



ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021

101 Forest Avenue
Swampscott, MA 01907
uucgl.org

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn
Annual Report 2020-2021**

Board, Committee, and Task Force Reports

Clerk: Annual Meeting June 14, 2020

Board of Trustees

Vision of Ministry

Governance Committee

Treasurer and Finance Committee

Grants Committee

Properties Committee

Church Reopening Task Force

Staff, Ministry Team, and Group Reports

Parish Minister

Music Ministry

Business Administrator

Faith Development Ministry Team

Green Sanctuary Ministry Team

Social Justice Ministry Team

Unitarian Universalist Women of Greater Lynn

Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn
Annual Parish Meeting
June 14, 2020

The meeting is being held via Zoom due to the ongoing global pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 10:12 a.m. by Michael Celona, president. Michael introduced Jeff Gunther, clerk for the Board of Trustees to review the rules of procedure of the meeting. Jeff reviewed the rules and reminded people on the call that only members of UUCGL can vote. After noting attendance on the Zoom call, it was announced that a quorum was present and the meeting began.

The 2019-20 Annual Report was introduced and members were reminded that printed copies of the report will be available. A motion was made and it was voted to accept the 2019-2020 report. The vote to accept the report was unanimous.

Eileen Cummings presented the recommendations for the new slate of 2020-2021 officers and Board of Trustees:

2020-2021 Board of Trustees Officers:

Past President: Michael Celona

President: Eileen Cummings

Co-Vice Presidents: Jeff Gunther and Mark Vander Linden

Treasurer: Sarah Cecil

Assistant Treasurer: Rebecca Greene

Clerk: Suzanne Forgione

At Large: Ruth Griffin (through 2022)

At Large: Jim Olivetti (through 2023)

At Large: Mary Gatlin (through 2023)

A motion to accept the proffered slate of officers and trustees was made and it was voted to accept the slate. The vote was unanimous.

Acknowledgments:

Michael Celona highlights all the good work everyone has done transitioning to online services due to the global pandemic.

Michael Celona welcomes Rev. Victoria Weinstein back from her sabbatical and notes all the good work she has done to help the church transition during the pandemic. He also notes her early return from sabbatical to help with transitioning the church to online services.

Michael Celona thanks Scott Nowka for all he has done on the Board and with Sanctuary.

Michael Celona also gives a special thanks to Steve Deveau for going above and beyond with getting online services up and running quickly. He also thanks treasurer Sarah Cecil for getting the PPP loan to keep staff employed during the global pandemic as well as her guidance on governance.

Reverend Victoria Weinstein thanks the staff for all their hard work to keep the church going during these uncertain times.

Rev. Weinstein also thanks the ministry teams for their continued hard work throughout the year and gives a special thanks to Dean McKinnon on his continued work on church history as he goes through the archives. Rev. Weinstein also gives a special thanks to Claire Wilson for coordinating pastoral care during her sabbatical and everyone else who helped lead/coordinate services during her absence.

The meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Gunther, Clerk



Board of Trustees

2020-2021

What a year it has been! At this time last year Michael Celona commented that the church building is closed until the fall, and here we are another year later and we are still closed. But the end is in sight, finally. As of May 29th, the state will be fully opened again.

I like the idea of starting on a positive note. We have several people who have stayed the course and gotten us through another wild year. This is by no means a complete list and I apologize up front if I miss anyone.

- Reverend Vicki Weinstein and Kenneth Griffith, who learned the technology and provided us with Zoom services throughout the year.
- Our staff—Elizabeth Muller, Angie Kern, and Mike Michaud, who continued to keep our church going, a task made much harder by having to work remotely.
- The Stanley School Task Force, who spent countless hours navigating through the complex territory of figuring out our response to the town. Doreen Hodgkin, Sarah Cecil, and Mark Vander Linden—we can never thank you enough!
- Michael Celona, our past president, who headed creation of UUCGL's support of the ECCO Beloved Economy Project. And to all those who helped to make this a reality.
- Our pledge drive team, Cliff Charney, Suzanne Forgione, Mary Gatlin, and Ruth Griffin.
- Sarah Cecil, Rev Vicki, and Elizabeth Muller, who created a balanced budget (with a small surplus) and the Finance Committee took the critical look at it.
- A Board of Trustees that worked hard during the year, defining board goals (a first in many years), COVID-19 issues, Stanley School issues, a new ECCO Support Project, and Board Policy updating, all while meeting over Zoom!
- Clare Campbell for organizing several food drives for local pantries and lunch making for My Brother's Table.
- New faces in our services and activities.
- And each of you for your continued support and involvement.

Here is to next year and to being in person once again. To this I say Hallelujah!

Eileen Cummings, President
Board of Trustees

Governance Committee 2020/21

The Governance Committee is probably the least known committee of the church. Appointed by the Board of Trustees, the committee is made up of the Board President, Vice President(s), the Minister, and one or more at-large Board members. The role of the committee is to help the church President set the agenda for Board meetings and to evaluate, create, and refine Board policies.

This year was an unusual year to say the least. All committee meetings were held via Zoom. In spite of the remote nature of the meetings, a lot was accomplished to make sure that the Board stayed on track and addressed important issues without diverging into the details that are the responsibility of the staff.

In spite of the difficulties of remote gatherings, our membership, as certified to the UUA, has stayed relatively steady. This year 134 individuals were members of the church, down by two last year.

The Governance Committee was also designated by the Board to serve as nominating committee for next year's slate of Officers and Trustees.

We are pleased to present the following nominees for 2021/22 Officers and Trustees:

President	Clare Campbell
Past President & Vice President	Eileen Cummings
Treasurer	Rebecca Greene
Clerk	Jim Olivetti
Trustee for 3-year term ending in 2024	Cathy Cubby

The following incumbent Trustees continue in office:

Term ending in 2022:	Ruth Griffin Mark Vander Linden
Term ending in 2023:	Loretta Connolly Mary Gatlin Jim Olivetti

Rolling off the Board at June 30, 2021 will be outgoing officers:

Michael Celona (Past President)
Jeff Gunther (VP)
Suzanne Forgione (Clerk)
Sarah Cecil (Treasurer)

We would also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the members of Board-appointed committees who have labored through this difficult pandemic year to keep the church moving forward, carrying out our Vision of Ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

The Governance Committee:

- Eileen Cummings (President)
- Jeff Gunther (Co-Vice President)
- Mark Vander Linden (Co-Vice President)
- Rev. Victoria Weinstein (Minister)
- Sarah Cecil (Treasurer)

Board of Trustees 2020-2021



Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn 2021 Financial Report

2019/20 Fiscal Year Overview. The fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 was an unusual year for UUCGL, as it was for the rest of the world, reflecting the impact of the COVID pandemic on our fourth fiscal quarter of that year. Fortunately, the resulting decline in the financial markets was temporary, and we ended the year with approximately \$20.9 million in net assets at June 30, 2020, made up primarily of investments, down only slightly from the previous year.

