building was closed for the entire year, we did open for a few exceptions, including memorials limited to no more than forty attendees, a blood drive, and the 2020 election. Based on reporting that polling places could expect some disrupters, Barbara, Heidi, and Teresa met with the Emergency Preparedness Team to discuss the plan for maintaining our commitment to the community as a polling place. We kept a tight building by forcing all entry into the building through the Portland Avenue entrance and exiting through the Ames Chapel entrance. We engaged our church partners at River of Life and House of Hope to discuss their plans and felt we had a good plan in place. Thankfully, no plan was needed. In the words of Richard Birger, Emergency Preparedness team member, "Plan for the worse and hope for the best." That day our hopes were realized.

## Literary Ministries

With the building closed in 2020-2021, the Library and Bookstall Team, led by Barb Foss, Janice Gestner, and Shelley Butler organized the 2021 Unity Book Read, creatively kept books moving through the congregation by opening an online bookstall, and continuing to circulate titles from the Anderson Library. With the help of Madeline Summers, the team held the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Café Unity: Poetry and Music Salon, our second on Zoom. In addition, the team sponsored well attended Wellspring Wednesday programs with member and nonmember authors including online readings of four new releases: *Shelter* with author Margaret Haase and artist Sharon DeMark; *The Seedkeeper*, by Diane Wilson; *American Freethinker*, by Kirsten Fischer; and *Uh-Oh! We've Got Birds!* By Peter Ross.

The *Cairns* staff produced a 12<sup>th</sup> volume of *Cairns: The Unity Church Journal of the Arts*, Vol. 12. (Reredos Press, 2020)

Finally, after careful consideration and under the advice of our ministers, the committee of researchers and writers working on a book about Unity Church history from 1970-2021, put the project on hold, hoping to gain new perspective after the interim year and the first year or two of a new settled ministry. All work to-date was preserved for those who pick up this project down the road.

In addition, literary minister Karen Hering's monthly Open Page writing sessions, now offered online, expanded their participation to a larger and national and sometimes international audience.

## **Music Ministry**

Submitted by Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries

For the music ministry, this has been a year of figuring out how to make music during a pandemic. It has required all of the staff to learn the skills necessary to produce weekly livestreams and recordings. As the vaccine has gradually become available, it has also meant figuring out how to make music ministry programs accessible through a combination of in-person, virtual, and hybrid offerings. Music also plays a central part in the life of the church, from the celebrations surrounding the retirement of our ministers to the extraordinarily high number of memorial services that we have carried out this year. Balancing the spiritual and pastoral goals of the music ministry with health and safety concerns has been especially difficult during a time of ministerial transition at Unity Church.

This year was largely carried out online, with the musicians of Unity Church producing music messages and virtual choir videos for the congregation and for use in worship. Music has served an important role in providing an anchor point for many in our congregation to stay connected while physically apart. For many in the congregation, the prospect of in-person music making, congregational singing, and the experience of listening to a choir or organ in person has also been something to look forward to, an incentive to do everything we can to gradually come together in person again. It has been especially heartening to see the enthusiastic return of choristers to choir as we created opportunities to return to in-person singing starting in summer 2021.

Some musical highlights of the past year include the following:

- Successfully producing online versions of beloved Unity Church musical traditions such as the Christmas Carol Shout, the Christmas Candlelight Choir, the Tolling of Bells Service, the Children's Musical, and Foote Music Sunday.
- Creating new ways for people to engage with the music ministry online such as the Zoom hymn singing and discussion group, hybrid in-person and online choir rehearsals, and Wellspring Wednesday musical offering opportunities for the musicians in the congregation.
- The creation of a youth music ministry and choir led by Unity organist Laura Potratz.
- Several world premieres of music commissioned or co-commissioned by Unity Church, including "We Give Thanks" by Elizabeth Alexander, a piece that is likely to become a beloved standard of Unitarian Universalist music across congregations.
- A successful collaboration with Unity's Artist-in-Residence Marcus Young that culminated in an event that took place on Arthur Foote Music Sunday.

- Musical collaborations with beloved Unity Church musical partners (such as Peter Mayer, Laura Sewell, and Jeffrey Van) as well as with musical guests new to our community such as Sprig of That, Clara Osowski, and Jared Miller.
- Naming Ruth Palmer as Director of Music Ministries Emerita during this year's Foote Sunday, celebrating her legacy, and formalizing her continuing relationship with this community to which she has given so much.

I am grateful to be part of a community that so values music. While the COVID-19 pandemic has affected every aspect of our lives, it has also given us the space to find new ways to make music together and a renewed appreciation for what our presence brings to worship and to our lives.

## Ministry with Children and Youth

Submitted by K.P. Hong, Minister of Faith Formation

### Reflections and Highlights

We heard these words spoken in livestreamed worship services and minister's messages, that "the ministry we share has never been about a building" and "our building may be closed, but the church remains open." What then is the church? Where is the site of ministry? What defines and constitutes a faith community? Extending Ralph Waldo Emerson's adage that "an action is the perfection and publication of thought" (from *Nature*), what if the constitutive core of a faith community is spiritual practice? Spiritual practice — like medical practice or legal practice or music practice — that is not momentary, arbitrary, privatized activity but practices that ground our becoming with intentionality, discipline, and purpose, in continuity with the narrative and content of our larger faith tradition and imbued with its wisdom. Practice that embodies the formative, life-orienting, identity-shaping beliefs, habits, skills, and dispositions that constitute the life of faith. Practice that curves our unfolding around the substance of our repetitions, like spacetime curving towards a sacred singularity.

Over the course of the pandemic year, from prerecorded videos for pre-kindergarten children to online learning for elementary, middle, and high school programs, religious education curved toward such spiritual practice. Children and families were invited to livestream worship together at home, then with parents assisting, children Zoomed into their online classes with dedicated teachers who found a way to hold children weekly in sacred community. Teachers who called children into practices of lighting a chalice and sharing joys and sorrows. Teachers who named our children's reality in a way that called them forth into greater presence and confidence. Teachers, strained and challenged on so many fronts, who faithfully served as trustworthy custodians of all that appeared. Gratitude abounds for our teachers and children who gathered for spiritual practice week after week throughout the year.

