

President's Annual Report to UUCville 2023
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This has been an eventful year at UUCville!

On August 1, Reverend Tim Temerson began as our lead Developmental Minister. He has provided wise guidance in all areas of congregation life while also listening extensively to our many committees and congregants. We are extremely fortunate to have him with us.

The years of pandemic have changed many things about UUCville. The many long months of zoom-only gatherings have given us a renewed appreciation for being together in person and for the importance of having fun together. Happily, with the mask optional policy that began on March 15, 2023, we can now see each other's faces in person. Though masking throughout the buildings was difficult, we appreciated the wise policies of the Building Use Task Force and no one got COVID from participating in any congregation activity in the three years of pandemic.

As we opened up this year, we have had expertly led multi-platform services that have been accessible and inclusive. Many people have expressed appreciation for being able to come in person and to also zoom in when they are traveling, have moved away from Charlottesville or just want to be at home. Videos of the sermons are available through our website on Youtube.

Rev Tim and Rev Leia have organized meaningful (and sometimes humorous!) services. It is great to have the children with us and to hear their voices in the first parts of the services! The music offerings have been terrific! The after service gatherings have been a wonderful opportunity to be together for more personal sharing (and wonderful snacks and lunches).

We have been having so much fun together. We had at the pool gathering in August, the Auction Party in September, social dancing for all ages, Christmas services, a Solstice Lantern walk, the Labyrinth walk, a craft bazaar, a Holiday party, creative Easter festivities and numerous soup and cake luncheons on Sundays after the services. The 80th birthday party of our congregation on April 16, 2023 was joyous!

Our Minister of Faith Development, Reverend Leia Durland Jones, has continued our Religious Education program in astoundingly creative ways through the pandemic. During the worst of the pandemic we had gatherings at parks, outdoor activities, and indoor masked sessions. More recently, the children have been in the sanctuary in the beginning of Sunday services. Then they have classes and following the classes, have had supervised play time on the playground. The children have such a need to be together in person. The youth gathered on zoom for the first year of the pandemic and then masked in person inside or met unmasked outdoors. It has been a challenge well met. Rev. Leia has expanded Adult Faith Development through the pandemic and we have had many extremely popular offerings.

Despite all the pandemic disruption, we have continued to prioritize supporting each other. Pastoral Care has continued and strengthened. Our ministers and our Pastoral Care Visitors offer personal spiritual support to members of the church community who are ill, going through a life crisis or transition, or are involved in care-giving. The CareNet team provided deeply-appreciated nutritious meals when life issues were overwhelming.

We have so many groups to meet varying needs of our congregants: UU Parents Weekly Conversation Circle, UUCville Women's Friendship Group, UUCville Young Adult Group, Youth RE groups, Children's RE classes, Adult RE classes, the Active Hope Faith Development Group, the Active Minds Discussion Group, UUWomen's Ritual Group, and the Interweave LGBTQ+ Fellowship Group. We have seven active Covenant groups

Throughout the pandemic, we worked to continue our social justice action and this has grown as the pandemic eased. We made meal packets for the UVA hospital patient family support program. We had a food and cleaning supplies drive with Ebenezer Baptist Church (and then later continued this program with bringing supplies for our own congregants several times through the year). We hosted PACEM in Summit House. We supply lunch at the Haven Soup Kitchen on Sundays and we had a drive to collect warm clothes for them. We host the Friday Food Pantry. We engage in IMPACT, we participated in Charlottesville Pride and we sponsored a refugee family from Afghanistan.

We have a monthly Social Action Collection to support 12 local groups each year. Since July, we have supported B.U.C.K. Squad, RISE Foundation, IMPACT, New Beginnings Christian Community Food Ministry, Meal Packets, Birth Sisters, PACEM, African American Teaching Fellows and Charlottesville Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR), our food pantry, and the Blue Ridge Abortion Fund.

In Cottage Conversations we have heard about numerous small kindnesses and the friendships people experience through UUCville and how much all these things mean to us. Participants have spoken about how coming to UUCville allows them to be a part of something bigger in the world and how that makes all the difference to them. We are truly a loving community doing good in the world.

Developmental Ministry:

One of the primary focuses of this year has been our Developmental Goals that we established when we decided that Developmental Ministry would be the next step in our congregation life.

Developmental Goal 1:

We want to define a broad shared vision of our purpose for being a congregation so that we can feel energized, dedicated, and aligned in the use of our resources.

The board appointed a Shared Vision Ad-hoc Committee with a charge to lead a process and congregational discussion to evaluate and revitalize the covenant and shared mission. We held 17 Cottage Conversations where over 120 congregants answered questions about what this congregation means to us, our purpose, the reason we exist and what is important about how we impact the larger community and world. It was fascinating and heartening to hear how we all hold similar visions (though of course in many different words and formats - we are UUs after all!). Many people spoke about the importance of community, love, open-minded inquiry, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual growth, social and environmental justice, caring for one another, engagement in the larger community, nurturing our children and youth, valuing diversity of thought, being a welcoming sanctuary for all people and expressing our love in action. It is inspiring to be a part of a community where people open their hearts and speak about love and dreams with such vulnerability and wisdom.

