



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Grand Valley



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## Annual Report 2020



### From Your Minister

Rev. Wendy Jones

#### The Meeting:

The Annual Meeting is on Sunday, June 14 via Zoom. An informational budget meeting is at 9am. Our service is at 10:30am, followed by the Annual Meeting starting at approximately 12:00pm.

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What a year. I guess I will start at the end and move backwards.

#### Racial Injustice:

As I write this, the United States is entering into it's 2nd week of riots and protests against police brutality, sparked by the death of George Floyd who was choked to death by a police officer kneeling on his neck. This is a reminder that UUCGV has hard work to do to continue to be a "go to" place for social justice. In that light we teamed up with local Together Colorado clergy, and hosted a community event called "Living Into Our Inclusivity Proclamation" in February in which over 200 people from the community showed up to talk about their lived experience of inclusion here in the Grand Valley. The racial unrest is a reminder that this work must continue and we



must be one of the leaders in the valley to help it move forward.

#### Pandemic:

We are also coming off of 10 weeks of social distancing and virtual worship services due to the COVID pandemic. We are learning that our connections with one another and our faith community transcends physical presence; that we can still have deep meaningful connection when we are physically distanced from one another. Even though our building has been closed for the past 10 weeks, we have continued to reach out to the community by opening up our parking lot and offering tables for the Grand Junction Mutual Aid group to hand out much needed supplies to the community every Tuesday.

I have continued to offer pastoral care during this pandemic via zoom, phone calls, texting and even a little bit of face to face pastoral care. Our lay leadership has worked very diligently behind the scenes making sure that our bills are paid, the stewardship campaign continues and our doors stay strong and ready to reopen when it is deemed safe by our public health officials.

#### Financial Health:

At our congregational meeting last year I asked the congregation to

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take a leap of faith to pass a budget that was in the red with the faith that we would make up for the deficit throughout the year. In February we were well on track to do this. When the quarantine hit we had a few tense weeks wondering what our financial situation would be as our revenue from rental income and Sunday morning offerings decreased drastically. We have been able to weather this storm and have received a PPP loan from the government that has allowed us to continue paying our mortgage and payroll through this crisis.

I am optimistic that our financial health will continue for this next year even as we need to be very intentional about where & how we direct our resources since we do envision a much lower net income due to the loss of revenue with our rentals.

### **Moving forward:**

As always, I feel so fortunate and grateful to be the minister to such a wonderful faith community. We never know what the future holds, but I have no doubt that whatever storms the year 2020 continues to throw at us we will weather it creatively and together. Bring it on!

~Rev. Wendy



## **UUCGV Board**

Elizabeth High, President



UUCGV Board Annual report for 2019-2020 fiscal year

Elizabeth High (President), Laurel Carpenter (Vice President), Steve Watson (Treasurer), Janet Cummings (Past President), Duane Carr, Herb Feinzig, Richard Hyland, and Abby Leinbach (At-Large Trustees)

### **Accomplishments:**

We started this year with clarification of the role of the Board and adoption of a Board Mission statement. A couple highlights this year were the Vision 2030 Town Hall meeting hosted by the Board in January and the "Living into our Inclusivity Proclamation" event put on by Together Colorado and hosted by UUCGV in February. The Board would also like to thank our staff and many hard-working members and friends of this congregation for a year's worth of top-notch worship services, a successful auction last fall, a blossoming of our religious education program, an OWL teacher training hosted

by UUCGV in February, and continued development of our working relationship with the Library Discovery Garden next store.

### **Future Plans:**

A pressing issue in the immediate future will be determining how to move forward safely yet inclusively in the face of COVID-19. COVID-19 also put a damper on the wave of positive momentum from the Living into our Inclusivity Proclamation event in February; we would like to work with Together Colorado to find a way to re harness that momentum. In the coming year we would also like to strengthen our Leadership recruitment/orientation process, update the Bylaws' description of Board roles/responsibilities, and support our Green Sanctuary team in its initiatives to partner with the Library Discovery Garden.

## **Children's Religious Education**

Chelsea E. Craine, Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth



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RE Team: Jan Hyland, Joanie Leinbach, Paul Kraushaar, Abby Leinbach, Laurel Carpenter

This year we used the Soul Matters themed ministry curriculum which uses the same monthly themes in RE as the ones used in adult worship. On Sunday mornings we had three classes: PreK-1st grade, 2nd-5th grade, and middle school. Children ages three and under went to the nursery with Robin.

In addition to Sunday mornings, we had a variety of other events, both social and service oriented throughout the year. Most notably was the addition of a monthly Parents' Night Out, our Glenwood Caverns fundraiser and trip, the It's Scary to Be Hungry food drive benefiting Community Food Bank, and our Mitten Tree program where we solicited dozens of donations in mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves to stock our blessing box through the winter. We also went on several intergenerational hikes in the Grand Valley including Minca Mines, Dinosaur Hill, and Devil's Canyon. Finally, we have also developed a close relationship with staff and volunteers in the Discovery Garden, helping plant and develop beds, and construct the Bookworm raised bed.