Our budget for 2019/20 church operations, including grants and scholarships, was expected to result in a small surplus for the year. Instead, we saw a deficit of about \$163,000 because of unexpected properties repair projects. The unbudgeted properties projects, amounting to approximately \$238,500, were paid for from our sinking fund and other unrestricted cash on hand that had been accumulated from prior years' surpluses.

Our 2019/20 financial results are summarized in the charts at the end of this report. Full detailed reports are available upon request. This summary does not include the Spinney Mudge funds, which are restricted for purposes of grants and scholarships and accounted for separately. Investment fees (\$78,660, or 0.4%, in 2019/20) are shown as a separate line item since they are deducted directly from our endowment investments and are not part of the operating budget.

Cash Received: Total cash received during 2019/20 was approximately \$791,000. Of this amount, approximately \$704,200 (or 89.0%) came from our endowment. As was our practice at the time, we withdrew an amount equal to 4.0% of the 3-year rolling average market value of the endowment, and used that amount to fund our operations and outreach.

Pledges for the 2019/20 fiscal year were received from 78 pledgers, for a total amount of \$77,610, and an average amount per pledge of \$995. However, the amount of pledge money actually *collected* was significantly less than this amount. During 2019/20 we received approximately \$73,000 (or 9.2% of total receipts) from pledges and plate collections. This was less than the previous year as plate collections and pledge payments declined once we no longer held live on-site worship services. Gifts from outside groups using our facilities also ended when the pandemic shut-down started.

In addition to our usual sources of income, in May 2020 we received a loan of approximately \$85,000 under the US government's Paycheck Protection Program ("PPP") to support the ongoing operations of the church during the uncertain early months of the pandemic. This loan remains a liability on our books, but we expect that the loan will be forgiven and that amount of cash will then become unrestricted.

Expenses: During the 2019/20 church year, we spent a total of about \$954,400, including the \$238,500 in unbudgeted properties projects. If not for those properties projects, our expenditures would have been about \$52,000 less than the prior year and almost \$80,000 ahead of budget. This was caused to a large extent by the reduction in activities during the fourth quarter due to the pandemic.

Balance Sheet: At 6/30/20 we had approximately \$ 21.5 million of assets (excluding Spinney endowment funds and funds held for the UU Women of Greater Lynn), primarily made up of approximately:

Cash and equivalents	\$ 0.4 million
Investments	19.0 million
Fixed Assets (at cost)	2.1 million

This includes a sinking fund that has been set aside from prior year surpluses to fund future repairs and building improvements. Because of the large properties project costs during 2019/20, the sinking fund decreased to approximately \$7,000 at 6/30/20. We plan to move an additional amount into the sinking fund this year to begin replenishing this reserve.

2020/21 Fiscal Year

Our financial results for the first three quarters of the 2020/21 fiscal year have resulted in a large operating surplus so far. (It should be noted that this was the first year we withdrew a reduced amount of 3.75% of the 3-year rolling average market value of our endowment). The operating surplus was mostly due to the impact of the COVID pandemic on our income, activities, and programming. While there are some areas, such as electronic communications, where we have incurred increased costs, many other expenses are considerably below those in prior years. Also, we have not had a Director of Community Life and Learning on staff this year, which reduced our compensation costs.

2021/22 Fiscal Year

The Finance Committee has approved a balanced budget for 2021/22, subject to Board approval. While there are still many uncertainties about how church programming and worship will evolve as we emerge from the pandemic, we hope and believe that our finances during this next year will more closely resemble 2019/20 than the current pandemic year.

In closing, we would like to express our appreciation for the work and support of the Finance Committee (Cliff Charney, Chair, Sarah Cecil, Bob D’Addario, and Rebecca Greene), Investment Committee (Tim Zimmer, Chair, Sarah Cecil, Michael Celona, Cliff Charney, Bob D’Addario, Rebecca Greene, and Jim Peterson) and the Board. And a special note of thanks to our administrator, Elizabeth Muller, for her dedication, persistence, hard work, and her admirable ability to keep us on track with patience, gentle reminders, and a cheerful demeanor. As always, we welcome any questions, comments, and suggestions from the congregation.

Respectfully Submitted:

Sarah P. Cecil
Treasurer

Cliff Charney
Finance Committee Chair

May 20, 2021

	Acct # and description	FY 2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Budget	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Budget	2021/22 Budget
Sources of Cash						
	6111-6113 Pledges	\$75,016	\$80,700	\$68,183	\$75,600	\$72,500
	6121 Plate Collections	7,656	7,200	4,835	6,800	3,000
	6131 Gifts from Outside Groups	8,637	9,000	3,400	8,000	4,000
	6141 Investments- Church Fd.	478,316	480,353	480,353	473,767	491,977
	6142 Investments- Barney Fd.	2,712	2,750	2,782	2,750	2,800
	6143 Investments- Soc. Concerns Fd.	40,462	40,639	40,639	40,082	41,622
	6144 Investments- Scholarships	26,006	26,117	26,117	25,579	26,749
	6150-6151 Interest	370	300	333	250	325
	6160 Fundraising	0	500	0	200	0
	6161 UU Affairs Fundraising	1,644	2,000	800	1,800	1,200
	6162 Other Income	3,253	0	282	0	
	6241 Investments- Sargent Fund	152,306	154,371	154,371	151,971	157,462
	6242 Spinney admin. reimbursemt	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
	SUBTOTAL Received	\$805,378	\$812,930	\$791,095	\$795,799	\$810,635
	Investments- Withdrawn for Inv. Fees	81,305		78,660	78,081	78,660
	TOTAL Received	\$886,683	\$812,930	\$869,755	\$873,880	\$889,295
Expenditures						
	7100 Ministry	\$139,854	\$157,079	\$147,464	\$145,063	\$144,763
	7200 Activities	2,772	5,350	3,579	4,450	3,650
	7300 Music	55,274	59,890	55,510	57,880	61,396
	7400 Denominational Connections	18,664	17,300	11,689	18,600	17,800
	7500 Scholarships & Social Concerns Grants	59,808	60,939	50,891	68,841	69,371
	7600 Faith Dev.	122,232	144,723	117,441	151,971	122,462
	7800 Administration	224,243	234,358	223,902	231,218	254,351
	7900 Properties	145,190	116,475	343,899	117,776	136,823
	SUBTOTAL Expenditures	\$768,037	\$796,114	\$954,375	\$795,799	\$810,616
	Investment Fees Paid	81,305		78,660	78,081	78,660
	TOTAL Expenditures	\$849,342	\$796,114	\$1,033,035	\$873,880	\$889,276
	TOTAL Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$37,341	\$16,816	(\$163,280)	\$0	\$19
	Add back properties projects funded from sinking fund and other unrestricted cash			238,516		
	Surplus from operations, grants & scholarships			\$75,236		

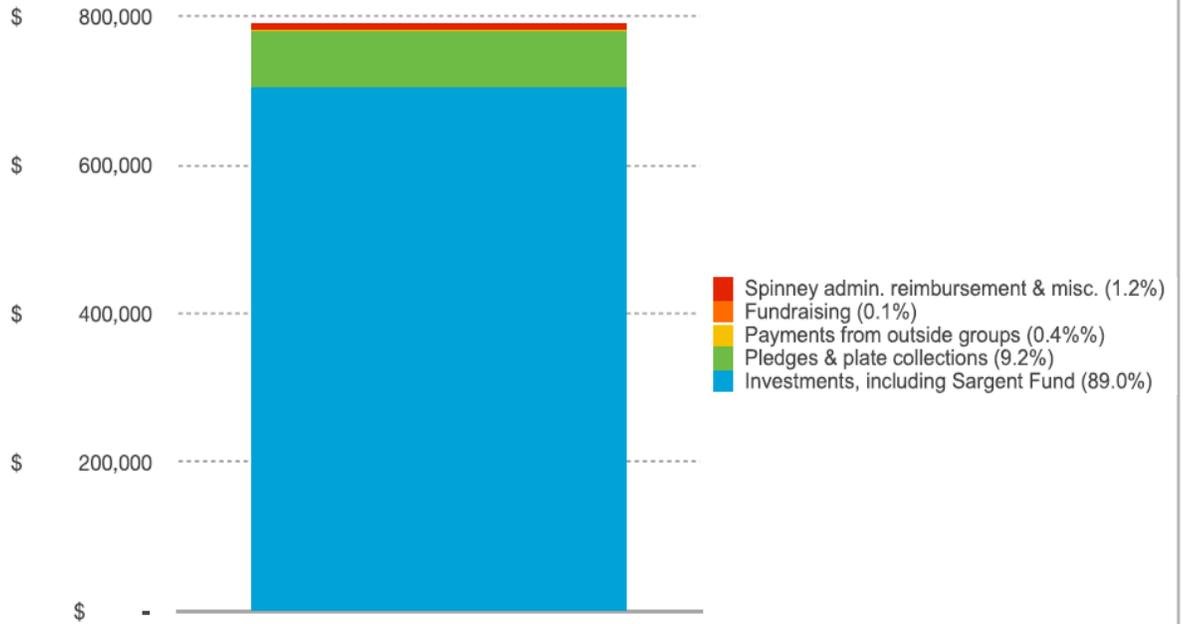
Notes:

Does not include Spinney, Mudge, Memorial, Tumulty or UUWGL receipts and expenditures.
Cash basis. Investment income consists of income and principal withdrawn from the investment portfolio.
In 2019/20, in addition to the regular investment withdrawals and other income, the Board authorized use
of up to \$250,000 from the sinking fund and unrestricted cash on hand to pay for properties projects.

2019/20 Sources of Cash (Rounded)

Investments, including Sargent Fund	\$ 704,200	89.0%
Pledges & plate collections	\$ 73,000	9.2%
Payments from outside groups	\$ 3,400	0.4%
Fundraising	\$ 800	0.1%
Spinney admin. reimbursement & misc.	<u>\$ 9,600</u>	<u>1.2%</u>
SUBTOTAL	\$ 791,000	100%
Investments withdrawn for investment fees	<u>\$ 78,660</u>	
TOTAL	\$ 869,660	

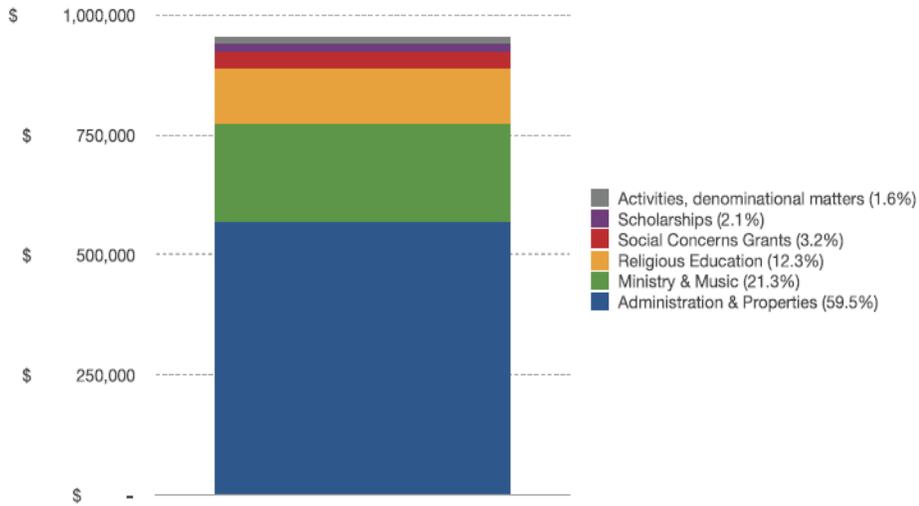
Note: Does not include Spinney funds.



