

Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2019-2020

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Staff and Board Reports:

Minister's Report

This year has been a crash course in living in the surreal. Some of that was personal with my wife, Lori's illness and death and part of that was and continues to be COVID 19. The lessons I learned about living 12 hours at a time while Lori was hospitalized were applicable to trying to do church in the context of a virulent virus. Thanks largely to the efforts of Sarah Skochko, we turned our worship around from meeting in a physical space to inhabiting an online presence via ZOOM and Facebook within 4 days. Because of the flexibility of Katy Siepert, Mitch Davey, Susanne G, and Ezra Black, we were able to transition music and religious education from in place to online. Yes, there was a learning curve for staff and the UUCE community alike but many of us were pleasantly surprised by the intimacy that can be created online in worship and in small group meetings. Yes, there are individuals who are not online and those who do not have access to computers. Consequently, there are some in our community who are not able to be included in the online format. Remedying that in a time of social distancing continues to be a challenge but one we keep plugging away at.

Due to my personal situation and the decision to close the church, the Ministry Council which was billed as governance but is really a communication tool, was not able to fully get off the ground and realize its potential. My gratitude goes out to the three Lay Ministry Leads who served this year: Barbara Kellogg, Marilyn Milne, and Lizzy Utterback, who labored on without clear direction. The hope for the coming year is to refine the mission of the Council and have it up and running at full capacity.

The other program that was negatively impacted by the church closure is the Compassionate Connection that is facilitated by the Lay Pastoral Associates. The circle is a time for folks to gather in a small group to share the difficult things in their lives and have them witnessed and heard. The hope is to have the Compassionate Connection

circle conducted in the ZOOM format concurrently with coffee hour after our Sunday services. The Lay Pastoral Associates will continue to facilitate this gathering. They also hope to host a once a week drop in circle online for any who wish to gather.

Running the annual budget drive during a pandemic and the ensuing economic chaos is challenging to say the least. But the Generosity Network rose to the occasion and you all responded. Even though so much is uncertain, so many of you indicated through your pledges that one thing is certain: UUCE and its place in your lives. Thank you to all who pledged or made gifts or support our community with your time and skills.

June 14 marks the culmination of Sarah Skochko's time with UUCE: her ordination. As I wrote elsewhere, this is what she came here to do: learn, grow into her ministerial self, fall in love with all of you, and leave to begin her ordained ministry with her own congregation. The gifts she has given us have been nothing short of remarkable. She will be missed not only for her poignant and humor filled sermons but for her compassion and care for all of us.

Never have I gone into a new church year with so much uncertainty and unpredictability. If anything illustrates the illusion of control, it is this pandemic and its ripple effects that have not even begun to take their toll. We will have need of one another in ways we did not know we would. And we will struggle to be present to one another and connected and engaged with one another in a time of social distancing, when contact has been reduced to a potential threat. How do you stay committed to and invested in a community that you have no physical contact with? How long can you yearn for the physical circle of community, that face to face reality?

If ever there was a time for imagination and creativity, this is it. We are all making church up as we go along at this point. Sometimes we will be planning 12 hours at a time, others a week at a time, and others, four months at a time. Who knows what form church will take at the other end of the pandemic. In the meantime, myself and your other staff are committed to bringing you quality worship, times to connect in groups online, times of musical reflection, time to learn more about music, time to go deeper into the questions of our lives, time to celebrate, time to be present to and with one another online. We will get weary. We will despair about our world. And at the same time we will carry on with our lives and the attendant transitions and rituals of them that need the context of community. As Reverend Wayne Arneson wrote,

"Take courage friends.
The way is often hard, the path is never clear,
and the stakes are very high.
Take courage.

For deep down, there is another truth: you are not alone."

In gratitude, Rev. Lo

Faith Formation and Religious Education Program

In 2019-20, SpiritJam has been chugging right along. It is a well-established program with proven positive results. I am happy to report that this program is operating smoothly and drawing a great deal of kid and community interest.

Some of the RE church events that stand out in the yearly cycle include:

The Halloween Party- Our 29th annual Halloween Party was pulled off without a hitch by the Girl Scouts! Thanks troupe!

Christmas Eve was shifted to a single service, later in the evening, and well-attended.

Community Cloth Art Project - congregants were invited to stay after service and cocreate a large fabric installation for our sanctuary and social hall spaces. These fabric installations created a beautiful and unifying effect in the space - we hope to make more.

Middle school and high school benefited from meeting regularly after church with volunteer leaders, building relationships with each other and their leaders through consistent, meaningful activities and conversation. This year, I taught Middle School OWL, along with Kris Olsen and Amy Dessert. We offered the class to youth both from our congregation and from the wider community, which meant we were working with 24 youth. We learned a lot from that experience, and will likely pare back that offering for the next round.

There are currently 110 registered infants, children, and youth in the **RE program**, with a regular attendance each Sunday morning of about 60 young people across the age ranges—infant/toddler, preschool, SpiritJam, middle school, and high school, with regular attendance in SpiritJam of 20-35 people.

Adult RE continues to develop and mature, with a strong emphasis on anti-racism, anti-oppression work, including the Examining Whiteness class, facilitated by Dan Goodlett and Ruth Kenney, and with Steve Kuzma trained and ready to lead another round.

This class was first offered last year the offering of the newly formed by the then new **Challenging Racism** group. This year, as with last, this group headed a series of book groups reading So You Want to Talk about Race and White Fragility, organized by Jeanne Marie Stine, Jean DeVenney and Scott and Cindy Robinson. Group numbers have

grown over this year, and I am hopeful that we will see even more of an uptick in participation and support in response to the national protests and rallies. Finally, this group has been instrumental in drafting a statement of support for communities of color that is anticipated to be adopted by the board.

Creative expression has also featured large this year with Soul Collage for the visual arts, and Tai Chi Fusion for movement and strength building. In addition, we have focused on continuing with the Inquirers classes every Sunday after church – these classes continue to draw a solid following. Adult RE classes consistently bring in attendance of anywhere from 3-20 people.