This year we were also successful in planning and hosting an OWL facilitator training here at UUCGV! This took a lot of work from a lot of people, but I would especially like to thank Mary Delbecq and Joanie Leinbach for their support and countless hours preparing meals for the participants. We love you! The training was attended by 16 people, including 7 members of our

congregation. We then launched a K-1 OWL class in the spring, which was unfortunately postponed due to COVID-19. We hope to relaunch in the fall if possible.

As with all aspects of the church, we had to drastically reform our program in March when the COVID-19 pandemic came to the Grand Valley. We have offered virtual children's chapel on Sunday mornings, UU night on Wednesday evenings, and in the first two months of the pandemic, Monday and Friday morning UU Kids hang outs. As we have slowly begun offering small, outdoor, in person activities, the hangouts have been eliminated. Although no concrete progress was made toward the addition of a playground to our grounds, I would like to say that the RE team and myself are thoroughly committed to this project. We hope to pursue this project in the next year.

It has been my sincere pleasure and privilege to serve as your DRE this year. I love and appreciate each and every one of you and look forward to another amazing year together!

## Adult Choir

Amandalin Hunter,  
Director of Music



This year the choir had new additions to our music catalog including a new rendition of Set Me As A Seal by Rene Clausen. We also got additional pieces from Jay Althouse and John Rutter. I thank my choir members for their diligence in meeting weekly at 6:30 on Wednesday nights from September until March this year when we postponed our rehearsals until further notice in response to the covid pandemic. We also have two amazing pianists Janet Hassell and Janet Cummings who play for rehearsal and for Sunday services. The choir sings two services a month.

## Finance Report

Steve Watson, Treasurer



While we started the fiscal year with an \$8,000 deficit, as we had predicted, we were in fact on track to make up that shortfall throughout the year. Even though the shut down threw us for a financial loop, we were granted a \$27,000 PPP loan to continue to pay our payroll and our mortgage which we believe will indeed land us in the black, to the tune of \$10,000, for the end of this fiscal year making up for that projected budgetary

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loss.

Due to the uncertainty of the upcoming fiscal year, we are again budgeting in a conservative manner planning for lower income, while optimistic that once again we will stabilize financially as the fiscal year moves forward.

Sue Brown had accepted the position as our new treasurer and we are happy to have a new person take the position. I have enjoyed serving as treasurer although it has caused me moments of worry. We are a solid congregation and we are committed to being a welcoming place for diverse thought and community involvement.

As the Onion newspaper says: "we are in a continual struggle to overcome ignorance - it's taking longer than we thought!"

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## Membership Team

Bill Conrod, Chair



Since this time last year, we have had 10 new members sign the membership book with a number of new friends.

Our Sunday worship services were attracting an average of 5 visitors/guests on Sunday mornings. From July through March we were averaging 70 adults upstairs for worship and 12 youth and children in the RE program.

Although, due to the pandemic we transitioned to a virtual worship service in mid-March, we have continued to average about 70 people joining us via zoom. The exciting part about going virtual is that we are able to connect with members and friends who have moved out of the Grand Junction area. These renewed connections are very exciting, and we have had two new members sign the membership book in the past two weeks. Our current membership level is at 102.

The membership team held four meetings, organized a new member ceremony for last June, and modified our "guiding path to membership" with ideas from UUA.

The membership team will be looking for creative ways to continue to make connections during this time of physical distancing.

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## Safety Team

Bill Conrod, Chair

As requested by the board as an item from our Long Term Planning Report of December, 2017, I volunteered to work on church safety and security issues. A team of a half dozen volunteers was formed with a first meeting in July, 2019. Turnover has been a problem. There are many safety issues, but it seemed the safety team's

highest priority is dealing with an active shooter. We had seven meetings through the year, met with two Grand Junction Police Department officers for a site visit and their recommendations, attended two Mesa County Church Safety Network meetings, developed a response plan for a shooter, and presented it to the board for approval. The alarm system was upgraded with several hand-held silent alarm buttons.

When we resume normal services, we need a town hall type meeting, perhaps after service, to present the plan to the congregation for input. We may have a problem of having gone too far without congregational input, but we felt it best to have a coherent plan to present. An underlying question is just how much security do we really want and feel comfortable with.

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## Staff Congregation

### Relations (SCR)

Richard Hyland



**Mission:** The Staff-Congregation

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Relations (SCR) Committee reports to the Board and oversees the hiring, evaluation and performance of the paid staff of the Church. It mediates issues among staff members, between staff members and supervisors, and between staff and members of the congregation on a confidential basis. It serves in an advisory role to the Minister in her/his role of staff supervisor. It seeks to achieve and maintain a healthy balance between the need for skilled professional staff and volunteer involvement in the growth and evolution of the Church.

**Members:** Richard Hyland, Joanie Leinbach, Monte High, Carmine Nugent.

**Activities:** Over the past year, the SCR has continued to grow into its mission, confronting and resolving challenges as UUCGV continues to grow. This past year has been especially challenging. Among the notable events are the following:

Welcomed, oriented and supported new staff member, Chelsea Craine, who is serving as our new Director of Religious Education (DRE). Working with a revitalized RE Team, she has rejuvenated the RE program, attracted many new kids and their families and brought youthful excitement into worship services, RE activities and Congregational life in general.