2019/20 Uses of Cash (rounded)

Administration & Properties	\$ 567,800	59.5%
Ministry & Music	\$ 203,000	21.3%
Religious Education	\$ 117,400	12.3%
Social Concerns Grants	\$ 30,700	3.2%
Scholarships	\$ 20,200	2.1%
Activities, denominational matters	\$ 15,300	1.6%
SUBTOTAL	\$ 954,400	100%
Investment Fees	\$ 78,660	
TOTAL	\$1,033,060	

Note: Does not include Spinney funds.



Spinney-Mudge and Social Concerns Grants 2020 - 2021

SPINNEY-MUDGE: The Spinney-Mudge Grants Committee oversees distribution of income from trusts left by the Spinney and Mudge families of Lynn, the Tumulty Fund, the Memorial Scholarship Fund, and as of last year, the Social Justice Ministry Team funds.

Grants Committee members are: Chair - Cliff Charney, Bruce Campbell, Mindy Celona, Martha Curry, and Elizabeth Dunnigan. Ex-officio members include the Minister, the Board of Trustees President and the Treasurer. Christina Hansen is the grants coordinator.

Due to the 2020-2021 coronavirus pandemic, this past year has been a challenge for the peoples of the world, our country, our state, the greater Lynn Community, our church parishioners, and especially for those who are most vulnerable and in-need. The Grants Committee tried to meet the challenges of this extraordinary time and the increased needs of our community. Larger grants to families for utility bills, rents, other emergency funds, and scholarships were administered.

The committee distributed **63** Spinney-Mudge grants totaling **\$104,387.03** to families, individuals, and organizations within the guidelines set down by the wills of those who left this money in the care of the church.

Emergency grants totaling **\$15,537.03** were given **to twenty-five families, thus far**, this fiscal year. Emergency grants help fund rent, utility bills, and other emergency situations.

Twenty-two scholarships totaling **\$43,350.00** were given **to students**. A part of our focus in scholarships has been to provide support for needy students studying at North Shore Community College and Salem State University. Some of these students are immigrants making their way in our country by taking English classes, but most are full- and part-time students in career fields. We also fund full-time scholarship students attending other colleges. *Please see the letter at the end of this report that was recently received from one of our many grateful recipients of student scholarships.

Spinney Grants totaling **\$45,500.00** were made to support **sixteen nonprofit organizations**. Most of the organizations are either UU organizations, are in the Greater Lynn area, or service the Greater Lynn area. The following organizations received support this year:

- Raw Art Works
- Children's Law Center of Massachusetts
- Family and Children's Services
- Girls, Inc. of Lynn
- The Lynn Shelter Association
- The Food Project
- College Application Educ. Project, Inc.
- Pathways Adult Ed & Training
- Promise the Children
- The Haven Project
- The Senior Action Center
- Highlands Coalition
- LYSOA
- UU Mass Action
- Ferry Beach Assoc.
- First Parish in Bedford

*Please also note the letter of thanks from one of the nonprofit organizations that receive Spinney grants at the end of the report.

SOCIAL CONCERNS: Social Concerns Funds totaling \$12,231.54 have been disbursed thus far, with \$18,900.00 in outstanding commitments to ECCO. The funds have been used to support the following organizations along with our all-church annual My Brother's Table holiday party.

- St. Stephens Church Food Pantry
- Kids In Community (KIC)
- My Brother's Table
- ECCO – dues and funding a salary for a new ECCO job position
- Black Lives Matter sign

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Hansen
UUCGL Grants Coordinator

**Dear Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn,*

I am sincerely honored to have been selected as a recipient of the Spinney Mudge Grant.

I am currently studying History in the Liberal Arts Program. I decided to study history since I desire to be a teacher and help other students to love the history of the world. Thank you for your generosity, which has allowed me to continue my studies at NSCC. In the times that Society is currently living in the United States, receiving this scholarship has been a great honor for me. After graduating next year from the NSCC I will continue my studies at a 4-year university and then go to graduate school. Also, this semester the poem "Aquamarine" written by me, was selected to be part of the SPARK magazine at NSCC. Receiving this scholarship motivates me to keep going and with more energy for my studies. I appreciate receiving this scholarship since it will allow me to continue with my studies regardless of the economic situation of my family. Thank you very much for supporting me on my way to fulfill this dream, this award is valuable for my future.

Thank you again for your thoughtful and generous gift.

*Sincerely,
Gabriela Garcia*

April 28, 2021

Christina Hansen
Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn
101 Forest Avenue
Swampscott, MA 01907

Dear Christina,

On behalf of the staff, board, and young artists at Raw Art Works, I extend a heartfelt thank you to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn's Spinney Mudge Grant program for your generous gift of \$5,000 gift on 3/18/2021 supporting our free creative youth development programming.

As illustrated at right by one of our youngest artists, the past year has been a year of "climbing mountains." So, it has been with great pleasure that we have returned to our studios for hybrid programming this spring, to the small joys of being in each other's presence, making art, building community, and facing the challenges in front of us, pandemic or otherwise, together. We know from our 33 years of doing this work that, with our support and yours, and the strengths they find in themselves, our youth can transcend the obstacles in their paths and venture into an adulthood characterized by creativity, resilience, self-efficacy, and community engagement.



"I made a lot of mountains because there were so many to climb in 2020 and some of those mountains were really hard, (like) dealing with COVID for so long and not seeing friends and family. PRISCILLA, AGE 8

So, we are immensely thankful to you for your steadfast dedication to our mission and our youth, since 1999! As the world opens again in the coming months, and youth return to our studios for fully in-person programming, we welcome you to join us for a virtual site visit if you have the opportunity. I am also always available to talk and am easily reached at kit@rawartworks.org. Thank you again!

Sincerely,

Kit Jenkins
Executive Director

This letter is a receipt of a charitable donation that you may use for tax purposes. No gifts or services were provided in exchange for your contribution.

**Properties Committee
2020-2021**

Committee: Bruce Campbell, Loretta Connolly (Board Liaison), Doreen Hodgkin (Chair), Elizabeth Muller (Administrator), and Dawn Stewart.