The technology that allowed for vital connection and mediation of that experience also prompted challenging questions and theological reflection about faith formation online. Technology's role in facilitating worship and faith formation is certainly not new, but now extraordinarily so with *technologies of mediated presence*. As with public schools, we learned that online learning diminished in value with our younger children. But even for older children and families, moving religious education online raised generative questions:

- What does it mean to "participate" in worship *in absentia*? What does such participation amount to? Is it a difference in degree or kind? Does the experience of participation work best when technology does not itself carry the entire burden of integrating hearers into the congregation? That the medium serves best when internal to the life of the congregation, with those who already have that embodied experience?
- How do we counter the reduction of *communication* to *information*, and the subsequent sense of a diminished personhood? Especially when personhood is racialized, instrumentalized, objectified, surveilled, and faces blurred by countless relational biases and abstractions?

- How does Zoom mediate that vital sense of being in the presence of one another—that felt sense of *personal availability* and its attendant sense of *exposure* and *vulnerability* to the other’s *touch*—when we can “mute” and “stop video” at any time? This personal availability vividly experienced in the ordinary *cross-talk* of dialogue and the conversational give-and-take of intersubjectivity? With Zoom, relationships start in different ways and the nature of human interaction changes.
- Even with the attenuated presence mediated by technology, how does such mediation fit or not fit within the wider formative practices by which the church gathers, communicates, and worships?

These are formative matters for ongoing discernment, not wistful lament, that draw critical attention to the relational practices at the heart of religious education. If we can bear the imprint of this moment, the heartache, burden, and glimmers of change around us may expand our capacity to attend more closely to the work of faith formation. This considerable undertaking is only made possible through the creative collaboration between RE staff and the dedicated volunteers who are reimagining faith formation for the world today.

## **Ministerial Intern**

Unity Church values its role as a teaching congregation to future ministers. During the Eller-Isaacs' tenure, Unity has had one, and sometimes two, ministerial interns each year since 2002. Each intern has been supervised by Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs, and each has had a Ministerial Intern Support Team (MIST) made up of members of the church.

As we continued in the transition of our Senior Co-Ministers in the 2020-21 church year, we made the decision to not bring in a ministerial intern for this year.



## **Pastoral Care**

Submitted by Janne Eller-Isaacs, Senior Co-Minister

The pastoral care program seeks to serve people in times of need, crisis, transition, grief, and loss. Overseen by Janne Eller-Isaacs and remarkable volunteer leadership, they are joined by the other ministers to provide care and accompaniment in times of need and transitions. Janne and the pastoral leadership team lead a team of impressive and well-trained pastoral care associates who provide a caring ministry of presence for our members and friends.

The heart of the program is best expressed in the Embracing Meditation each Sunday. This essential part of our worship always contains the joys and sorrows of people who are willing to share their tender news with the larger congregation. The Embracing Meditation is read at the weekly staff meeting, the adult service, children's chapel and with the preschoolers in Spirit Play. Those named each Sunday and listed are placed on the pastoral care table in the Parish Hall during coffee hour. There the entire congregation is invited to send cards of care, concern and congratulations to those listed each week. The congregation has continued to send cards to people lifted up in the Embracing Meditation even during the pandemic, but more informally and based upon established relationships. We look forward to the ministry of cards continuing once the congregation is, in part, meeting in person. When we worshipped in person, many of the cards were lovingly made by Betsy Moore. Her cards have crossed oceans and miles and into homes of people who have appreciated their presence. Thank you to Betsy!

There is a large network of support and care available to members and friends in need or in times of transition. The formal structure of the program seeks to ensure quality support and care for all of Unity's community. It begins, of course, with the lay ministry provided by the pastoral care team itself but their work is supported by a group of largely invisible people who add to their visible care by helping out when asked to provide companionship, rides or meals.

The Congregational Connectors program was created as a response to COVID-19. Some connectors have continued with their calls and connections. Other connections wound down on both sides. But some have continued if not flourished. This is now a dimension of the pastoral care program. To connect, to check in is a basic element in community building and it continues in many forms, even if not formally monitored by the church.

The U-Knitarians knit comfort shawls throughout the year. The shawls are then finished by shawl coordinator, Carol Miller and some others in training, Carol delivers them to the pastoral care meeting where they are blessed by all the members there. Our comfort shawls have been delivered to many over the past year and the practice of sharing our shawls with non-Unity friends and family continued to be much appreciated.

The Pastoral Care Team meets monthly throughout the year to receive training, support one another, share ideas and to ensure that everyone in need is served adequately. Monthly meetings often focus on a particular theme or pastoral issue. This past year the team participated in informational meetings or trainings at most of our online meetings. The team

has continued its work virtually or through cards, phone calls or walks when the weather permitted physically distanced interactions. The team is always seeking to grow and deepen their skills and abilities.

We always work to hone our listening skills because they are at the heart of the ministry of presence we seek to provide everyone with whom we come in contact. Members of the pastoral care associates or leadership team are entrusted with people's sacred stories. They are exposed to the trials, tribulations and triumphs experienced by members and friends of this community. They show up, they listen, they walk along side. They know what it means to be privileged to be called to accompany someone as they walk through their lives. This sacred relationship is held in trust and honored in our meetings.

This year we invited the congregation, once again, to volunteer in our Caring Circle. The Caring Circle seeks to provide one-time services that include things like rides, meal preparation and delivery, childcare, respite care, shopping and errand running and house projects. The Caring Circle is designed to allow for more practical kinds of support to be offered to members and friends who need things that are offered generously from their fellow congregants. One hundred forty people signed up. This part of the pastoral care program is often invisible and yet it serves many of our folks who are in need of practical support. The services offered by the Caring Circle form an essential piece when we create a team approach for the numerous services that are needed for a particular individual. Laura Park made the opportunity for getting involved in the Caring Circle part of the invitation into membership into the church community this past year. Though complicated because of the pandemic, it will continue to grow. Thank you, Laura!

The program continues to grow in scope and depth. The gender balance of the caregivers was achieved, with men playing a vital role in the program. We have reinstituted the evening program to accommodate the needs of people who work full time but want to participate actively in the pastoral program.

Janne Eller-Isaacs and Cynthia Orange continue to co-facilitate a once a month support group for caregivers that has provided a place of mutual support and encouragement for the caretakers who attend. This group continues to grow in numbers and commitment. It continues to include people from other congregations who are in need of the support it offers, when this offering is not available in the congregations they attend. As a response to the burden placed on caregivers during the pandemic, the group has met twice a month since March and will continue to do so as long as the group finds it useful. With COVID-19, many caregivers lost access to other supportive resources or respite care, so the group's importance has increased.

