President's Report

At our last board meeting, on May 19, board members were asked to describe what they were feeling in the moment. Almost all said the word, "hopeful" and many said "and also anxious". I am sure that most of us are feeling somewhat hopeful right now, and also somewhat anxious. We wonder what the future will hold, and wondering what happened to us in this last year. We are all still trying to figure it all out and it will take time. We have suffered trauma. But we will recover and we will come back stronger. We have all been stressed in so many ways and we have to forgive ourselves and one another for our imperfections.

At the start of this church year, the board created goals and we worked on these goals diligently through the end of March, but then we got gob-smacked. Our Interim minister left under difficult circumstances for us, our president, Natalie, felt the need to step down, and there was conflict that seemed to be unresolvable. But, we did resolve a lot, even most, of the conflict. We are now all working together for the benefit of our congregation. We've come up with creative solutions together. We will work together, and find ways to talk out our disagreements over governance with positive intent, lots of listening, and with the help of a new Interim Minister. That is all to say, that we feel that we need to heal, really heal, and take a little break from working diligently on some aspects of our goals. But, we should all work diligently on one goal- Goal 4- having fun. We need fun, to be able to laugh with one another, to play games, drink wine (or sparkling water), and let our hair down. That should be Goal 1. So, I'm going to break the rules and not report out on progress on the other goals. There will be time for that.

However, the finance committee continues to work towards the financial health of our congregation, the HR committee continues to look at our hiring practices and benefits packages and job descriptions for our staff, the operations committee is still working to keep our facility running and aesthetically pleasing. Everyone is still working hard.

On Thursday, May 19th, the board passed a budget that did not require us to make any cuts to our beloved staff and they are all beloved. We made some great hiring decisions and have a strong administrative office, an incredible RE program, an incredible music program, and knowledgeable technology people. We have a capable sexton, a wonderful RE assistant, and a strong and dedicated Glaser Center coordinator. These are valuble assets that will help our congregation thrive and grow. It's always about quality. We are so lucky.

And our congregants are quality people- not perfect, but quality folks who care about one another and our community. We have lost some people and that is very sad (maybe we can get them back). And we all wish that Covid would just go away so that we can be a whole congregation in all the ways we can be whole again. There are still people who are suffering from isolation and we want those of you who cannot attend in person to know that we care about you.

The board elected our officers for the next fiscal year
President: Leslie Norinsky
Vice President: John Mason
Co-Treasurers: Linda Balabanian and Jan Hess (board member)
Corporate Secretary: Tamara Murrell
At Large Board members are: Scott Miller, Margaret Bregger Coston, Lee Lipinski, Maria Praetzellis, David Reitzell

We honor those board members who served us so well during difficult times: Natalie Brundred, Joe Como, Mike McGirr, Paula Hammett. Thank you, thank you, thank you! And our board member who is terming out is Cathie Wiese. Thank you, Cathie!

Also in the shortness of this month, new committees formed: The Right Relations Team, and the Community Conversations Team. (I may have the names incorrect). I think the names are descriptive of what they are about, but their formation is indicative of how much we all want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be connected to one another and to be a participant in how we govern ourselves as a congregation, increase communication, and provide feedback in healthy ways.

Furthermore, this congregation runs on the efforts of all its volunteers. Volunteerism is what allows us to have so much of what we value in this congregation. I am so grateful for all of our volunteers. And we will continue to ask for you to help. Because we NEED help. We are going to need to build a great fundraising program. In particular, if there are a few people who would like to take on our annual auction (except during Covid lockdown). The auction is a big social occasion with food, and music, and cheer, and it raises a lot of money for our congregation. This short term, but intensive, volunteer opportunity will be well worth the effort. And if you think you would be up for this opportunity, please contact me.

We will also be looking for people to help us set up a very special concert. Again, see me, Leslie Norinsky if you can get a few people working on this as soon as possible.

And finally, I am so proud of the number of people who came forward to work on our 8th Principle Task Force. I've lost track of how many people are a part of this effort, but I know it is more than 10! We are a mightly congregation. I hope that sometime we have an occasion to really look at all of the social justice work, and in particular, anti-racism work, our congregation does within our walls and also in the larger community. We live in a larger society where it is apparent that racism is prevalent and now mainstream. Our response should reflect our value to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

I am so proud of us for so many reasons. Thank you for being here, UUCSR, for all of us.

(I'm also going to break another rule and use the same President's Report for the June newsletter as for the Congregational meeting).