The Properties Committee did not meet due to the COVID pandemic. Earlier in the spring of 2021, Sutton Construction returned to finish up the lower-level windows and side section of the building as previously planned. We still hope to have the following items completed on this year's budget:

- Installation of gates between lower and back parking lots.
- Installation of a new freezer for the kitchen.
- Repair of cement steps to upper parking lot.

Many thanks to the committee who were ready to assist with any issues. We all look forward to returning to the building and enjoying the property later in 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Doreen Hodgkin
Chair

Church Reopening Task Force 2020-2021

Reopening has been a challenging issue the past year, with one small comfort being that everyone worldwide was having the same discussions and questions. Being in limbo is not easy, following the slow swings of the pendulum between apprehension and hope. In-between time can test one's mettle; the old is not there, the new is not clear, the given is that it will have changed. Fortunately, those changes can provide great opportunities to deepen faith and service.

As the pandemic worsened and the building's closed state seemed a long-term measure, the board voted to disband the original task force. We thank them for their yeoman's work creating the survey and gathering information in the dynamic environment of ever-changing reality and guidelines. The Governance Committee made itself available to questions of reopening until the time was right to engage a Reopening Task Force once more in March. This group:

- Researched CDC, state, and local laws and guidelines and UUA recommendations regularly to ascertain the latest developments as the virus progressed.
- Monitored weekly state and Essex County metrics of the virus.
- Considered the profile of our congregation and our UU values of abiding care for the most vulnerable both within and beyond our congregation.
- Reviewed model reopening plans and gathered information on local houses of worship.
- Developed criteria driven by scientific data by which we might decide to reopen.
- Determined the capacity limits for each room based on state-mandated criteria.
- Discussed how reopening might look for the interior and exterior of the building and what steps were needed to effect this.
- Undertook an HVAC assessment of our ventilation system, had that system repaired to be fully functional, and purchased HEPA air purifiers.
- Developed UUCGL reopening guidelines.

This brought us together under a sunny sky to celebrate an outdoor Flower Communion on May 23 against the backdrop of flowering dogwood and azalea and vases of colorful blossoms. This weekend the governor will be lifting most restrictions and small church groups will be able to meet inside and we should have wider latitude to make decisions. As stated in our guidelines, “. . . we view this summer as an opportunity to test the waters, refining our best practices for in-person and hybrid meetings and worship services. While our goal is to reopen as fully as possible in the fall, we move forward carefully with the understanding that the path toward reopening may shift depending on local health conditions or state mandates.” There is still work to do in our in-between time. We are grateful for the adaptive and creative ministries that have developed and we are looking forward to building on them in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Muller for the Church Reopening Task Force
Loretta Connolly, Mary Gatlin, Elizabeth Muller (staff), and the Rev. Dr. Victoria Weinstein (minister)

Staff,
Ministry Team,
and
Group Reports

Minister's Annual Report to the Congregation 2020-21

It seems a cliché to say that this was a year unlike any other, but in this case it is literally true. I have been thinking back over what we call “the program year” at UUCGL and it is hard to keep the timeline clear! From March 2020 until now, when we are just beginning to see the pandemic loosening its dreadful grip on this part of the country (even as it ravages global neighbors and produces variants of itself to do further harm to the human population), we have been living through an overwhelming crisis.

I observe the remarkable reality that even within this reality, the church endures. The ministry of the church – although interrupted, disrupted, under siege medically, socially, emotionally, and institutionally – endured this year. You, the church, took care of each other and our neighbors in many ways. You prioritized food, survival, accurate information (another casualty in the age of conspiracy theories and intentional misinformation), outreach, and the essential business of the church. My admiration for the commitment and service you all demonstrated is enormous and inexpressible. Our **board of trustees**, under the steady, loving, well-organized leadership of Eileen Cummings, met faithfully in excess of their monthly meetings in order to address the entirely unexpected Stanley School plan to use the church’s property for an access route for buses and cars. Not only did the board and the **Stanley School Task Force** (comprised of board members and Doreen Hodgkin) attend to the legal and business aspects of this ongoing issue with extraordinary attention to complicated practicalities, they have remained present and available to an outpouring of questions, opinions, suggestions, fears, hopes, and frustrations by a wide variety of parishioners and members of the Swampscott community. Whatever any of our personal thoughts about the Stanley School project, the congregation owes the leaders of this year a huge debt of gratitude for their service and dedication to healthy spirit as well as process.

We offered online programming. It is frankly a blur. Our **ministry teams** continued to meet and have meaningful conversations, participate in learning and service activities, and to keep the church’s mission alive even when members’ lives and work and families were under tremendous stress. Thank you, Toni Bandrowicz, Martha Curry, and Jack Butterworth for gathering your ministry teams regularly throughout the year, and to Claire Wilson for leading the Pastoral Care Ministry Team, as well as to everyone who regularly made caring calls around the parish. I look forward to working face-to-face with you in the fall.

Some aspects of our **congregational life**, especially those geared toward children, fell face down after months of effort, and I am well aware that these aspects will need special attention, energy and fresh commitment when we reconvene. Many thanks to Mary Gatlin, Scott Nowka, and Steve Young for serving on the **Search Committee** for our new Director of Community Life and Learning!

I am deeply grateful for the frequent conversations and consultations I was able to have throughout this year with **clergy colleagues** from various faith traditions all over the country

who reported similar challenges and failures in similar program areas of their faith communities, and who advised each other in how to do what we *could* do well. My thanks go especially to my Unitarian Universalist colleagues of Essex County who encouraged and supported each other and our congregations through shared worship and programming, and forged closer ties during a demanding time for all of us. We hope that the end of the pandemic will not see an end to our collaborations.

As many of you know from your own workplace experiences, the adjustments, re-adjustments, worry, confusion, learning-in-crisis (akin to fixing a leak in a boat while it's still in the water) and functioning under constantly changing circumstances put an inordinate amount of stress on **our staff**, and especially our Administrator, Elizabeth Muller. When we put up signs saying "The Church is Closed," the work did not stop, it just became different. Elizabeth bore the brunt of the relentless operational decisions that required workshops, seminars, researching safety guidelines and protocols, and responding to the demands of a congregation that wanted to serve our mission even under extreme restrictions. I am so grateful to all our staff: Angie Kern, Chris Hansen, Mike Michaud and his cleaning team, for walking together with graciousness amid prolonged unknowing. We really did not, and could not, know exactly week to week what would be required of all of these very invested, experienced, and caring people. They were unfailingly patient and supportive throughout a year of uncertainty. When you are very good at your job, it can be particularly anxiety-provoking to not know *what* your job is. This was no walk in the park for any of them.