In addition to serving the church in these ways, as your Director of Lifespan Faith Formation, I served our region in my final year as the Pacific Western Region Liberal Religious Educator's Association Board Secretary (PWR LREDA), and taught two Renaissance Modules (Administration and Curriculum Development) for other DREs who are seeking credentialing from across the nation as a contracted employee through the Unitarian Universalist Association. I also completed two units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), and discerned that I am ready to pursue a divinity degree.

I have been accepted to Starr King School for the Ministry, and will begin in August with their program. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have served UUCE for the last ten years, and am ready to embark on this new adventure. I will be returning to you next year as an adult programming and spiritual development coordinator. I look forward to serving you in my new, reduced, role.

Director of Lifespan Faith Formation, Katy Siepert

SpiritJam

SpiritJam continues to thrive, with regular and enthusiastic participation from children and a few adults who have come to appreciate the vibrancy and fun to be found there. We are so grateful for everyone who takes part! In addition to our regular SpiritJam offering each Sunday, we have continued to explore best practices with Whole Church SpiritJam on some Sundays this year - while there continue to be some issues with accessibility, we are working hard to respond to those concerns and to create opportunities to engage with worship in new and innovative ways for everyone.

This year's pageant featured many little mice - we focused on solstice and returning of the light through the lens of Leo Leoni's beloved children's book, Frederick. The children came together to practice their performance, and of the day of the pageant, all were decked out in costumes lovingly created by members of our RE Committee - thank you Laurel Allender and Susan Schneider!

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we have shifted our SpiritJam offering to an online format, and have a reduced but regular attendance of about 12 young congregants each week. Your SpiritJam staff continue to create content for our website - videos of teachers Alexa Engelmann, Natasha Willow, Mattie Wyszynski, and Megan Lawver doing everything from reading stories, guiding craft projects, feeding horses (Yep! There's a video showing us how to feed Lucky!), and engaging our young people in a myriad of learning opportunities. As we head into these next months of COVID response, your SpiritJam team - though reduced in numbers - will continue to innovate and explore ways to engage our children and youth in an online setting.

Aside from the pandemic, the largest adjustment we've made as a program this year is in sharing our space with The Big Little School, a full-time preschool that moved into rooms 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7. After some negotiation and practice with how to best utilize these shared spaces, we all feel that things have been running smoothly and we are able to both support the church through this rental, support our children through classroom engagement, and support the broader community by providing a home for BLS!

In harder news, earlier this year, our cob house was vandalized and damages equaling more than \$500 were sustained. We are committed to completing this project and hold the vision of it as a beautiful multi-use space where meditation, small groups, and play time can all occur. We had committed to restarting building on this space in May, but with COVID, have had to re-think and re-group around how to move forward safely on this project. More information will be coming as we further develop our plan.

As you can see, our program has had to stay flexible, responsive, and innovative in response to so many changes. But that is just what SpiritJam is designed to do! As a "just in time" ministry, the SpiritJam model allows us to continue to engage with our children, youth, and families, even as we must stay socially distanced for the foreseeable future.

Changes that you can anticipate is Children's Program Coordinator, Ezra Black, stepping into the role of supervisor and program lead for all things children and youth as Katy Siepert steps away from lifespan work at the church. Starting July 1, 2020, Ezra will be your point of contact. He has dedicated the last five years to his work for this church, and we are very excited to see what he will do from here!

Director of Lifespan Faith Formation, Katy Siepert

Outreach and Engagement

In my year as Coordinator of Outreach and Engagement, I continued offering worship support by preaching about once a month. During Rev. Lo's leave of absence, I preached more, and took on additional administrative and organizational duties.

Our social media engagement also continued to increase during this past year. In September 2018, our official Facebook page had 555 followers. I also took on partial website maintenance duties. In the two years I coordinated our social media presence, that number grew to 936. In-person media initiatives included the revamping of the bulletin boards in the Social Hall with monthly updates, and the creation of a new Involvement Guide. I also worked with the A/V team to install a new pulpit mic and other sound equipment.

Some of our outreach initiatives during this past year included a Stuffed Animal drive for PeaceHealth Riverbend's pediatrics department, a diaper drive, and our annual Christmas service project (this year, we made "blessing bags" for the women's shelter at the Eugene Mission, and collected menstrual products). Our church won an award at the annual Trans*Ponder gala (which



was held at the church) as a result of our support of that group. Other outreach activities included having a presence at both Pride and a contentious gun rally on the same day, and inviting speakers from different faith communities to speak on Sunday morning.

Since the start of the pandemic in the US, my duties have shifted considerably, as we worked to get online worship and other programming moved fully online. In the coming year, it will be both a challenge and an unprecedented opportunity for all churches to re-imagine what worship and connection will look like for the duration of the pandemic.

Serving UUCE for three years has been an incredible blessing, and I take my leave with so much love in my heart for this dear community.

Music Program

What a year it has been for our Music Program at UUCE! I had the pleasure of joining you all here in Eugene at the end of August 2019 when I began my role as Choir Director. We had an exciting fall and winter full of wonderful, inspiring choral music making. Both our Sanctuary Choir and Chamber Singers were very active in providing impactful choral music for our worship services on a weekly basis.

When the impact of COVID-19 pushed the church online, the choir program continued to forge ahead! Our weekly Wednesday night choir rehearsals quickly moved to Zoom where we continued to be a choral community, making music and improving our musicianship in any way we could despite our physical separation – music theory lessons from Payton, vocal instruction from your fellow congregant and vocal teacher Kristina Jones, as well as a virtual choir project. The virtual choir is finishing up in mid-June, and we look forward to sharing it in service very soon. My partner Kelly and I have had the pleasure of providing music for Sunday service for you all from the comfort of our living room, and we look forward to continuing to do so while the church remains online.

Due to budgetary decisions from the previous fiscal year, the position of music director, formerly filled by Brad Schultz, was changed to choir director, a position which holds different duties and responsibilities. This change in position along with our limited music program budget meant UUCE Choirs were unable to provide the church with annual concerts. With the goal of returning the current position at the church to Music Director for this coming year, I hope to expand the music program at UUCE and create a sustainable music program model which we can continue forward in the years beyond 2020-21. Your continued support is a huge part of the growth and success of music at UUCE – thank you!

