



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Grand Valley



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## Annual Report 2021



### From Your Minister

Rev. Wendy Jones

#### The Meeting:

The Annual Meeting is on Sunday, June 13 via Zoom. An informational budget meeting is at 9:30am. Our service is at 10:30am. followed by the Annual Meeting starting at approximately 12:30pm.

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As I write this annual report, the word that comes to me is gratitude. I feel a deep sense of gratitude for our amazing staff, deep gratitude for our amazing lay leadership and deep gratitude for all of our UUCGV congregation consisting of members and friends who held us together throughout this very strange year. I feel like our bond is still strong, and I extend my gratitude to each and every one of you, for helping make that be so.

When I wrote my annual report for 2020, I wrote that we were coming off of 10 weeks of social distancing and virtual worship services due to the COVID pandemic. That number has now grown to over 60 virtual worship services.

As, I stated last year, we have learned that our connections with



one another and our faith community transcends physical presence; we have demonstrated that we can still have deep meaningful connection when we are physically distanced from one another. We have lived into that truth this year.

One of the highlights of the year has been our partnership with the Grand Junction Mutual Aid distribution in our parking lot every Tuesday for well over a year now. This has proved to be an extremely valuable community resource for the Grand Junction community, and I feel honored that GJ Mutual chose us to reach out to as partners in this endeavor.

We have also hosted a number of collections for the Navajo Nation this year under the organization of Sandy Dorr & Sally Crum, sending truckloads of supplies to various locations.

Thank you Sandy & Sally for taking on such a huge endeavor, and to everybody who have contributed to this and drove U-Hauls and trucks to deliver the much needed supplies.

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.

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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.

Overall, it has been wonderful and difficult year. We have had to say goodbye to some of our beloved congregants this year, and we are a stronger faith community because of their love and commitment to UUCGV for so many years. So, we miss them and hold them in our hearts at the same time.

My hope is that we will be able to engage in more "in person" activities as people get vaccinated and feel safe going out in public again.

Finally, there have been some gifts from learning how to navigate being a "virtual" faith community. We have been blessed with being able to see people who have moved away but are still able to be an active part of our community on Sunday mornings. I hope we can find creative ways to incorporate this virtual gift that transcends physical presence as we move 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 2021 might throw at us, we will weather it creatively and together. Here's to another wonderful year.

With love,  
Rev. Wendy



## UUCGV Board

Elizabeth High, President  
UUCGV Board Annual report for  
2020-2021 Fiscal Year

Elizabeth High (President),  
Laurel Carpenter (Vice  
President), Sue Brown  
(Treasurer), Janet Cummings  
(Past President), Melissa  
Humphrey (At-Large), Richard  
Hyland (At-Large), Abby  
Leinbach (At-Large)

### Accomplishments:

The Board this year was largely focused on helping our congregation maintain a sense of community and keep safe as we navigated the COVID-19 pandemic. We kept tuned to guidance from the UUA, CDC, and the Mesa County Health Department as we worked to

balance needs for safety, community, and inclusivity in our COVID-19 policy.

In the late summer, we initiated a check-in phone call effort. We extend our gratitude to the volunteers from leadership and from the membership and care teams who called members of our congregation to see how they were doing and whether they had any needs that we could meet. Many people expressed appreciation for getting this phone call in the midst of an isolating and disorienting time.

In late summer, our Black Lives Matter banner was vandalized. The Board and TLC worked together with Reverend Wendy to address this. The vandal who damaged the banner unwittingly gave UUCGV a platform for publicity about the problem of racism in the Grand Valley. A few weeks after television and newspaper publicity about UUCGV's banner and its vandalism, another church in town decided to also put up a Black Lives Matter banner. Thank you to the generous congregant who has purchased a back up banner in the case that our banner again would be damaged.

### Future Plans:

We hope in the coming year to further address the second UUCGV goal that we set last summer: "Realizing that the pandemic is sharpening inequalities and the UUCGV's social justice presence will be needed now more than ever before, we will actively promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations within our Grand Valley community and the in

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world at large.” We also will be keeping tuned to changes in the progression of COVID-19 and its management, and will likely be modifying the our COVID-19 policy as changes occur in the world outside.

We want to thank our congregation for its generous financial support through this COVID-19 pandemic, and we look forward to meeting the coming year’s boons and challenges together with the rest of you in a spirit of community, resilience, creativity, enthusiasm, and love.



## Children’s Religious Education

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

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

This year Sunday morning RE was conducted via Zoom using the Soul Matters themed ministry curricula. The Soul Matters programming for children covers the same themes the adults discuss in worship, but in a child-

friendly manner. We began the year with two classes (preK-1st grade and 2nd-5th grade) but ended up consolidating the two into one. Many thanks to our wonderful RE teachers who adapted to online learning and made this year possible: Penny Hopkins, Barb Preston, Peg Oswald, Joanie Leinbach, Monte and Elizabeth High, Sandy Dorr, Kathleen Hedlund, and Melissa Humphrey. You kept our kids engaged in our community despite the pandemic; thank you!

In addition to Sunday mornings, we also hosted a variety of small, outdoor events throughout the year. These included field trips to Moon Farms and Glenwood Caverns, several planting activities in the Discovery Garden, decorating a door for Habitat for Humanity, and a tie dying project. Our kids also collaborated with the adult choir to provide music for RE Sunday, created a unique video skit celebrating the water cycle, and participated in our first ever virtual Christmas pageant. It has been a busy year!