And for all the members of our two **Re-Opening Task Forces**, bless all of you for your willingness to evaluate, re-evaluate, compare CDC and MDH guidelines, read dozens of reports from local and UUA resources, attend Zoom meetings and respond to endless email threads asking the most minute questions around safety and protocols. How many Google docs and drives and folders do we all have labelled "UUCGL Re-Opening, UUCGL Safety, UUCGL Safety and Re-Opening Questions, COVID-19 Safety Houses of Worship, State Guidelines...?" I had more than one distraught moment doing this work with you, and your kindness and humor helped me so much to get through when I felt like collapsing.

The congregation stayed connected in many ways: phone calls and emails, cards and notes, sandwich-making get togethers, distanced visits, outdoor activities (the Pop-The-Trunk food drives organized by Claire Campbell and a wonderful team of helpers were successful on multiple levels), and especially weekly worship. I will note in some detail here the extraordinary work done by our **Music Director, Kenneth Griffith**, to assure the quality of our worship offerings online:

Kenneth and I came into the pandemic with minimal knowledge and no experience with technical production. We started, like everyone else I know, in a panic: researching and comparing various models that required hours and hours of conversation and consideration. Should we produce what I call "cable access worship" in an empty sanctuary? Could we include singing? Congregational? Choral? How could we include parishioners or viewers who wanted to have a worship experience at an hour other than 10 a.m. on Sundays? What video

editing software worked best? We purchased and tried tripods, stacks of books, music stands, ring lights, microphones plugged into our phones. Should **our marvelous pianist David Collins** record from the sanctuary, or from home? How would we share and store recordings? How many minutes did our Offertory need to be if people were ostensibly going to the website from home? Could we send Kaleb Thomas a microphone in Rhode Island for his banjo solos?

Kenneth talked with me through every decision about every aspect of worship, artistic, spiritual, and technical: were my sermons recorded outdoors audible, should we put together a slide show of images to accompany that meditation, or was music enough? He coached me on everything from creating subtitles to designing slides and timing them to coordinate with music. He signed onto Zoom every Sunday morning with me on two devices and reminded me to re-start the iPad that was our connection to the congregation. A few times, I signed onto Zoom with the wrong wi-fi extension, imperiling our connection – Kenneth texted with me during the service to troubleshoot. We had a constant message stream going when the audio cut out, or when a glitch happened. We worked off of a Google document that we typed notes onto to improve the next Sunday.

Kenneth was not just our Music Director who kept rehearsing with the choir all year and learned how to audio edit so that we could have choral anthems and choir support for hymn singing (which we weirdly did on mute due to Zoom's asynchronous sound production), he was our Tech Lead every Sunday, working the screen sharing from his computer so that we could have a true liturgical service with not just talking heads, but visual elements. Many thanks to Steve Deveau who edited the worship services for much of the year by stitching together video segments Kenneth and I provided until Kenneth took over that function, often getting segments in at the wee hours of Sunday morning due to technical challenges by those of us providing the segments. I also want to thank my friend Michael Hammond for holding my hand through a lot of video editing projects and for taking my frantic calls at weird hours.

Thank you so much to all of you who were **worship leaders** during this time. You were amazing, recording yourselves and in more than one instance driving to Steve's house for uploading assistance, setting up chalices in your house and coordinating camera angles, readings and fire (!), sending in photos to accompany reading segments, and heroically in the choir's case, singing alone in your home to a recorded track and emailing it to Kenneth! We did what we would never have imagined prior to this crazy year. David Collins, we loved it that you came to worship every Sunday even though your piano parts were pre-recorded. You ministered to us so much with your music and your presence.

I document just a portion of the demands of pandemic worship production here because it is historically unprecedented and future researchers may find it interesting. I find it fascinating today!

There must be things I am forgetting, but for that I must beg your forbearance and bring this report to a close, with tremendous gratitude and anticipation of re-gathering in body as well as spirit.

In faith, hope and love,



Rev. Dr. Victoria Weinstein

Rites of Passage

Fran Marcin – January 20, 2021

Requiescat in pace

Mary Ann Hayes and Larry Hanapole

April 10, 2020

Married in the Church

Richard Muller – June 5, 2021

Private Memorial Service in the Church

Sarah Darling Pruett – June 19, 2021

Private Memorial Service in the Church

Music Ministry 2020 - 2021

This choral season has been our most interesting yet! During this year, the choir and David Collins have all been extremely flexible, nimble, and open to the change in choral landscape.

At the end of the last choral season, the effects of the pandemic forced a rather abrupt end to the program. This year, after some research over the summer and a few kinks to work through, we were able to transition to rehearsals over Zoom and to pre-recording all of our music for church services. Since we weren't using the church building and not really using the organ this year, Nami took a hiatus and continued working with her outside position. We, of course, are sad to have missed her this year, but are hopeful that as we return, Nami can also rejoin us one Sunday a month as before.

The Thursday night choir rehearsals are relatively silent, excepting what you hear from my piano and singing as I led the choir through our songs for the week. They could not hear each other, so that was sometimes rather taxing for them, in that, it takes away a rather essential element of the experience: hearing each other, breathing together, and feeling the music in the room. The members of the choir still continue to be their wonderful selves and helped to maintain a sense of camaraderie and community which I know has been hard in other areas of church (and social) life. The work that David and the choir have done this year has really surpassed all of my expectations and they have really put their whole hearts into the work.

Though we could not hear each other in rehearsal, using a website called Soundtrap, an online browser-based collaborative portal for creating and sharing music, the choir was able to sing "together" virtually. David would record himself playing piano accompaniments and also several other tracks which played the voice parts for each section of the choir. Then, everyone else would join the Soundtrap project and individually record their part into their computer. After that, I would bring everything together, editing for consonants and excessive background noise, also managing volume and balance within the ensemble. I eventually learned a new major platform for professional music editing called Logic Pro X. It is a heavy-duty program which allowed for a lot more nuance than Soundtrap could support. While this made for an even better sound as the year progressed, everyone put in hours of work each week in order to make sure that the congregation was able to hear the beautiful music to which we have all become accustomed. Once all of the audio was recorded, I would then create slides and find images to use for videos to stream over Zoom.