I am eternally grateful for the work of UUCE's 2019-20 Choral Scholar, Payton Lommers, who has provided his musical talents to the church not only through his singing abilities and weekly work with the choirs, but also through his work as an audio/video engineer on our "Uncertain Times" virtual choir video and "Prepare a Way," a new musical work written as a collaboration between Rev. Lois and I as a gift to Rev. Sarah Skochko on her ordination day.

The Choral Scholar Program is an integral and absolutely essential part of our program. The Choral Scholar Program not only benefits the church by bringing in talented musicians to enhance our worship service but simultaneously provides an invaluable opportunity for young choral musicians in our community to gain choral leadership experience in the professional realm. I reaped the benefits of similar

programs when I was an undergraduate. I believe it is a responsibility of the church to provide our greater Eugene community with these types of positions for young musicians, and I am very grateful we offer one at UUCE. Offering a Choral Scholarship shows that UUCE cares about music in worship and understands the time and effort our musicians put forth to provide meaningful and high quality music for the congregation each week. My hope is that the church will make it a budgetary priority to expand the Choral Scholar Program so that we are able to provide this opportunity to 3 more young, talented musicians - a choral scholarship for each voice section in the choir - and continue to grow our musical and church communities.

I owe an enormous amount of gratitude to my choral librarians, Joyce Smith and Kelly Sweeney, who without I would be drown in sheet music. Moreover, I am eternally in debt to my musical partner in crime and your amazing pianist and organist, Susanne Giordano, for without whom the Music Program at UUCE would be only a fraction of the what it is. Thank you for providing our community with inspiring and inviting music every week!

As Unitarian Universalists and musicians, we strive to amplify all voices and recognize music has the power the change people and change lives. Our Music Program stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. We recognize our role in the systemic and institutionalized racism that has plagued our society. We recognize that white privilege and other overt and covert forms of racism exist and are entrenched in all facets of our lives. We understand our UUCE music community has a role to play in breaking down and rebuilding our society until all lives matter. The UUCE Music Program vows to continue to educate ourselves and our community by offering a diverse array of music from many different cultures and peoples and by creating a safe, welcoming space for people of color in our music community. We are committed to amplifying the voices that need to be heard in 2020-21 and beyond, especially the voices of persons of color. Over the coming year and beyond, UUCE will spotlight the music of persons of color at every possible opportunity. Black Lives Matter.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee was reinstated in 2020. Our work this year was focused on updating the UUCE Employee Manual, bringing some of our benefits in line with both UUA guidelines, and Oregon State law. We have also been working with the minister and treasurer to develop / update job descriptions for staff, and provide guidance through the process of staff reduction related to the pandemic.

FORC (Financial Oversight and Review Committee)

Appointed by the Board of Trustees, the FORC meets on the third Monday of each month. Responsibilities include review of the most recent Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, noting substantial variances between actual and budget, discuss reasons for any variances. FORC is also responsible for review of financial policies, designated donations, and making recommendations to the BOT on financial matters.

We have worked closely with the treasurer to ensure proper coding and projections on income and expenses to ensure accurate information to the board. Year-end close for last fiscal year was completed in a timely manner, which provided an up-to-date look at the status of church finances soon after the start of the new fiscal year. We expect this closing process to continue to occur in August.

We began a review of church Bylaws addressing financial matters, in order to make recommendations for updates to the Committee. The decision was made to table changes due to the impact of the pandemic.

We were able to replace a member who stepped back due to family issues, and are pleased to welcome Susan Oldland. We hope to continue growth within committee membership in order to expand knowledge of church financials and responsibilities of oversight.

Members: Katy Colburn, Treasurer, Phyllis O'Neill, Dave DeCou, Sarah Kordon and Susan Oldland.

Ministry of Connection and Engagement

Membership

New Members: I became Membership Chair in July 2019. This year, UUCE has welcomed 14 new members. We held one New UU Recognition during a Sunday morning service on December 1, 2019 at which we recognized six new members. We had a number of people who were interested in joining in the late winter and Rev. Lo recognized them as new members after holding a Zoom meeting with them. Working with Steve Kuzma, chair of Faith Forward, I have been regularly been the presenter at the session on Membership at FF.

Additional projects: My major focus this year was improving our welcoming of visitors and new UUs. In particular, I am interested in helping people become involved with activities that align with their needs and interests so that they become active members of the church. I attended a couple of workshops on membership and communication at GA in Spokane and I met with Rev. Lo and Sarah to discuss ways we might help newcomers find their niche at UUCE. Thus far, we have accomplished the following:

- Created and updated materials on the Path to Membership and an information pamphlet about UUCE. These documents, along with the Involvement Guide are available to newcomers at the Welcome Table.
- Worked with the Welcome Table volunteers to update their materials and procedures.
- Installed brochure holders and filled them with updated UUA pamphlets on a number of topics.
- Met with one of the Small Group Ministry groups to discuss their ideas about becoming a more welcoming congregation. They had taken this on as their project and provided a number of interesting suggestions for helping newcomers and even new members better navigate UUCE and find a place there. In the coming year, I hope to follow up on some of the resources they found and incorporate some of their ideas for welcoming.
- Experimented with new ideas for the perennial problem of nametags. Izzy and I have a system for making nametags in a timelier fashion and I am grateful to Steve Kuzma for making the nametag racks.

Submitted,

Sharon Roberts Membership Chair

Welcome Table

When I started at UUCE, a happy woman befriended me and I felt very welcome. Now three years later it seems I'm taking over as coordinator of the welcome table from her. We know that greeting everyone in the morning and after service is a fun easy way to participate in our community. It's a great group!

Kris Topaz

Faith Forward

Faith Forward at UUCE is a program to introduce Unitarian Universalism as a whole and The Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene specifically to newcomers. We use a curriculum developed by the First Unitarian Church of Dallas. There are nine sessions in the curriculum.