The grief group continues as a monthly drop in resource. There is a core of regular attenders who seek to welcome all newcomers so that they feel welcomed and included. Co-facilitated by Janne Eller-Isaacs and Linda Kjerland, an environment of mutual support and understanding is available to anyone walking the journey of grief.

Barbara Hubbard and Janne Eller-Isaacs co-convene a monthly support group for people who have loved ones living with mental health challenges. Since the pandemic hit, the group has been meeting virtually and has been able to include people from beyond our community, a service we are pleased to be able to provide. This group provides a vital sounding board, a place to ask for advice and a place to receive much needed support and acknowledgement of shared struggles that the group provides.

The Memorial Service team is not formerly under the umbrella of the pastoral care program, but its ministry and intentional care would inevitably place it in this part of the annual report. . Coordinated by Barbara Ford, they seek to provide a calm and lovely reception after memorial services. Barbara recruits bakers who bake cookies that are delivered to the church. Another group then sets up a lovely reception. Though designed for Unity members they have been especially generous in also getting cookies and bars for services for non-Unity members and friends. Their services came to an end when the pandemic hit, but the staff continues to provide a safe harbor for memorial services when we can. We have complete faith that their dedicated service will continue once memorial services are open to all.

The accomplishment of this past year was the formation of the Pastoral Care Leadership Team which includes: Cynthia Orange, Linda Kjerland, Patt Kelly, Barbara Ford and Carol Miller. This group will work creatively with the next minister who coordinates pastoral care. They could not be more fortunate to have such a wise counsel!

The year of 2020-21 was full of challenges, sickness and losses. It was also a lesson in our faithful resilience. The pastoral care program sought to meet those challenges, even if it meant a comfort shawl delivered in a hallway outside an apartment with no human contact or intimate sharing over Zoom or by phone. This year we lost one of our own, the stalwart Tom Merritt, who always brought great curiosity and presence to our meetings. A true gentleman, he will be missed by all who were served by him and served alongside him.

In closing, for those of you still reading, it has been a profound privilege to hold so many hands, to hear so many deep truths shared and revealed, to live life along-side so many of you. You have blessed us with the depth of your sharing and your willingness to enter into the brave space of vulnerability and trust with us. The “us” I refer to is the professional ministers, but folks like the unflappable and irreverent Cynthia Orange, the deep and always open Linda Kjerland and the “I will humbly walk with you,” Barbara Hubbard. What a blessing!

Upon the retirement of Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs, Associate Minister Rev. Karen Hering assumed responsibility for Unity’s pastoral care program. As part of our interim year tasks, we are restructuring and renewing the pastoral care program. Drawing from Unity’s long history of caring support, today we strive to overcome the isolation of the pandemic and to heal the brokenness of relationship that systemic racism depends on. We nurture the loving and healthy interdependence at the core of true justice and right relationship.

## Sanctuary Congregation

In December of 2017, the Board of Trustees made a decision to become an official Sanctuary Congregation. We converted space on the lower level of the church to accommodate this commitment.

During the pandemic the Unity staff and the Sanctuary Team have welcomed three different groups or individuals into the safe harbor of our sanctuary space. Our first guest needed a place to safely quarantine after being released from detention. She tested free of Covid-19 after two weeks and successfully moved to Minneapolis where she is supported by the Sanctuary Team at First Universalist.

Then, through the St Paul Sanctuary Coalition, we were asked to house a family in danger of deportation who had been living at the Powderhorn Encampment. They stayed at the church for some weeks. Working through the coalition, we were able to secure Section 8 housing for them and amazingly (through your generosity) furnish a two bedroom apartment. They moved out with the help of a Unity staff and volunteer crew.

Once again, a request from the St Paul Sanctuary Coalition came about a Ghanaian family facing homelessness and deportation. Again, we said yes. Our new guests are an extended family from Ghana. Sherifatu and Gawusu are a married couple. They have two sons, a seven year old who is attending school in Shoreview, and a three year old. The family welcomed a new baby girl in June. In addition, their friend Sani is extended family. Given that the building was closed, we created extra sanctuary space for them on our lower level, and when the church opened for religious education in September of 2021, they moved to our duplex.

They are wonderful people and have great hopes for their future here in the United States. Our sanctuary team and staff have been supporting their journey as they learn English, navigate the health care systems, and work with immigration attorneys in obtaining documentation that will allow them to find employment and a permanent home in the community. We have been providing rides to grocery stores, doctor appointments, and to St Paul league soccer games.

This commitment is funded by individual contributions, by other sanctuary support congregations, and through occasional Unity Sunday offerings.

A hearty thank you to our sanctuary team members, Scott Charlesworth, Libby Arnosti, Andrea Bond, Pat Haff, Molly Flattum, and Susie Macpherson. Teresa Connor and Barbara Hubbard from the staff have been integral to these efforts, as well. If you have interest in joining the Unity Sanctuary Team, let us know!

## Unity Consulting

Unity Consulting is a program of Unity Church whose mission is to liberate and empower the leadership of progressive religious congregations and institutions to awaken compassion, transform lives, and bless the world. We help congregations understand their purpose, the difference they make in people's lives, and then we help them organize to deliver on that promise. Our primary tool is Policy Governance® as we've learned to adapt it for congregations.

Five percent of Unity Consulting's fees go to support Unity Church's operating budget. Unity Consulting also provides some pro-bono services to the denomination through governance consulting with denominational and congregational leaders.

Highlights from this past year's work include:

- Provided virtual consulting services, retreats and hourly coaching, to 14 congregations over the course of the year (July 2020-June 2021), the same as last year, despite the pandemic. Three of the congregations were new clients.
- Continued Spirit Map development work. Spirit Map, a proprietary product of Unity Church and Unity Consulting, is a tool that helps individuals, groups and institutions explore their spiritual landscape, focus their spiritual practice, grow their spiritual presence, and deepen their spiritual well-being.
  - Considered what might better launch Spirit Map, with the guidance of a Marketing Team. Identified the Unitarian Universalist Association as the most likely partner to advance the work and presented possibilities to leadership there.
  - 18 individuals completed the Spirit Map inventory July 2020 through June 2021.
  - One congregation did their Spirit Map inventory again.
  - Worked to identify and name spiritual "types," people who had areas within Spirit Map that were more and less true of them, and more and less important. This work continues.
- Continued sales of *The Nested Bowls: The Promise and Practice of Good Governance*, the first in an anticipated series of books on Unity Consulting practices. InSpirit, the UUA Bookstore, carries the book and it is also available on Amazon. Sales have been small but steady.
- \$2,304.00 went to the Unity Church operating budget from Unity Consulting and Spirit Map fees and book royalties July 2020 through June 2021.