We are developing a mission statement to present to the congregation on June 4.

Developmental Goal 2:

We want to be a more welcoming, inclusive and anti-racist congregation, cultivating greater diversity in our membership and stronger engagement with the broader Charlottesville community.

Rev Tim meets with our Membership Committee as they continue their important work on UUCville welcoming all people. Developing a clear path to membership is a critical part of this work. We have monthly Newcomers Circles after services and a New Member and Friends class. Zooming with Rev Tim on Thursdays at noon offers a welcoming space for anyone to talk with Rev Tim.

We changed our sign on Rugby Road to “Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Charlottesville” as an important step in becoming more welcoming. At the Sunday Service on January 15, “The Responsibilities of Privilege,” Rev. Tim and Greg Townsend provided a rousing call for us to examine white privilege in our congregation and in the larger world. In the conversation that followed, congregants shared their experiences and insights in a powerful beginning to our journey toward building a more anti-racist community. Linda Dukes and Diane Ober are meeting with Rev. Tim to discuss anti-racism training and actions for our congregation. The Racial Justice group has started to have conversations again. Through Adult Faith Development, UUCville will offer a Transgender Inclusion class. The board voted to approve UUCville as a Community Partner for talk [Bryan Stevenson](#) lecture on March 28th at JPJ Arena.

As we continue forward, we also plan to examine how we support young adults and LGBTQIA2S+ communities, how we can become more multicultural, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive and how we can combat ageism.

Developmental Goal 3:

We want to strengthen our Stewardship Ministry to manifest passionate support of our mission with time, wisdom, and finances.

The board appointed a Stewardship Steering Committee with a charge to develop both short and long-term priorities in enabling and expanding the Stewardship Ministry to care for all our physical and financial resources.

Buildings and Grounds:

The Glenn Short Trust conducted impressive renovations throughout the older building during the pandemic and we returned to in person activities in a beautifully revitalized building. They have a few remaining renovations to complete before their work is done.

Our Facility Rental Task Force worked to improve rentals in order to stabilize and improve the revenue stream. They have done extensive work from researching and benchmarking our fee schedules and evaluating our facilities, to promoting our facilities with beautiful pictures on our website and updating our rental agreements and policies. <https://uucharlotteville.org/renting-our-facilities-and-grounds/>

Our new Building Committee has been meeting to set priorities for maintenance and repairs to our property. Summit House has a new HVAC system, Summit House's fire escape has been repaired and we plan to repair the ramps in upcoming months.

In June and July, thanks to the wisdom and action of Sean, we survived the lightning strike and thanks to quick thinking (and acting) members and staff, we survived the basement flood.

The Grounds Committee has kept our campus looking beautiful and well maintained. They have worked hard to bring native species to our grounds and to have truly lovely gardens.

The technology in the sanctuary is impressive. We have an extensive sound and video system in the sanctuary and social hall. We also have an excellent system for conducting meetings in person and on zoom. We now have excellent WIFI throughout both the main building and Summit House.

Financial Resources:

Our Treasurer, Kay Frazier, our Director of Administration and Finance, Sean Skally, and the Finance committee have been working extremely hard to ensure that we have up to date information on our finances and transparent record keeping. Thanks to expert management and an increased honoring of pledges, our finances for this current fiscal year are on track to balance revenues and expenditures. The Finance Committee's excellence in not only figuring out the numbers, but in also considering the heart of our congregation, has led to respectful, thoughtful conversation and support throughout the year.

We had an extremely successful Pledge Drive in which congregants pledged over \$500,000.

Through an impressively inclusive and collaborative process, our Personnel Committee, Finance Committee, Treasurer and Vice President spoke with our many committees, board, staff, and members to determine our needs and develop a balanced budget.

We had a fun and financially successful yard sale in July and a terrific auction in September.

Developmental Goal 4:

We want to strengthen our internal processes and communication skills, build trust, and become more emotionally and operationally functional than we have been historically.

Our Vice President, Bev Ryan, and the Personnel Committee have developed policies, salary guidelines and recommendations for staff benefits after thoroughly evaluating the UUA values based policies and practices.

The Policy Review Team has reviewed the bylaws and our policies and made recommendations to keep all our documents up to date.

Our board Vice President, Bev Ryan, reviewed all the committees and is updating descriptions on the website.

The Communications Committee continues phenomenal work on our website both in making it lovely and easy to navigate and in making sure all pertinent information is updated. It is easy to find out what is happening and check on all aspects of congregation life on our website. It has been wonderful to see all the pictures of congregation life on our website! Our list of Frequently Asked Questions are available on the website to help make the structure and processes of UUCville life more transparent to the congregation. Our Wednesday and Friday emails keep us connected with both heartening and informative posts. We are also able to send texts to the whole congregation with announcements of important events and important messages and we have developed our social media presence.

Though the pandemic was unbelievably challenging in so many ways, we found the resilience, creativity and determination to not only survive it, but to grow and even transform our congregation life. I hope that we can continue on this exciting path and bring our love to even more action.