They are:

Session 1: Q&A with Minister

Session 2: UU History, Principles and Sources

Session 3: Campus Tour & Orientation

Session 4: Faith Development for Children and Adults

Session 5: Worship & Liturgical Year

Session 6: Social Action & Community Service

Session 7: Pastoral Care and Small Group Ministry

Session 8: Small Group Connections

Session 9: Membership 101 & Congregational Life

These sessions are held after the Sunday service at 11:15 at the church. We have a team of lay facilitators that welcome newcomers to the sessions and work with presenters (staff and lay) to go through the sessions. These include both information for newcomers and a chance for them to introduce themselves and to ask questions about UU and what goes on at UUCE in particular.

Faith Forward serves as a place where newcomers can begin to feel what we – UUCE – as a community have to offer as a spiritual home and a place of connection.

In 2019-2020 we operated at the church until the pandemic closing in March. Ways to do Faith Forward online are being explored as this is written in June of 2020. No satisfactory format has been found and the program lies dormant. As of this writing our hope is that a Zoom breakout room for newcomers will be instituted where people new to UU and UUCE can receive information and ask questions.

Young Adults

This year, we held monthly Young Adult brunches after worship. At least ten young adults - between the ages of 18 and 35 - attended in person. Others joined our private Facebook group. Each month, we shared snacks and had themed discussions, sometimes while doing holiday-themed crafts. Holding our gatherings immediately after worship proved more successful than setting up times throughout the week, which had been the model in prior years. Most young adults attended worship throughout the year anyway, and were then able to come to brunch. By nature, young adult groups tend to fluctuate from year to year, and it seems that staff support is essential for success. Our brunch schedule was disrupted - as many things were - by the pandemic.

Craft Group

The craft groups goal is sharing space while working on portable artworks. We have a beautiful group and continue to gather remotely.

Here are some pictures from our online group where we share WIP (works in progress).



This is a SMALL sampling of the variety of work that we do together. (Lizzy made her dress!). Over the holiday we carved stamps and made chalice cards and donated \$120 to the church from the proceeds.

New members are welcome, Molly mae Culligan and Jeanne Yohn are the coordinators.











Community Art Gallery

The art gallery is ready and awaiting our return to church. Art from the Youth Art Month exhibit has been taken down and returned to young artists and their families. It currently features art by Scott Hovis, Martha Snyder, and Carol Martin.



Sisters Circles

Spirited Sisters

Spirited Sisters is an ongoing discussion group open to all who identify themselves as women. We meet on the third Thursday of each month from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Leadership is voluntary and rotates each month. The lease determines the topic with suggestions from the group. Topics range from spiritual, literary, women's issues and personal issues. For further information contact Laramie Palmer, at spiritedsisters@uueugene.org, this group is currently meeting on Zoom.

Laramie Palmer

Quest Sister Circle

UUCE Sister Circle (called Quest) has been going since the early 1980's. Over the years we have lost members due to moves, illness, and death. We invite new members whenever the group size gets below 10, which is what we now have. We are meeting every two weeks via Zoom where we do brief check-ins. We miss being together in person, but Zoom helps fill the gap

Bonnie Phipps

Men's Groups

Tuesday Men's Group

We meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. There are usually eight or nine participants for the two hour discussion. A topic is chosen for each meeting by members or the facilitator and sent out via email on Sunday.

Historically the group has met on Wednesdays but in order to accommodate choir members I moved the meeting to Tuesday. Of the participants half are members of UUCE. The group is open to anyone who identifies as a man.

Be well, Emmet

Poetry Groups

There are 3 active poetry groups at the church. Members write their own poems based on a theme we select each month, often in alignment with the Sunday Service theme.

Each group has a name: Poets, Poeta, Poesy. Since Covid19, Poeta and Poesy still meet monthly via Zoom and that seems to be working for us. The Poets group has too many members who can't participate that way, so it is on hold for meetings, though we stay in touch via email. As this continues, more members in the Poets group are getting the technology that may enable us to soon also meet via Zoom. There are 25 people total participating in the three poetry groups.

During the year, the poetry groups met once a month each, put together a basket for the auction fundraiser, several members submitted poems for the virtual March exhibit, and we remain committed to our monthly gatherings.

Bonnie Phipps

Birders Group

The Birders group is still active with many members, about 20 of whom are regulars – which means we have a large group show up each week at various locations to watch birds (8-20 people depending on weather).

Since Covid19, we have not been out birding as a group, but most of us still go out and bird individually on Tuesday mornings, our usual meeting time (as well as other times!)

The Birders group has a standing meeting via Zoom each Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. after most of us have returned from our birding jaunt, and we check in and discuss the birds we saw and where. We are all anxious to get together again when it seems safer.

The birders group also made a basket for the auction and has donated the funds we collect each week to the church general fund. (Mike can tell you exactly how much the group has donated.)

Bonnie Phipps

Touchstone Tuesday Potluck

This past church year we gathered for 6 potlucks in person. Some of the best things about the in-person potlucks, besides the desserts and Pat's artichoke dip, is the opportunity to hear Misha slay on the piano. Another highlight is the super fun art table that MollyMae, Hawkeye, and Charlie started this year which was a hub of

intergenerational connection. Then to adapt to social distancing, we offered two gatherings via Zoom, and one on a Facebook thread where we continued our gratitude practice by sharing in community.

Accessibility Committee

The Accessibility Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Eugene focuses on three main goals:

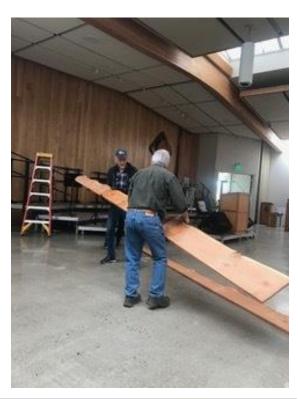
- To provide mutual support four members and Friends of UUCE who are disabled
- To be a resource and advocate within the church for increasing accessibility and anti-ableism
- To create educational events for the community that highlight the lived experience of disabled people and education around ableism.