Resolved, together with our Minister in her role as staff supervisor, a series of staff-congregant incidents involving poorly defined role/responsibility boundaries between the staff Facility Manager and the congregation Property Team. The resolution process was difficult, time consuming

and emotionally taxing. The outcomes were sobering: resignation of the Team leader of the Property Team, dissolution of the Property Team, resignation of a Congregant, and finally resignation of the Facility Manager in March 2020. Details and the learning gained will be part of an SCR Incident Report to be released to the Board in the near future.

Found and hired a new Facility Manager

Fully funded the staff benefits program, in compliance with UUA Guidelines, for all staff working 20 or more hours per week.

Working with our Minister in her role as staff supervisor, established a staff performance evaluation process and tools with implementation to begin soon.

Continued to update and standardize staff job descriptions including Facility Manager and Administrator.

Continued to work with the Board and volunteer teams to educate all Congregation members and friends on the roles and responsibilities of staff and their importance in UUCGV operation

Working with the Board, successfully applied for and received a loan/grant of \$27,000 from the Federal Government through the CARES Paycheck Protection Loan program directly benefitting UUCGV staff.

## Journey to a Green Sanctuary Team

Mary Delbecq, Member Green Team has met monthly this past church year. The following church members have been involved with the Green Team: Ann Barrett, Audrey

Brainard, Wendy Brainard, Arleta & Duane Carr, Mary Delbecq, Gary Dolezal, Patricia Eble, Elizabeth & Monte High, Bill Hilty, Richard Hyland, Lance & Peg Oswald, Pooka, Robintix Perryman and Cheryl Roberts. Audrey stepped down from chairing the Green Team in February and Richard and Ann have filled in as temporary chairs. Mary Delbecq has maintained meeting minutes.



The teams main goal is to complete the requirements to have UUCGV achieve UUA Green Sanctuary Accreditation. We are presently at stage 3 of this process which involves creating action plans and completing projects that focus on 4 areas: Environmental Justice, Worship and Celebration, Religious Education and Sustainable Living. During the January 26, 2020 UUCGV Visioning meeting participants identified 25 projects that would help us work for a sustainable and clean world for everyone. The 4 projects that received the most votes were:

- Being more involved with the Discovery Garden by maintaining the compost

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area, grow more food for the soup kitchen and use the garden as an educational resource for RE.

- Encourage reduce and reuse philosophy. Come up with a system to re-purpose or share items within our church community.
- Offer environmental education programs at UUCGV open to the community.
- Revisit the concept of solar panels for the church possibly as free standing shade structures.

Some of the items members accomplished this past year include:

- Richard, Audrey and Wendy attended the Solar United Neighbors meeting to learn about this non profit organization dedicated to expanding the use of solar energy.
- Audrey is a member of Citizens for Clean Air and keeps us updated.
- Mary worked to make several events at the church greener by not using disposable plates and cutlery. Aiming for zero food waste and trash from the events.
- Audrey, Monte, Patricia and Ann wrote Green team articles for the church bulletin.
- Richard presented a copy of our Green Sanctuary Assessment report to the Grand Valley Interfaith Network.
- A Green Store Cart was created to sell environmentally friendly household cleaning products.
- Audrey and Cheryl manned a greener practices information table after church services.

- Audrey and Chelsea manned a table with climate related info and UUCGV signage at the Grand Junction climate rally. Many Green Team members attended the rally.
- Richard gave a presentation on Green Sanctuary Action Planning to the team.
- Mary, Audrey and Ann have been attending the Discovery Garden meetings at the library.
- Team members have been assisting with Discovery garden planting, decorating, compost maintenance and creating educational information on the use of composting to recycle nutrients back into the garden and reduce landfill waste.

This garden area is a vital resource for the RE program and Chelsea has been incorporating it into her classes frequently. It gives the opportunity to touch on environmental topics such as sustainability and the value of growing food locally. It touches on social justice because the food grown is available to the entire community. It gives UUCGV the opportunity to help make the community a greener place.

We are planning to redo the individual assessment questionnaire to see if we have made progress over the past year.

## Care Update

We have had an active care team this year under the guidance of Laura Jeffries as the team head. The care team and Rev. Wendy have worked closely together balancing the personal one on one pastoral care that Rev. Wendy does with the more active support such as delivering

meals for people and organizing rides, etc.

One of the new programs that the care team implemented this year was the monthly "Care-Full" conversations discussions that Rev. Wendy and the care team hosted on Thursday mornings. This Thursday morning conversation transitioned to the virtual "UUCGV Coffee House" when the stay at home orders were put in place due to COVID19.

The care team was also very active during the quarantine as they continued to check in with people who were feeling isolated and communicating with Rev. Wendy as needs would arise.

The UU Institute is offering a Lay Pastoral Care training program for lay leaders this spring. We have 5 people who are taking these classes under the guidance of Rev. Wendy. This is a very exciting program that will strengthen the depth of our pastoral presence here at UUCGV.

We foresee the upcoming year keeping us busy as we are dealing with the stresses related to a pandemic, riots and a pivotal election year.