Learning the screen-sharing and audio sharing and working to smooth out transitions in virtual services had a bit of a learning curve, but overall, I am rather pleased with how they have all turned out. Of course, given the remaining uncertainty surrounding the pandemic as we continue into the fall and winter, this will remain an option for church services in times during which it may be most wise.

Going forward, we will begin to make adjustments (as permitted and recommended by the proper authorities and organizations) to how we can sing together, both as a choir and as a congregation. It was nice to hear those of us who came to the outdoor service sing together

again. I will proceed with caution and reserve the right to make changes based on the landscape as needed.

Music this year really would not have been possible without the tremendous efforts of the choir and David. Collectively, they have recorded nearly 100 different projects. I would suggest that Christmas Eve was the heftiest service and one of the most special: the choir sang their hearts out and really helped to create a sacred space that night, and over the rest of the season. Recordings of hymns and prelude, offertory, postlude, meditative music, and the like has taken hours of time and their effort deserves the highest praise. I continue to be impressed by the community here at UUCGL and am looking forward to more time making music together and, as always, encourage any other parishioners to participate in the choir or to possibly offer music as a guest musician for service.

Respectfully submitted,
Kenneth Griffith
Director of Music

Business Administrator 2020-2021

In Zoltan Kodály's *Háry János Suite*, he begins with a crescendoing orchestral musical sneeze. According to Hungarian superstition, if you sneeze, what you say is true. I feel as though I should begin this report with a lexical sneeze, because anyone reading this in future years would question its veracity. Who would have thought a year ago that we would still be home wearing the same schlubby clothes, surrounded by toppling piles of files in rooms straight out of the Collyer brothers, New York siblings infamous for their eccentric behavior and hoarding tendencies. Governor Baker appears to be coming to the rescue before eccentric slips into bizarre and file hoarding becomes lethal.

We have taken a giant leap forward in the realm of online virtual services and offerings. We have learned, often painfully, new software. We have had children, animals, delivery people, and weed whackers become part of our Zoom meetings, and I learned to my embarrassment that ducking and falling to the floor is not a guarantee of escaping being seen, but it is good for comic relief. We were welcomed to Sunday services by Babs the hen, by Iris lighting candles, by guitar solos overlooking a sparkling Lynn pond, by Eileen's deck plants, and by dear Max the beagle, among many other beloved parishioners. The UUCGL services and their beautiful music have been warmly welcoming, spiritually enriching experiences that have drawn both long-term parishioners and many new people.

Much time was spent on reopening discussions and research with two separate task forces this year. The care for and well-being of our parishioners was paramount in everyone's minds and we owe a debt of gratitude to the members of these groups for their thoughtful consideration.

On the facilities front, we were able to finish installing the last of the exterior pole lights and are embarking on new LED lights mounted to the outside of the building. Recently we were able to finish the repairs of last year with the rebuilding of the exterior walls. Our HVAC company reviewed our ventilation system and brought it up to its original specs with new motors and belts and we have mobile HEPA air purifiers to give us cleaner air to breathe. We have become part of a new initiative that offers many exciting possibilities by joining the Community Purchasing Alliance, a cooperative of Boston and North Shore churches and nonprofits that have come together to be able to negotiate lower costs on many items, the first of which is electricity. It is a great fit for this church that has such a strong tradition in social, economic, and environmental justice and diversity and offers not only cost savings, but the power of being in closer relationship with our colleagues. I want to thank Doreen Hodgkin, chair of the Properties Committee, for her counsel on regular phone meetings and her willingness to tackle any number of projects on behalf of the church with consistent good cheer.

Our finances did well despite the building's closure because of a strong market this past year. Pledges and payments on pledges were down, but were very reasonable given the circumstances. Huzzahs to the Canvass team for FY 2021-22: Cliff Charney, Suzanne Forgione, Mary Gatlin, and Ruth Griffin. I attended many webinars on SBA PPP loan forgiveness and finances and payroll in the time of COVID from many sources; all were

excellent and the UUA's presentations were especially so. We will be ending this fiscal year with a surplus for a variety of reasons, partly the closed building and reduced programming and partly lower staffing levels. The church owes a huge debt of gratitude to outgoing treasurer Sarah Cecil, who willingly and expertly gets into the weeds (the beans?) on all matters financial and provides expertise to any number of committees and task forces, and to Cliff Charney, Finance Committee and Grants Committee chair, who seamlessly and knowledgably juggles many hats worth of work. They both provide reasoned counsel, enjoyable discussions, and are always available to answer a question.

I have missed one-on-one interactions with administrative assistant Angie Kern and sexton Michael Michaud. Angie toils from her dining room table and keeps the entire church informed by producing the Weekly Update and eblasts and posts to Facebook and makes sure that the website is current practically to the hour. We have a beautiful new website chock-full of news thanks to Mary Gualtieri and her assistance has been invaluable. Michael has watched over our building and grounds this past year, making early morning and late-night runs, too-numerous-to-count trips to the dump, and is here when we need him most in emergencies that always seem to occur after hours. We thank them for their dedication in this isolating year.

As I write, we are preparing for a Flower Communion service outdoors with a new sound system, and we are on the tiptoes of expectation as we anticipate a return to indoor worship. Our foyer sanitation station is set up, UPS trucks have been circling with supplies and air purifiers, an online registration system is ready to go, and we have been moving around blue markers on chairs in the sanctuary as state guidelines change. Our heads, at least for those vertiginously challenged, are literally spinning. So much has happened to get us to this point. The cracks in the armor of our previously well-ordered lives have allowed the light of new opportunities to shine forth. We are ready to come out of the shadows and embrace them all.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Muller



As sexton Mike was setting up for Flower Communion, he caught an early bird attendee.