This summer, RE will resume meeting in person outdoors in the Discovery Garden where we will be planting and tending a pumpkin patch from seed as we explore our seventh principle: the importance of the interdependent web of life. In the fall we hope to resume RE classes in the basement as well as re-launch our K-1 OWL program.

I want to thank each member of the UUCGV community for your positivity and support during this year. The coronavirus pandemic is certainly a defining event in all of our lives, but is especially formative for our children and youth. I believe that this

congregation’s courageous and honest response to a very difficult situation will benefit our children for years to come.



## Adult Choir

Miriam Deming  
UUCGV Music Director

During the 2020-2021 financial year at UUCGV, most activities of the music program were put on hold. Amandalin provided opportunities to record music to create virtual songs/hymns and recorded some music as well. Special music was provided virtually by various UUCGV members.

Miriam Deming became the new Music Director in February 2021 and in-person rehearsals resumed in March 2021. Not much of the music budget was used since the choir was not meeting in person.

My vision for the 2021-2022 UUCGV Choir / Music program is this:

- Create a Modern Band / Youth Choir Program that meets weekly and will provide music for some church services.

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· Continue to have the choir meet most weeks (this summer we are meeting through the end of June) to record hymns and special music for church services. Once in-person services resume, the choir will sing every other Sunday during their Sept.-May season using a variety of music -- some that is currently in the music library and some new music.

· I hope to attend a UU Music professional training session as soon as one meets in person and directly apply some of what I learn there.

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## Finance Report

Last year the congregation took a leap of faith and approved a budget that was estimated to be in the red. Due to the amazing generosity of this congregation we are ending the year with an expected surplus of about \$24,000.

As of the writing of this, for the fiscal year 21-22, we are again showing a deficit budget of about \$6600. Based on the pattern from previous years we feel confident that this deficit will be corrected throughout the course of the year.

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## Membership Team

Bill Conrod, Chair

Due to Covid restrictions and sparse in-person attendance on Sundays, the Membership Team has been dormant. About 40 households (perhaps 50-60 individuals) have been attending on Zoom with about 6-12 persons attending service in

person when we allowed such in spring.

Several old members now living out of state have been joining us on Zoom. If all goes well, we hope to return to normal in-person Sunday services this fall. At that time we will provide more care to guests, prospective new members, and members who became inactive during our Covid hiatus. Membership team needs to be re-organized with recruitment for more team members.

Sadly, Covid claimed our beloved members Duane Carr and Phil Ellsworth. We also said good bye this year to Arleta Carr, Jack Eagleton, Marcia Bilbao, and Wes Allen.

We have had three new members sign the membership book in the past year. Our current membership level is at 92.




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## Safety Team

Bill Conrod, Chair

Due to Covid restrictions on in-person attendance, safety team functions were largely dormant the past year. We received a threatening anonymous letter mentioning arson of the

Milwaukee UU church in connection with Black Lives Matter. This was reported to the police. Our Black Lives Matter banner was also vandalized but at a different time. The church building seems well monitored with video cameras. One safety team meeting was held in March 2021 with six team members attending.

Discussed was potentially hiring a non-uniformed security person for two hours/Sunday to watch the front door during service and let in late arriving members. This would relieve congregation volunteer safety team members during the service. We also need to better integrate pre-service door greeters with safety. Identified last year but still on hold due to Covid restrictions is a congregation town meeting to discuss just how much security do we want?




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## Staff Congregation Relations (SCR)

Richard Hyland

**Mission:** The Staff-Congregation Relations (SCR) Committee reports to the Board

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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.

**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 of COVID-related changes has been challenging. Among the notable events are the following:

- Proposed and gained Board approval for providing all staff members with an annual holiday bonus funded partly through budgeted funds and partly through a dedicated fund-raising effort managed by the SCR. First attempt, managed by Joanie Leinbach of SCR, in December 2020 was overwhelmingly successful providing funds in excess of targeted 1% of staff base salary.

- Accepted the resignation of Amandalin Hunter as Music/Choir Director who needed to devote more time to family.
- In her place, welcomed Miriam Deming to the position effective April 2021.
- Extended the contract of Chelsea Craine, our Director of Religious Education (DRE) who has revitalized, expanded and continues to improve our RE program, worship services, and Congregational life in general.
- In the process of filling the Facility Coordinator position left vacant in May 2021.
- Continued to update and standardize job descriptions, hiring documents (including employment agreements).
- 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.

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## Care Update

This year our care needs were unique in that for the most part we were moving through a pandemic and a shut down. We lost a few beloved members, two of whom to COVID 19, and a few members to old age.

A few members of the care team participated with Reverend Wendy in an online class provided by the UUA for in depth lay pastoral care training. We are grateful for the UUA for providing

such a wonderful resource in the middle of a pandemic.

Our hope for care this year is to begin to have the team meet in person again and reach out in proactive engaging ways as we support people re-integrating into "in person" activities again.

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## Worship

We have been doing virtual online zoom based worship for a full year now. For the most part the kinks have been worked out and Reverend Wendy and the staff has learned how to navigate the technology issues with zoom.

Now that more people are getting vaccinated, there are more individuals choosing to attend worship in person. Right now, we are averaging about 12 people in person on a Sunday morning with about 50 people online.

The worship team is waiting for direction from the board as to when we can begin planning for a larger presence of in person worship services.

As we move to a genuine hybrid model of UUCGV worship, there will continue to be learning curves, this summer will be spent experimenting with how to offer the best hybrid worship possible.

This year we have had a number of powerful rich virtual worship services which stimulate the imagination and the intellect. We are thankful for our guest speakers, and the team committed to making sure that our Sunday mornings continue to flow smoothly in the middle of what might be considered a world in chaos.