Until Covid-19 cancelled in-person meetings, the Accessibility Committee met the last Sunday of each month after church. We conducted a survey and have used the results to inform conversations with staff about improving the accessibility of the church and its events, and will bring more ideas to the church and its leadership when we return to inperson meetings. We will be holding an open Zoom forum on Sunday, June 28th from 2:00-3:00pm sharing both what we've learned, our hopes for the coming year, and the stories of the lives of some of the disabled folks in our congregation.

Submitted by Jones David Hollister, Chair

Ministry of Sustainability Building and Grounds

The Building & Grounds crew continues to maintain and improve our church's interior and exterior. Some projects are on-going, such as patching and painting walls, hanging banners and pulling weeds. Every month, the building crew has a list of regular maintenance items to work on, and the garden folks work on seasonal maintenance of our beautiful grounds.





In addition, they tackled some major projects this year. They are repairing the north exterior wall, where the paint job didn't adhere properly, and resealing wood that has weathered on the north and south sides. They worked with Big Little School to prep their spaces when they moved in last summer. The crew installed the AED, a ramp to the sanctuary risers and solar security lights over the playground. They

repaired the Zamboni machine. They installed art lighting over the gallery and new lighting in the north RE hallway, finished the walls in the library, and made and installed library shelves to store the quilts there. Every week, new projects arise, such as repairing a broken chair, fixing a leak in an attic condenser or gathering metal recyclables.

Meanwhile, the grounds team does weeding, edging, weeding, trimming, weeding, litter patrolling and weeding. Also, they have cleared root wads (yay,Nick Jones!) from the drainage pipe in our 13th Street swale, aka The Seven Seas, and planted a thorny bush to protect the rain garden from illegal campers. They maintain the irrigation system. They placed "Slow Down, You're Here" signs to discourage speeding in our



parking lot. A special shoutout to Bill and Abby Rhoden, who mow the lawn weekly despite barely adequate equipment. The team nurtures the edible plantings established by the Earth First group and flower beds planted by a small ministry group. Occasionally, they munch on strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and figs.

We meet every Tuesday morning at 9. First, we drink coffee and catch up with each other; then we work. Everyone is welcome to join BAG, whose regulars include Eric Swegles, Emmet Band, Saro Hendrickson, Gretchen Miller, Steve Kuzma, John White, Marilyn Milne, Sigrid Jones, Nick Jones, Bill and Abby Rhoden, Vicki, Keith and Penny the Wonder Dog.

Marilyn Milne

COOK (Committee on Oversight of the Kitchen)

The COOK committee was formed to ensure that the UUCE kitchen would pass health inspections and be maintained in excellent condition in order to be available for use by both the congregation and rentals.

In the past year we have achieved these goals through the following activities:

- Committee members rotated weekly cleaning and inspection of kitchen and corrected any problems. Duties included monitoring laundering of towels and linens.
- Offered kitchen use and cleaning trainings, upon request, to UUCE groups for their events.
- Updated Kitchen Manual which covers all aspects of use and maintenance of the kitchen. It is near the microwave. Improved signage so that all those who use the kitchen would be able to help maintain it to those standards.
- Made signage to welcome and clarify use of the kitchen by church members.
- When one of the three refrigerators failed, COOK members arranged for the purchase of a new one. All refrigerators were labeled to clarify the designated use of each one.
- Contributed to purchase of new coffee maker.
- Purchased 20 blue aprons with a printed UUCE chalice on the front. They arrived in time to use at the Holiday Fair.
- At the request of the office, took a full inventory of all kitchen ware and equipment.
- Arranged to secure the pantry area with a coded lock box.

Nadja Sanders

Safety (Previously known as Emergency Planning Task Force)

History: The Emergency Planning Taskforce had been a standing committee with the Board of Trustees up to and after the remodel of our new church home, to develop the fire exit maps and emergency procedures manual. The manual is in need of updating. In 2016 the Board, through Rev. Sydney, requested this committee add general church safety to its agenda, and get some volunteers to provide security, especially in light of the fact our new neighborhood provides a lot of drifters and campers. As part of our reorganizing efforts, the committee members decided to re-name the committee to more accurately reflect our newly added task of trying to provide a bit of security at our services and events, and to follow the common verbiage of emergency planning as used by first responders. The common language for first responders is ERT for Emergency Response Team, and EOP for Emergency Operating Procedures for the church's manual. In 2018 a separate group was started and centered around disaster preparedness of the individual.

Over the 2019-2020 church year:

Related to Church Safety: Bob Fraley has been routinely offering disaster preparation meetings after Sunday services to help inform people how to prepare for disasters in the neighborhoods they live in.

This year's accomplishment: Thanks to a successful auction item to acquire the money for purchase of an AED, in April-May of 2020 the church has acquired an AED. Building and Grounds installed it. As of June 2020, we are now ready to train some volunteers, through Red Cross instruction or by way of a congregant getting instructor certification to train the rest of us how to use the AED and also how to administer CPR. However, because we are currently also in isolation because of the Novel Coronavirus, the training may be on hold until later in the summer of 2020.

To Be Done: All staff and some volunteers need a refresher on general church safety. This is at least two years due. The Emergency Procedures Manual also needs updating.

Currently, the Safety group is now one person only, Susanne Giordano, who is not sure if this is still a Board standing committee.

Susanne Giordano

Generosity Network

Our team organizes the year-long schedule for and implementation of fundraisers and the annual pledge drive. Many church members and friends help with these events, in addition to the Generosity Network (GN). Our work was made easier because of the great leadership of our minister, staff, board, lay leaders and volunteers and the current good, loving vibe in our congregation.



Book Sale: Our annual book sale raised \$1,526.75 due to the superb leadership of Sue Craig and Judy Sawyer and many helpers!

Bazaar: The UUCE annual Bazaar had lots of fabulous offerings from members, friends and outside vendors. The event raised \$4,445.50.

Auction: This year's auction was a 1920's themed live event with some costumes, delicious food and drink, a live auctioneer, great music and even some live dance lessons! It was our most successful auction yet, raising \$25,518.20 in funds to support programs, an AED, and Sarah Skochko's ordination. Out of that total, \$9,660 was from paddle raises for money donations! Many wonderful items were purchased, and some events have now been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; we may have a lot of these dinners and events next spring!