Faith Development Ministry Team
2020-2021

Members: Nicki Buscemi, Mary Gatlin, Gwen McKinney, Megan White, Whisky Wolinski

What a year this has been! The Faith Development Ministry Team continued to meet via Zoom throughout the year, brainstorming ideas to engage our children and youth remotely as we moved through the pandemic. But over the course of the past year what we personally experienced and heard from parents of many other school-aged children was that they were “Zoomed out.” Remote offerings geared toward the kids, as creative as they were, felt more like obligations and less like the joyful community-building that our religious education programs have fostered in the past. And in-person gatherings, given the challenges of social distancing for children, continued to feel unsafe. Our ministry team shifted gears a bit to focus instead on parent support and planning for the future. In October 2020 we formed a monthly virtual parenting group facilitated by Chris Scheller, a religious education professional. It has been such a pleasure to get to know other UUCGL parents deeply, to connect in ways that we couldn’t during coffee hour at church, and to share our joys and concerns as we parented through the pandemic.

This year also brought a feeling that we are building momentum for the program year ahead. We have connected with other UU churches on the North Shore about a potential partnership to offer “Our Whole Lives” in 2021/2022. Our team worked with Rev. Vicki to refine the job description for the Director of Community Life and Learning and in March, after a competitive interview process, we were successful in hiring Chris Scheller to join UUCGL’s staff full time starting this summer. Also in March we reconnected with the Church School Union Trust, a local consortium of UU churches, and secured \$1,000 to be used for religious education at UUCGL. It feels like we are taking the steps needed to build our capacity and prepare for a year in which the religious education programs will be able to resume in person. We would love to invite anyone with an interest in faith development and children’s programming to join the Faith Development Ministry Team and/or to consider volunteering with the children. If you think you might be interested, please reach out to our current chair, Mary Gatlin, mary.c.gatlin@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Gatlin, chair
Faith Development Ministry Team

GREEN SANCUARY MINISTRY TEAM
2020-2021



Unfortunately, COVID-19 affected the GSMT's ability to schedule events this church year.

Climate Change & Faith Speaker Series—Together with the Swampscott Conservancy, the GSMT hosted a ZOOM presentation by RICHARD PRIMACK, Professor at Boston University and author of *Walden Warming*, on how he has been using Henry David Thoreau's records from the 1850s to show the biological effects of climate change. Close to 100 people participated!

Blessing of the Animals Service included drive-up blessings in the church front by Rev. Vicki and a ZOOM service with hymns and stories celebrating our furry, feathered, and scaly friends.

Earth Day Service was combined with National Poetry Month this year as members of the congregation shared their favorite nature-based poems that helped them find solace in nature during the pandemic. The service included live and pre-recorded presentations celebrating the wonders of nature, interspersed with lovely music by the choir. The service was followed by a special coffee hour highlighting the Newhall Field Community Farm.

Family Wildflower Planting Event—With the help of the Swampscott Conservancy, church members planted 136 seedlings of native windflower, columbine, and geranium in a wooded area on the church's property. The May 1st event brought 14 church members out, trowels in hand, ready to start planting. With everyone wearing masks and socially distancing, the seedlings were gently transplanted from pot to soil, ready to root and grow in their new woodland home.

Bird walks were held in March in Nahant and in May in Marblehead giving church members a chance to get outside and enjoy nature first hand.

A tour of the **Newhall Field Community Farm** will be held in June. Small family groups and individuals will be able to visit this experiential farm's herb garden and rows of a variety of vegetables growing on its two-acre plot at Tillie's Farm in Peabody.

Consistent with distancing requirements, GSMT hopes to organize hikes this summer.

Stay safe and healthy!

Respectfully submitted,
Toni Bandrowicz, chair
Green Sanctuary Ministry Team



Social Justice Ministry Team 2020-2021

The past church year saw us learning to unmute ourselves on ZOOM meetings, but our team worked on a number of tasks as individuals and in socially distanced groups.

Jack Butterworth and Martha Curry acted as co-chairs of the team this year. The year divided itself into three parts: from August to the presidential election, from the November election to the January inauguration, and from the inauguration to June.

We began in early September with an outdoor event, a well-attended tailgate discussion of issues in the church parking lot, organized by Carole McCauley.

Volunteers participated in phone banks and postcard-writing to help new voters in Georgia and other states find out how to register—Georgia turned out to be very important for the Senate.

We purchased a Black Lives Matter banner for the church, which sadly was lost in a windstorm last winter, and we are in the process of replacing it.

In October, we voted to support an expenditure of \$75,000 to assist the ECCO (Essex County Community Organization) Beloved Economy Program. We also supported the spring online auction to provide a portion of that money.

We sponsored a book group to discuss *How to Be an Anti-Racist*. There will be more.

We began producing weekly columns on social justice in the church's Weekly Update.

Spearheaded by Bruce Campbell, Clare Campbell, Kate Campbell, and Michael Celona and daughters Isabella and Lucia, we have supported food programs.

Clare and Michael and friends made more than 1,000 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for My Brother's Table.

We also helped distribute food at St. Stephen's Church and the Lynn Community Health Pantry and supported Anchor Food Pantry. Our "Pop the Trunk" food drives turned into socially distanced social occasions.

Martha and Jack "attended" the UUA's New Day Rising program on social justice issues and Martha, Bruce Campbell and Jack are participating in ECCO's Regional Initiatives program. Martha is taking a look at community policing and Jack and Bruce are surveying communities on community investment in minority businesses.

We have a new generic email for announcements, SJMT@UUCGL.ORG.

We meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. We hope to see you there!

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Curry, co-chair of the Social Justice Ministry Team



**Unitarian Universalist Women of Greater Lynn
Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended 4-30-21**

During this Year of the Pandemic, the UUWGL had to cancel just about everything we usually do AND we saw our membership drop by 50%. We continued to meet virtually every two or three months to stay connected.

We DID continue our long tradition of philanthropy by contributing to My Brother's Table and Anchor Food Pantry during this unprecedented time of need. We also donated to over 15 other charities and provided scholarship aid to several college students.

We look forward to getting back to "normal" soon!

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Brine
for the Unitarian Universalist Women of Greater Lynn



BLACK LIVES MATTER

Unitarian Universalist Church Of Greater Lynn



**UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH of GREATER LYNN**

WE CARE ABOUT YOU
PLEASE MAINTAIN 6' BETWEEN YOU AND OTHERS
← **6'** →
PLEASE WEAR MASKS WHILE ON THESE PREMISES
DOGS MUST BE LEASHED