## **Worship Life**

Submitted by Rob Eller-Isaacs, Senior Co-Minister

Over the summer before we entered back into the formal church year in the fall, the Senior Ministers invited the Rev. Ruth Mackenzie and Lee Carey to advise them on the production values and challenges of online worship. They recommended that the service be shortened, that we work to project intimacy more than ritual authority and that a single person be designated as producer/director. Their suggestions were taken seriously and largely implemented. We deeply appreciate their good counsel. We also want to acknowledge the dedication of Director of Communications, Martha Tilton, who accepted the invitation to become the producer/director of Unity's online worship. Her steady, strategic, non-anxious presence at the helm was essential to holding the congregation together.

Many congregants expressed appreciation for the different and, for some, refreshing dynamics of on-line worship. It definitely makes the services more accessible for those unable to attend in person and has special appeal to the most introverted among us. For some the experience reduces anxiety and feels safer not only in terms of avoiding of COVID-19 infection but also by releasing them from the obligations of social interaction.

As our technical capacities increased, we were able to make use of videos and technology to broadcast occasional musical selections and to bring in multiple voices. By mid-autumn it was clear that when the church is able to open again for in-person services we would plan to continue our expanded online presence. Though a welcome, creative opportunity, that intention presents staffing and funding challenges. We are confident the congregation and staff will be able to meet the challenges ahead as we seek to incorporate the many lessons of this pandemic year.

Each year, and especially as we reflect on this particular year, our worship associates deserve special commendation. Thanks to departing coordinator, Erika Sanders, whose steady, inspiring leadership has significantly enriched the team. Richard Lau now assumes the lead role while Rebecca Flood has agreed to become his partner and successor in coordinating the program. We also want to thank departing associates, those who are continuing and those who joined the Team over the summer.

### **Terms ended spring 2021**

Lia Rivamonte, Bailey Webster, Shelley Butler, Benjamin Pettee, Erika Sanders, Kara Younkin Viswanathan, Jake Rueter

### **Continuing into 2021-2022**

Rich Lau, Katrina Nichols, Rebecca Flood

### **Joined in Summer 2021**

Brian Newhouse, Jennifer Welsh, Jess Goff, Merrill Aldrich, Nancy Dilts, Nate Solas, Ray Wiedmeyer

In closing, it is important to acknowledge that there has been a wide range of opinion about and participation in, online worship. Though the church has done its best to offer online worship that provides nourishment and inspiration, worship is essentially an embodied experience. Your worship leaders share a sense of impoverishment at the lack of the reciprocal relationship between pulpit and pew. We miss singing together. We miss our choirs. And we miss the shared silence that restores our souls for just and joyful living. We look forward to being together again as we plan how best to incorporate all that we've learned during the pandemic in order to strengthen and expand our ministry.

## **Finance and Resource Development**

This annual report to the congregation includes highlights and accomplishments of the 2020-2021 church year. Reports in the area of finances/resource development cross two fiscal years because the church's fiscal year is a calendar year. We are including a written overview of the December 31, 2020, financials, the statements from the review of the December 31, 2020, financial position as prepared by Schechter, Dokken, Kanter CPAs and an update of 2021 finances.

### **Overview of 12/31/20 Financial Statements**

The Board of Trustees engaged Schechter, Dokken, Kanter CPAs to review the church's financial position as of December 31, 2020, with comparisons to the prior year. The field work was done remotely in March and April of 2021, and the report was presented to our trustees at their May 2021 board meeting. There were no findings and a "clean" management letter.

In addition to the SDK financial statements that are included in this annual report, the SDK report includes important notes about the nature of our business, significant accounting policies, liquidity, pledges, investment income, property and equipment, funds held by others, long term debt, endowment funds and more. Full copies of the December 31, 2020, SDK audit report are available (electronically or in hard copy) upon request.

There were a number of factors that impacted our financial landscape in 2020. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March of 2020, we closed the building, moved worship and programs online, and applied for a PPP loan, not knowing what to expect. We received a \$224k PPP loan in April, allowing us to continue to pay all staff (including those facilities staff members who were not working) at budgeted levels into the summer. We terminated employment for our part time facilities staff members in July and continued to pay other staff at budgeted levels through the end of the year.

Building and program income stopped abruptly with the pandemic, and our investments lost significant value in the first quarter, regaining value later in the year. We were amazed and grateful that you, our congregation continued to support the church through your pledges (exceeding our pledge goal), Sunday offerings, unrestricted gifts, and donations to the Minister's Discretionary Fund. We received many notes of thanks for the church's presence in your lives through a very challenging year.

At the end of 2020, we received a second distribution from the estate of Helener Currier in the amount of \$420k. With approval from the Board of Trustees, \$140k was added to the Board Designated Currier Fund for Racial Justice, \$140k was allocated to our Multicultural Initiative Program, and \$140k to pay down loan principal on our long term debt.

As a result of your generous giving and the PPP loan, we ended 2020 fiscal year's operating budget at 99% of budgeted income and 95% of budgeted expense.



### **Legacy Giving**

The Heritage Society is made up of members and friends who have remembered Unity Church in their estate plans. These legacy gifts ensure the future of the church. We welcomed four additional people into Unity Church's Heritage Society, joining over 200 others who have committed to supporting the church into the future. Even though we weren't able to hold our annual in person Heritage Society event in May of 2021, we held a virtual event for Heritage Society members, complete with charcuterie boards (prepared by Martha Tilton and Madeline Summers and picked up or delivered), and a marvelous program "The Permanent and the Transient at Unity Church" with two of Unity's former intern panelists Rev Jim Foti and Rev Jennifer Nordstrom and moderator Don Brunnquell.