Annual Pledge Drive: Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we were able to host our in-person Generous Fun Potluck, which also provides an opportunity to pledge amid the food and fun. As of June 3, 2020, we have \$454,290 in pledges and gifts to fund the 2020-2021 church program year. This is an increase over last year that had a pledge total of \$411,000. It is a testament to the values and dedication of our members and friends that people



stepped up to fund our mission and vision for the coming year while adjusting to virtual church!

With all that is happening in the world in the spring of 2020, our Generosity Network is grateful for the amount of time, talent, and treasure that has been offered up by so many in support of our congregation.

Communications Task Force Report

The Communications Task Force (CTF) was established in January 2013, and has met intermittently since then, chaired by church member Dick Loescher. The charter (charge, mission statement, or goal) of the CTF is to develop and implement policies and procedures related to communications (electronic, paper, and verbal) within UUCE and from UUCE to the wider community, in order to support implementing the UUCE Mission Statement. The CTF members are church volunteers who participate according to their interests for as long as they are willing, and certain church staff. Existing CTF members recruit others to help as the need arises. In church year 2019-2020, the CTF met intermittently with participation by church volunteers and church office and professional staff.

Current church volunteers on the CTF include: Dick Loescher (chair Communications Task Force, lead editor of volunteer editorial team for Weekly

Connections and Sunday Handout, and chair Small Group Ministry steering committee), proofreaders for volunteer editorial team (Janet Barnes, Kat Johnson, Frankie Hill, and Sharon Roberts), Listserv moderators (Kat Johnson, Nikki Frank and Martha Osgood), and interested person Jean Marie Stine.

Church staff members of the CTF include: Rental and Office Administrators Jody Monegan and Izzy Crecca and professional staff Minister Rev. Lois Van Leer and Coordinator of Outreach and Engagement Sarah Skochko.

Office staff. Rentals and Office Administrator Jody Monegan went on maternity leave in March 2020 and plans to return to work in mid-July 2020. Izzy Crecca is covering for Jody during this time.

UUCE website. The church website has been managed by Rentals and Office Administrator Jody Monegan since July 2018. In January 2019, the church web calendar was changed from a Google calendar to CalendarWiz. Currently, the church web calendar is managed by the Office Staff. There have been intermittent challenges with the website and with the church technology infrastructure that are being addressed. The host server for the church email addresses was changed from one company to another in December 2019 and January 2020, with temporary interruption of functioning of some email addresses. Many revisions of the website are needed and are pending availability of additional time and help to make them. **Because of privacy concerns** and the intent to not have contact information for individuals visible on the website, in late March 2020 an attempt was made to remove all contact information about people from the website, including removal of postings of *Weekly Connections* and the Sunday Handout. The only remaining contact information is for church staff.

UUCE has Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube postings. Coordinator of Outreach and Engagement Sarah Skochko and Office Administrator Jody Monegan have been managing those postings, with occasional input from others.

Weekly Connections. This document, with articles of interest and the church calendar, was initiated on December 5, 2018, and is produced by the church office staff with input from the church volunteer editorial team and from church professional staff. This document is designed to take the place of the previous monthly Connections newsletter and the previous Weekly eBulletin that were discontinued in 2018. The document is sent by email using MailChimp format and posted on the website each week on Wednesday. The volunteer editorial team sends their suggestions to the office staff each Wednesday morning. The website postings were removed in late March 2020.

Sunday Handout and Order of Service. Starting on Sunday, September 16, 2018, the Order of Service (produced by church professional and office staff) became a separate document given to each attendee of the Sunday service, and the Sunday Handout with the weekly church calendar and announcements (produced by the church volunteer editorial team and the church office staff) became available as a separate document on a table in the Social Hall for people to pick up if they were interested. The document was also posted on the website. The website postings were removed in late March 2020. The Order of Service was discontinued after March 8, and the Sunday Handout was discontinued after March 22, due to suspension of in-person worship services.

Weekly Meeting and Event Calendar. This printed document lists all of the events that occur in the church building (both rental and church events and designation of open or closed to drop-in attendance) and a few off-site events. This document was discontinued in late March 2020 due to closure of the church building.

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic. In about mid-March 2020, the church was closed to in-person meetings. The last in-person worship service occurred on March 8.

Use of Zoom. In March 2020, in-person church meetings were cancelled and many of them were changed to online format using Zoom. Some of the Zoom meetings are hosted by UUCE Zoom accounts, and some are hosted by personal Zoom accounts. Some of the Zoom meetings are in webinar format, which allows people to observe the presenters, but not to see or hear each other. Join meeting links to webinar format events are listed on the website. Some of the meetings are in meeting format, which allows participants to see and hear each other. Join meeting links to the meeting format events are available only in *Weekly Connections*. For some of the events, it is necessary to contact the host person for the join meeting link.

Other matters considered by the CTF in collaboration with church staff included management of the Information and Fundraising tables, use of the bulletin boards, processes for notification of people about church emergencies, use of Slack (an internal communication tool), and other matters as needed.

Additional changes are anticipated with upcoming staff changes and eventual reopening of the building.

Respectfully submitted, Dick Loescher, Communications Task Force chair

UUCE Library

The UUCE Library was reopened in January 2019 in the room accessed via the doors behind and to the left of the Sanctuary stage. Open hours (prior to the Church's closure in March 2020) were Sundays from 11:00am to 1:00pm. The library could also be opened by request during the week.

Bob Kaeser generously donated three bookcases in April 2019 that greatly increased our shelf space. The added shelves allow the books to be displayed at more easily reached heights (both low and high).

Emmet Band and the Building and Grounds crew installed some new shelves that are long enough to safely protect the quilts when they are not being hung in the Sanctuary.

A rolling cart houses books used by the Challenging Racism group. The rolling cart allows this group to bring the books to their meetings.