### **Pledge Drive**

Our annual canvass' theme in the fall of 2020 was "Brave Harbor." Lee Carey led the effort with grace and competence. Our goal for the 2021 Operating budget was \$1,350,000. Here are a few of the words that were written.

"Just as a ship seeks harbor for rest and refueling, so too are we drawn to our beloved church for refuge, repair, and new resolve. Unity Church, both in person and online, is a trusted space where we travelers seek calm from the commotion of our lives. It's where we allow ourselves to drop anchor, turn down the volume of the outside world, share our burdens, and find our balance. It is a place where we chart our course together, side by side. It is our brave harbor."

### **Unity Tomorrow Capital Campaign / Long Term Debt**

We have been enjoying our newly renovated building since the Unity Tomorrow capital project was completed in 2012. Through the generous contributions of Unity Church members and friends, we were able to integrate and modernize our infrastructure, upgrade the kitchen, add restrooms and create a beautiful and welcoming main entrance.

In November of 2011, the congregation voted to move forward with the Unity Tomorrow capital project with the goal of attaining \$8 million in pledges. At a special meeting of the congregation in April, 2012 a resolution was passed that the "debt in the project be limited to the cost of short-term construction financing and long term financing such that scheduled repayments shall not exceed more than 10% of the annual operating budget of the church, and authorize such encumbrances as are necessary to secure such financing and such liens as are customary industry practice."

The Unity Tomorrow project cost \$8 million. Total Unity Tomorrow commitments from 2011 – 2016 were \$6,874,342 and by the end of December 2016 we had collected \$6,653,734 or 96.8% of the amount promised.

After paying principal and interest on the short term construction loan for 4.5 years, we converted the remaining \$1,950,000 to a long term note on January 1, 2017. This is a five year

note with Western Bank based on a 20 year amortization schedule. Interest is fixed at 4.0% and debt service payments are \$142,512 per year from 2017-2021. Our capital pledges are adequate to cover this debt service without impact to programming.

In addition to debt service payments, we are allowed to pre-pay up to 20% of the principal balance each year without penalty. Since 2017, we have made additional loan principal payments of \$690,937 from individual gifts for this purpose and through the application of unrestricted bequests. Debt service payments and principal gifts will leave us with a loan balance of \$850,000 to renegotiate in late 2021, at the close of the first five years.

### **2021 Financial Update**

The congregation approved the 2021 operating and capital budgets at the November 21, 2020, annual meeting with the assumption that we would be able to reopen and return to worship and programming in July. As the pandemic lingered on with the Delta variant, we were able to open the building to small groups in June and to in person worship in September, but safety limitations have not allowed us to reopen fully. We made decisions to cancel retreats, concerts, and to not allow food and beverages. Our staff and volunteers have continued to find creative ways to provide access to worship and many programs through online options.

Our income projections for 2021 are on track for pledges, investment income and gifts. We're under budget on program and building income. Salary and benefit expenses are on track, while program expenses are under budget and administration/ facilities expenses are running over budget.

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*Financial statements of:*

**UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL**

*Years ended*

December 31, 2020 and 2019

**SDK**  
Schechter Dokken Kanter  
CPAs ■ Business Advisors

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UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL (See Independent Accountant's Review Report)		STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION DECEMBER 31	
	2020 (Reviewed)	2019 (Audited)	
<b>Assets:</b>			
Current assets:			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 920,284	\$ 542,136	
Pledges receivable current portion of:			
Operating pledges, net	1,119,408	1,080,981	
Capital pledges, net	182,909	178,996	
Other receivables	12,293	53,749	
Prepaid expenses	12,540	15,574	
Total current assets	2,247,434	1,866,436	
Property and equipment:			
Land and land improvements	195,011	195,011	
Buildings and building improvements	11,542,391	11,583,080	
Equipment	1,191,354	1,137,542	
Artwork	23,300	23,300	
Less accumulated depreciation	13,052,046	12,936,939	
	4,915,680	4,663,461	
Other assets:	8,195,366	8,275,478	
Operating pledges, long-term	666,498	518,677	
Capital pledges, long-term	128,766	111,816	
Investments	1,921,138	1,656,548	
St. Paul Foundation holdings	141,821	137,856	
Beneficial interest in perpetual trust	522,158	469,514	
Total assets	3,380,381	2,894,411	
	\$ 13,763,181	\$ 13,036,325	
<b>Liabilities and net assets:</b>			
Current liabilities:			
Accounts payable	\$ 28,739	\$ 27,624	
Accrued expenses	73,326	88,411	
Security deposits	1,875	1,875	
Current portion of long-term debt	1,056,096	91,732	
Total current liabilities	1,160,036	209,642	
Long-term debt, net of current portion	-	1,199,366	
Loan from donor restricted fund	-	127,902	
Total liabilities	1,160,036	1,336,910	
Net assets:			
Without donor restrictions:			
Unlocks granted	6,890,021	6,516,199	
Board-designated for racial justice	303,671	225,000	
Total without donor restrictions	7,193,692	6,741,100	
With donor restrictions	5,409,453	4,758,216	
Total net assets	12,603,145	11,499,415	
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 13,763,181	\$ 13,036,325	

# **UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL**

(See Independent Accountant's Review Report)

## **STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS** **YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31**

	2020 (Reviewed)			2019 (Audited)		
	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total
<b>Support and revenue:</b>						
Pledges and gifts	\$ 599,553	\$ 1,989,625	\$ 2,589,178	\$ 907,535	\$ 1,713,568	\$ 2,621,103
Sunday collections	37,627	126,441	164,068	34,407	135,551	170,358
Program fees	41,111		41,111	66,808		66,808
Investment income (loss)	74,954	217,471	292,425	35,411	260,354	295,765
Change in value of:						
St. Paul Foundation holdings	-	3,965	3,965		12,116	12,116
Diether perpetual trust	-	52,645	52,645	-	39,799	39,799
Rental income	38,553	-	38,553	55,857	-	55,857
Unity consulting income	38,530	-	38,530	59,044	-	59,044
Miscellaneous income	12,667	-	12,667	20,898	-	20,898
Paycheck Protection Program forgiveness	224,000	-	224,000	-	-	-
Net assets released from restrictions	1,798,910	(1,738,910)	-	1,920,877	(1,920,877)	-
<b>Total revenues and support</b>	<b>2,805,915</b>	<b>651,237</b>	<b>3,457,152</b>	<b>3,101,237</b>	<b>240,511</b>	<b>3,341,748</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>						
Program	1,945,359		1,945,359	2,030,378		2,030,378
Management and general	338,262		338,262	352,264		352,264
Fundraising	69,801		69,801	113,170		113,170
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>2,353,422</b>		<b>2,353,422</b>	<b>2,495,812</b>		<b>2,495,812</b>
Change in net assets	452,493	651,237	1,103,730	605,425	240,511	845,936
Net assets, beginning	6,741,199	4,758,216	11,499,415	6,135,774	4,517,705	10,653,479
Net assets, ending	\$ 7,193,692	\$ 5,409,453	\$ 12,603,145	\$ 6,741,199	\$ 4,758,216	\$ 11,499,415

**UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL**

(See Independent Accountant's Review Report)

**STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS****YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31**

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
	<b>(Reviewed)</b>	<b>(Audited)</b>
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ 1,103,730	\$ 845,936
Adjustments to reconcile changes in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	253,120	262,422
Accretion of financing costs	2,895	1,568
Donated Investments	(68,598)	(45,906)
Loss on sale of property	-	35,117
Donor contributions restricted into perpetuity	2,806	44,984
Unrealized gain on investments	(109,153)	(205,822)
Change in value of:		
St. Paul Foundation holdings	(3,965)	(12,116)
Beneficial interest in perpetual trust	(52,644)	(39,799)
Decrease (increase) in assets:		
Pledges receivable	(212,111)	129,183
Other receivables	41,456	(31,098)
Prepaid expenses	3,034	(4,995)
Increase (decrease) in liabilities:		
Accounts payable	1,115	4,551
Accrued expenses	(15,085)	(7,307)
Security Deposits	-	1,875
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>946,600</u>	<u>972,593</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchase of:		
Property and equipment	(113,008)	(25,984)
Investments	(151,704)	(503,626)
Proceeds from:		
Investments	64,865	65,646
Sale of property	-	6,545
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(199,847)</u>	<u>(457,419)</u>

**UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL**

(See Independent Accountant's Review Report)

**STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS****YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31**

	<u>2020</u> (Reviewed)	<u>2019</u> (Audited)
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Payments on:		
Loan from donor restricted fund, contribution into perpetuity	\$ (127,902)	\$ (24,628)
Long term debt	(237,897)	(419,330)
Capital lease obligation	-	(10,576)
Donor contributions restricted into perpetuity	(2,806)	(44,984)
Net cash used in financing activities	<u>(368,605)</u>	<u>(499,518)</u>
Net increase in cash	378,148	15,656
Cash and cash equivalents, Beginning	<u>542,136</u>	<u>526,480</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, Ending	<u>\$ 920,284</u>	<u>\$ 542,136</u>
Supplemental disclosure of cash flow information:		
Cash paid for interest	<u>\$ 53,775</u>	<u>\$ 69,451</u>

# UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL

(See Independent Accountant's Review Report)

## STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31

	2020 (Reviewed)				2019 (Audited)			
	Management and		Fundraising	Total	Management and		Fund-raising	Total
	Program	general			Program	general		
Salaries	\$ 721,455	\$ 205,764	\$ 51,891	\$ 979,910	\$ 654,838	\$ 193,284	\$ 83,165	\$ 911,287
Payroll taxes and benefits	178,946	41,764	9,277	229,987	154,236	42,162	12,283	208,681
<b>Total salaries and related expenses</b>	<b>900,401</b>	<b>247,528</b>	<b>60,968</b>	<b>1,208,897</b>	<b>809,074</b>	<b>235,446</b>	<b>75,448</b>	<b>1,119,968</b>
Program expenses								
Internet	367,688	6,365	1,874	375,927	518,635	4,220	30,143	553,038
Other professional fees	51,386	1,965	424	53,775	66,231	2,534	546	69,331
Utilities	106,367	17,850	538	124,755	95,436	17,141	450	113,028
Entity consulting fees	51,748	1,721	414	53,883	66,256	2,360	508	69,124
Dues and subscriptions	35,348	-	-	35,348	47,029	-	-	47,929
Professional development	62,998	-	-	62,998	61,174	45	22	61,747
Repairs and maintenance	13,172	3,838	821	17,831	7,430	4,482	1,657	13,569
Supplies	37,567	1,444	283	39,294	36,038	1,106	238	37,382
Insurance	27,648	9,303	1,245	38,196	26,450	11,464	1,161	39,075
Bank fees	25,397	898	213	26,498	25,079	959	207	26,245
Telephone and communication	-	18,713	-	18,713	-	16,576	-	16,576
Office equipment	11,861	2,160	720	14,741	10,679	1,786	596	13,061
Property tax assessments	-	16,765	-	16,765	-	9,240	-	9,240
Total expenses before depreciation and loss on sale of equipment	37,806	367	88	38,261	9,379	96	20	9,495
Depreciation	1,703,787	328,927	67,588	2,100,302	1,779,830	307,447	110,996	2,198,273
Loss on sale of equipment	240,572	9,335	2,213	252,120	250,548	9,700	1,174	262,422
Total expenses	\$ 1,945,359	\$ 338,262	\$ 69,801	\$ 2,353,422	\$ 2,030,378	\$ 352,264	\$ 113,170	\$ 2,495,812
Percentage of total expenses	83%	14%	3%	100%	81%	14%	5%	100%



# MST SURVEY RESULTS

## What was the survey for?

The Ministerial Search Team and prospective ministerial candidates use the survey results to better understand what congregations are looking for in their next settled minister.

## When was the survey open?

Unity's 2021 Ministerial Search Survey was open September 15th through September 30th.

## How many people completed the survey?

In total 371 members and friends of Unity Unitarian completed the survey.

## What did the survey cover?

The survey asked questions about the congregation, Sunday services and programs, the minister(s), Unity's Ends statements, and personal demographic information.