Additional valuable shelf and floor space was made available by Ruth Anne Fraley and BAGs by moving the boxes containing items used for worship, along with the cart holding the hymnals, out of this room and into closets in the hallway and Social Hall.

Photos of UUCE's prior ministers that had previously been mounted in the hallway outside the minister's office are now mounted on the Library's north wall.

The room is available for meetings and was occasionally reserved by various groups in our church.

Books were getting checked out prior to the library's Covid19 closure, so it was wonderful to see the library being used!

Future work: There is still much work to be done with further curating the collection, assuring all of the books have check out cards, and possibly reconfiguring some of the categories.

Janet Barnes

Ministry of Transformation and Action

Food Justice – Produce Plus, Food for Lane County, and Community Court Lunches

Produce Plus is a twice monthly program that brings fresh produce to our neighborhood community. UUCE has been a site for this Food for Lane County incomebased Program since August 2017. From July 2019-March 2020, our site distributed 6,725 lbs of produce. We now average 35 individuals picking up produce for approximately 70 household members. We average 6 volunteers per Produce Plus day for a total of 255+ volunteer hours.

Community Court Lunch Program started in September 2016. UUCE provides 45 lunches 1x per month to this weekly restorative justice program run by the city of Eugene. All items for these healthy lunches are donated by our congregation. From July 2019-Feb 2020, we provided 360



lunches, with 60+ volunteer hours. In addition, the children in Spirit Jam enjoyed decorating lunch sacks and helping to assemble many of the non-perishable lunch items.



As of March 16, all Food Justice activities are on hold. Restart possibilities are unknown. With that in mind, all food donations stored for the Community Court lunches, as well as all food in the FFLC barrel, were donated to community hunger relief efforts.

Quilting for a Cause

Quilting for a Cause has been busy this year. We delivered 13 quilts to First Family Center in the fall. We delivered 9 smaller quilts to COSA. We have also been making curtains for St Vincent's conestoga huts. They make 53 a year and we have made 25 curtains so far. With the pandemic hitting this spring, we have been working in our homes making masks. We try to meet up on zoom twice a month to share projects, ask questions and get encouragement. We hope to be able to meet up soon to create the larger projects that take teamwork. There is a core team of seven involved. We are always looking for additional volunteers to join us.



Barbara Flitcroft QFAC facilitator

Music Committee

SUMMARY of Duties: The Music Committee plays an active role in the Music Program at UUCE. Meeting once a month, they help with volunteer coordination for and scheduling of musical events, help to manage the annual music budget, support the Music staff, and work on long-range Music Program Development. Their behind-the-scenes involvement is essential to the success of the Music Program. This committee does not have a budget.

Charge: The Music Committee is composed of 5-8 non-elected choir and non-choir members and friends of the church who serve one-year renewable terms. Responsibilities include supporting the Music Program by offering constructive feedback on decisions considered by the Music Director; suggesting ways in which to build on the health and outreach of the program; helping coordinate and produce special music events; undertaking special fundraising projects that benefit the musical life of the church; making recommendations to the Board in conjunction with the Music Director regarding the Music Program budget; making available to the congregation a brochure providing information about the music program; assisting in the process of hiring music staff; and advocating for the Music Director when appropriate.

In 2019-2020: The music program lost Music Director Brad Schultz in July 2019. The position was filled by Mitchell Davey in September. The budget for the music program this year was extremely lean, leaving very little room for new music, never mind having a concert. The position had also been down-sized to Choir Director. The only thing the Music Committee could help with at this point was to do some extreme cleaning out of the music file cabinets over the 2019 summer, finishing this project into Mitch's first couple of months with us. In March-April 2020 the coronavirus has caused the church to go online through Zoom. So for the time being, the Music Committee waits in the wings for any assistance to be needed in the future.

Susanne Giordano

Fair Trade Coffee Cart

The UUCE Fair Trade Coffee Cart is an environmental project and a fund-raiser for UUCE. We have Equal Exchange edibles for sale weekly, all certified organic and all Fair Trade. We have a variety of coffees, teas, and chocolates at the UUCE Coffee Cart. All products support farmers directly and 20-30 percent of the sales price goes to support UUCE. The UUCE Fair Trade Coffee Cart is open every Sunday, year-round, after the service. Look for us in the South Lobby.

UU Earth Action

We are a very busy group with lots of interest in helping our Planet. This year, we helped other groups sponsor Informational Movies, we collected recyclable plastics from our congregation and took it all to Lane County. We worked to make connection, and have a relationship with

- Conservative Christian Churches
- Our UUCE Youth group
- Worked to develop a youth related Eugene Mayoral relationship

Many attended Rally days for the state House and Senate Bills to provide Carbon Tax and Invest legislation before the Republicans abdicated Democracy. In working with UUA Ministry for Earth, we helped arrange, and have speak, one of the plaintiffs for "Our Children's Trust". We also helped them make several large amphibious creatures that several of us used at GA 2019.

We supported, with demonstrations both here in Eugene and in Portland for "Our Children's Trust". UUCE Earth Action also got authorization and signed as a Friend of the Court/Amicus for the Our Children's Trust Oregon suit, Cherniak v. Brown, accepted by the Oregon supreme Court last summer.

We hosted the OUUVfJ (Oregon UU Voices for Justice) Annual Meeting.

We worked to provide an Earth Day event at UUCE, which would have been a Full Community Spirit Jam event. Unfortunately, we were unable to present it secondary to the Coronavirus.

We had planned for EV's, Organic Gardening, a sharing from the Congregation on how they are decreasing their CO2 levels, Youth participation, etc.

Worked to produce a Trifold handout for UU Earth Action.

Worked to produce a bumper sticker reading ...Idling is Exhausting.

Took our brochures downtown and handed them out on Fridays, to encourage folks to contact their Banks...Chase, Wells Fargo, etc. to stop providing funds for oil exploration. Helped link us to Interfaith Earthkeepers web page, which is produced by our own Ron Hess. Worked to put our group on our own UUCE social media pages.