## Use the QR Code below to view all results online



## Question 1: Please indicate why you attend Unity Church-Unitarian, check as many as apply.

Factor	I first attended because of:	I continue to attend because of:
Adult Programs	36%	89%
Building/location	75%	70%
Religious education for children and youth	82%	36%
Choir/music	44%	87%
Other family members attended	67%	58%
Fellowship/community	56%	84%
Minister(s)	61%	70%
UU beliefs	75%	80%
Worship	70%	83%
Social justice work	44%	89%
Community engagement	36%	90%

**Question 2:** How much do you value the following aspects of congregational life?

Aspect	Very little	Somewhat	Very much
Adult faith formation	12%	45%	43%
Celebrating common values	3%	29%	68%
Denominational involvement	36%	52%	12%
Fellowship / community	1%	25%	75%
Intellectual stimulation	<1%	24%	76%
Meditation or prayer	12%	45%	44%
Religious education for children and youth	25%	26%	48%
Social justice	4%	31%	65%
Spiritual growth	3%	33%	64%
Worship	7%	31%	62%

**Question 3:** Please indicate which of the following best describes your religious orientation.

Option	Percent
Agnosticism	28%
Atheism or Non-Theism	8%
Buddhism	11%
Earth-centered spirituality	33%
Eclectic	47%
Ethical Christianity	25%
Ethical Religion	37%
Humanism	27%
Islam	1%
Judaism	3%
Mysticism	27%
Naturalistic Theism	31%
Taoism	7%
Theism	13%
Theological Christianity	3%
Undecided	2%
Additional/Other	11%

**Question 4:** In 2018, the Unity Church-Unitarian Board of Trustees established Ends Statements, after extensive engagement with the congregation, to reflect Board policy goals for 2019 - 2023. Please indicate the relative importance for you personally of each statement.

Ends Statment	1 - Less important	2	3	4 - More important
Create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships.	3%	11%	31%	54%
Ground ourselves in personal practice and communal worship that grows our capacity for wonder and spiritual deepening	4%	7%	31%	58%
Articulate our Unitarian Universalist faith identity, teach it to our children, share it with others, and live it courageously with the world.	7%	19%	34%	39%
Know each other in all our fullness and create an ever-widening circle of belonging for all people.	1%	11%	33%	55%
Generously give and openly receive compassionate care in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.	1%	7%	35%	56%
Discover and pursue our individual work to advance justice, wholeness, and equity for people, our Earth, and all life on it.	2%	8%	29%	61%
Create brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture.	7%	13%	28%	52%
Sustain and steward the church and our larger Unitarian Universalist movement for the future.	7%	26%	38%	29%

**Question 5:** Please indicate how you feel your personal involvement has contributed to progress toward the stated End, keeping in mind that progress can be personal or collective.

Ends Statment	Minimal to no involvement	My involvement helped a little	My involvement helped a lot
Create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships.	32%	56%	12%
Ground ourselves in personal practice and communal worship that grows our capacity for wonder and spiritual deepening	24%	60%	16%
Articulate our Unitarian Universalist faith identity, teach it to our children, share it with others, and live it courageously with the world.	35%	45%	20%
Know each other in all our fullness and create an ever-widening circle of belonging for all people.	19%	63%	18%
Generously give and openly receive compassionate care in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.	27%	54%	20%
Discover and pursue our individual work to advance justice, wholeness, and equity for people, our Earth, and all life on it.	26%	60%	14%
Create brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture.	41%	50%	9%
Sustain and steward the church and our larger Unitarian Universalist movement for the future.	40%	45%	15%

**Question 6:** Indicate your personal level of interest in the following content areas for worship services.

Content area	Not interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested
Building a multicultural spiritual community and/or anti-racism work	7%	40%	53%
Community engagement and social justice	6%	42%	53%
Coping with life and cultivating self-worth	6%	40%	54%
Creative and artistic activities including music	13%	39%	48%
Developing personal spiritual practices	12%	44%	44%
Drawing connections between daily living, multiple traditions, and universal truths of the human experience/life	4%	33%	63%
Inspire reverence and awe	15%	33%	52%
Judeo-Christian traditions	36%	53%	12%
Global religions and traditions	14%	59%	28%
Philosophical ideas	9%	51%	40%
Religious implications of science and modern knowledge	10%	49%	41%
Spiritual growth	8%	33%	59%
Theological values	26%	46%	29%
Unitarian Universalist history	18%	60%	23%
Values and perspectives on social issues	3%	41%	55%

**Question 9:** What changes made during the pandemic should Unity be sure to hold on to?

Factor	Less	Same	More
Adult faith formation	3%	80%	17%
Building congregational community and connection	0%	59%	41%
Community/neighborhood involvement and engagement	2%	56%	42%
Fundraising and development	4%	88%	9%
Growth in anti-racism and multiculturalism	8%	45%	48%
Ministry with children and youth	2%	80%	18%
Relations with the UUA	8%	84%	8%
Relations with other local UU churches	6%	68%	26%
Social action/justice work	4%	58%	38%
Spiritual growth and practice	4%	55%	41%

many people are looking for ways to connect with their church community. With Zoom, you can  
 many of the same things you can do in person, but from the comfort of your home. You can  
 YouTube, live stream, or use Zoom to connect with your church community. You can also  
 online services, Sunday services, live stream, and more. You can also use Zoom to  
 your virtual live streaming services. Make your  
 streaming services easily accessible to your church  
 Continue your meetings  
 Zoom services online  
 option. Offering people the opportunity  
 Keep your services, think of it as a person's group worship and attend  
 your attend person's group worship and attend  
 Live streaming services are streaming services online. The opportunity  
 still offer meetings to those who are unable to attend in person. Live streaming  
 services available to people who are unable to attend in person. Live streaming  
 In person services

[unityunitarian.org](http://unityunitarian.org)

**Question 10:** If you were screening ministerial candidates using the following characteristics, how important would each be to you?

Characteristic	1 - Less important	2	3	4	5 - Absolutely critical
Administration/staff relationship skills	2%	9%	21%	28%	39%
Ability to expand membership	14%	26%	33%	20%	6%
Appreciation for art and music	6%	13%	30%	30%	20%
Building a multicultural spiritual home	4%	10%	22%	29%	35%
Committing to anti-racism work	6%	9%	21%	25%	39%
Decisions made are based on existing Unity Church values and mission; would respect Unity's traditions	6%	14%	34%	27%	20%
Developing personal spiritual practices	6%	19%	29%	30%	15%
Engaging lay leadership and members	1%	8%	29%	31%	31%
Financial development skills/building a culture of generosity	5%	18%	40%	29%	8%
Intellectual leadership skills	2%	6%	24%	34%	34%
Participates in denominational activities e.g. UUA	19%	36%	31%	10%	4%
Pastoral care skills/making pastoral calls	1%	10%	26%	33%	30%
Preaching ability/experience	0%	1%	4%	22%	74%
Religious education leadership for adults	7%	21%	38%	26%	7%
Religious education leadership for children and youth	7%	27%	35%	22%	9%
Sense of humor	2%	10%	21%	33%	34%
Social action/justice commitment and involvement	2%	8%	28%	27%	34%
Spiritual leadership skills	3%	8%	20%	24%	46%

**Question 11:** The UUA supports ministerial settlement procedures that do not discriminate because of race, color, disability, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin. Do you have any reservations with this policy?