Small Group Ministry

The charter (charge, mission statement, or goal) of the Small Group Ministry (SGM) program is to build community by facilitating connections and understanding among people, to promote personal and spiritual growth, and to provide service to the church or the larger community. These goals are closely aligned with the UUCE Mission Statement. The UUCE Small Group Ministry Covenant of Right Relationship is shown after the end of this report and on the SGM webpage.

The SGM program has been occurring annually at UUCE since 2003, with approximately 50 to 90 people participating each year in small groups with a trained facilitator. Each year, the groups disband at the end of the church year, and new groups are formed the following year. The program is open to friends and members of UUCE. Each year, some people are participating for the first time, and others have participated one or more times previously. Most indicate that their experiences are very rewarding, and they would recommend the program to others. Participants are requested to make a one-time voluntary registration donation to help cover the expenses of the program and support the church budget.

The program is planned and implemented by the SGM Steering Committee (whose members are church volunteers), in collaboration with the minister. They select and train the facilitators. Facilitators and steering committee members serve as long as they are interested and willing. At the SGM Facilitator Training in December 2019, participants included the SGM facilitators, assistant facilitators, steering committee, Sharon Roberts (Membership Committee chair and WrenSong chair), and Katy Siepert (Director of Faith Formation).

This church year, the SGM program consisted of ten 2-hour sessions from January through May 2020. A total of 70 people registered. Approximately 64 people, including the facilitators, actually started in the 9 groups, with several people withdrawing at various times along the way. Approximately 30% of the participants were relatively new friends or members of UUCE. 36% were participating in the SGM program for the first time. 64% self-identified as women, 28% self-identified as men, and 9% self-identified as trans (all of whom were in the same SGM group per their request). The overall theme was "Themes of Life," with the topics of the individual sessions inspired by the monthly church worship themes. The titles of the sessions were: 1. Getting Acquainted. SGM Program and Covenant Review. 2. Belonging. 3. Awe. 4. Wisdom. 5. Expectations. 6. Integrity. 7. Liberation. 8. Resilience. 9. Play. 10. Thresholds.

The SGM facilitators this year were Jean Ella, Ed Glennon, Saro Hendrickson, Steve Kuzma, Dick Loescher, Yvonne Lyles, Connie Newman, Susan Oldland, and Anne Turner. In addition, we had three assistant facilitators: Frankie Hill, Jones Hollister, and Jean Marie Stine. The SGM steering committee members were Dick Loescher (chair), Bonnie Koenig, and Connie Newman. All of these folks met each month for mutual support and education.

Due the COVID-19 pandemic, the church building was closed and in-person meetings were cancelled in about mid-March 2020. Eight of the nine SGM groups resumed meeting virtually using Zoom, either via a UUCE account or a personal account. Regarding service projects, some groups agreed to contact people by various methods to let them know that they were being thought of. One group focused on being able to help with welcoming newcomers. Some groups did not do a service project.

This year, for the first time, we used a Google form for the evaluation form filled out by the participants and the form filled out by the facilitators.

Some people in several of the SGM groups have decided to continue to meet via Zoom as an ongoing support group for an indefinite period of time after the SGM program finishes this church year. The specific details and logistics may vary from group to group.

We anticipate that the SGM program will continue in church year 2020-2021, with the specific details to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Loescher, Small Group Ministry Steering Committee chair

WrenSong

WrenSong is a small group ministry for UUCE members with a nature-centered spirituality. The WrenSong program was developed by me as my thesis for a Master of Arts in Earth Literacy degree. Katy Seipert has graciously helped me launch it as a small group ministry at UUCE. The format involves regular gatherings to explore Nature through seasonal walks, working with natural materials, outings and seasonal meals.



The goal is to meet six times each season and for the group to meet for one year (groups may continue if they wish). It began at UUCE with two groups in Spring of 2019. One of the groups met for six months and the second group is continuing to meet. Outings have included seasonal walks at Mt. Pisgah, visiting the sand labyrinths at Bandon, boating at Clear Lake, hiking at Sweet Creek, collecting petrified wood, visiting an alpaca farm and a fish hatchery, birdwatching, and creating art with found materials.



Due to the pandemic, this group has ceased to meet together for any activities, but instead is meeting via Zoom and sharing reflections. Although this was not part of the original format of WrenSong, it has proven to be an effective format and I am considering developing it as an alternative to the more active, outdoor gatherings in the future. I

hope to begin a second round of WrenSong groups when we are able to meet together again.

Submitted, Sharon Roberts

Transitions SGM

My first and only small Ministry group, "Transitions" began two and a half years ago. We've still been meeting twice a month. Connecting is very healing.

Community Offering

As in years past, the Community Offering Committee continues to organize monthly contributions to nonprofits. We have been grateful for the congregation's support of this program, which gives a Sunday's entire offering to a group that embodies our principles.

In 2019-20, we coordinated our offerings with the monthly worship theme. When the coronavirus hit, we pivoted to groups that address the needs of people with unsecure sources of food, shelter, healthcare, jobs, etc. We were thrilled by the April response to our offering to a Centro Latino fund to provide emergency payments to local residents who don't have documentation: Congregants responded by giving \$3,985! That's a record!

The church year's recipients and amounts donated are:

- June 2019 Little Music Playground (Oregon Mozart Players) \$835
- July Trauma Healing Project \$1,104.22
- August Bethel Farm \$1,042
- September Blues in the Schools \$1,247.52
- October Girl Scouts \$1,037
- November Womenspace (children's gifts) \$1,340.46
- December Uhlhorn Day Services \$884
- January 2020 UU Voices for Justice \$968
- February NW Abortion Access Fund \$1,290.86
- March Boys & Girls Club of Emerald Valley \$925
- April Centro Latino Americano (COVID-19 Relief Fund) \$3,985
- May Habitat for Humanity \$886
- June's offering will be given to FOOD for Lane County

Total: \$15,545.06

Visit our web page, https://uueugene.org/community-offerings/, to read about our offerings since we began in 2006. We welcome suggestions for recipients. Send them to community-offering@uueugene.org.

Our committee includes David Bockoven, Valerie Elliott, Gretchen Miller, Marilyn Milne (chair), Ron Milton and Heather Schantz-Mulford.