Yes: 3%      No: 97%



## Unity Church - Unitarian

November 5, 2021

**Question 12: It could become controversial if the new minister tried to change...**

people would embrace a more approach change well involved in creative practices  
 avoid making Sunday services happen stuff being much more love and focus know  
 members and new things... music program...  
 community... pageant... commitment...  
 worship... worship services...  
 music... Christmas pageant...  
 service... change... church... think  
 use traditions... Unity... anything...  
 new minister... minister... social justice...  
 congregation... programs... importance... know...  
 Christmas... by...  
 Continued on the next page

**Question 13: It could be unifying and energizing if the new minister tried to change and implement...**

anything... to...  
 change...  
 use...  
 worship...  
 congregation... service... new...  
 community... church... members...  
 ways... groups... change...  
 social justice... one... know... opportunities...  
 outreach... while... diversity... add things together... social...  
 groups...  
 Continued on the next page

**Question 14: How open to change is Unity Church- Unitarian?** 56/100

**Question 15: Unity Church - Unitarian has a flexible enough structure to implement new ideas easily.** 59/100

**Question 16: Unity Church - Unitarian focuses on mission, our Ends, and the greater good, rather than the strong preference of some individuals.** 71/100

**Question 17: There is a high level of trust in leadership at Unity Church - Unitarian.** 79/100

**Question 18: Unity Church - Unitarian has a core group of leaders able to lead change in a non-anxious way.** 73/100

**Question 19: There are opportunities for congregants/me to share leadership of the church in meaningful ways.** 73/100

[unityunitarian.org](http://unityunitarian.org)

**Question 20: Unity Church - Unitarian does a good job of having difficult conversations and staying in relationship.** 69/100

**Question 21: Unity Church - Unitarian's mission, ministry, and Ends continue to adapt to changing conditions in the world.** 77/100

**\*\*Question 22 continued the Board's Ends survey question.\*\***

**Question 23: What is your membership status?**

Status	Percent
Voting member (signed book and pledge or received pledge waiver)	86%
Member (signed book but not current pledge or waiver)	4%
Friend (have not signed Unity's membership book)	8%
Other	2%

**Question 24: How long have you been associated with this congregation?**

Time	Percent
Less than one year	2%
1-3 years	9%
4-7 years	14%
8-12 years	13%
13-20 years	16%
21-30 years	18%
31-45 years	16%
46+ years	10%

**Question 25:** What word(s) do you currently use to describe your gender identity and/or gender expression? \*Note: Responses have been categorized using the same framework as Unity's Annual Congregational Survey

Gender	Percent
Female	55%
Male	26%
Other Response	2%
No Response	18%

**Question 26:** What word(s) do you currently use to describe your sexual orientation? \*Note: Responses have been categorized using the same framework as Unity's Annual Congregational Survey

Sexual Orientation	Percent
Heterosexual	67%
Gay	2%
Lesbian	4%
Bisexual	3%
Queer	2%
Pansexual	1%
Asexual	1%
Multiple	1%
Questioning	1%
No Response	19%

**Question 27:** In what year were you born? \*Note: Years of birth have been translated into age ranges

Age	Percent
Under 15	0%
15-19	0%
20-29	<1%
30-39	4%
40-49	4%
50-59	12%
60-69	19%
70 and above	31%
No Response	16%

**Question 28:** What word(s) do you currently use to describe your race and/or ethnicity? \*Note:

Responses have been categorized using the same framework as Unity's Annual Congregational Survey

Race/Ethnicity	Percent
African American/ Black/African	1%
Asian and Pacific Islander	1%
Person of Color + White (people who identify as part Person of Color and part white)	1%
White	79%
Latino/a/x and Hispanic	0%
Native / Indigenous	0%
Person of Color + Person of Color (people whose racial identity includes two POC identities)	0%
No Response	18%



**Question 29: What is your education?**

Education	Percent
Some high school	0%
High school diploma	0%
Some college	4%
Undergraduate college degree	27%
Graduate school degree	68%
Other	1%

**Question 30: What is your relationship/marital status?**

Relationship/Marital status	Percent
Single	10%
Married	71%
Divorced	8%
Widowed	5%
Separated	1%
Living with partner(s)	5%

**Question 31: Do you have children under the age of 18 living at home? \*Note: Reported as percent of responses with child(ren) in each group**

Age group	Percent
Under 2	1%
3 to 6	2%
7 to 12	5%
13 to 18	8%

**Question 32: What words do you currently use to describe your household financial situation?**

\*Note: Responses have been categorized using the same framework as Unity's Annual Congregational Survey

Financial Situation	Percent
Financially secure	38%
Financially secure but concerned	2%
Financially secure for now	24%
More than enough	12%
Paycheck to paycheck	3%
Unexpected bill from a problem	2%
Other response	1%
No response	11%

**Question 33: What is your household's current annual pledge amount?**

Amount	Percent
Under \$300	12%
\$301-\$500	4%
\$501-\$800	11%
\$801-\$1200	10%
\$1201-\$1700	13%
\$1701-\$2400	10%
\$2401-\$3000	12%
\$3001-\$4500	12%
\$4501-\$6500	6%
\$6500 and above	10%

**Question 34:** How would you characterize your Sunday attendance in a non-pandemic year?

Attendance	Percent
Less than 5 times	7%
5-10 times	5%
11-20 times	14%
21-30 times	26%
31-40 times	25%
41 times or more	24%

**Question 35:** In a typical month, how many participation or volunteer hours go to Unity activities or programs other than attendance of a Sunday service?

Hours	Percent
Less than 1	23%
1-3 hours	32%
4-7 hours	24%
8-12 hours	13%
12 or more hours	8%