

# **REPORTS TO THE ANNUAL MEETING**

on

June 13, 2021



## **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY OF WESTBOROUGH**

64 West Main Street, Westborough, Massachusetts

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATIONAL  
SOCIETY OF WESTBOROUGH

**REPORTS TO THE ANNUAL MEETING**  
**June 13, 2021**

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**WARRANT FOR ANNUAL MEETING  
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Worcester, ss  
Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society of Westborough

To: Ashleigh Swain, Clerk

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and in accordance with the provisions of General Laws (Ter.Ed), Chapter 67, Sections 7,13,14, and otherwise, you are hereby directed to warn and notify members of said Society to meet for an **Annual Meeting** via a Zoom call ([https://us02web.Zoom.us/j/82333605734](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82333605734)) **at 12:00 pm (noon) on Sunday, June 13, 2021**, to act upon the following Articles:

**Article 1:** To review 2020 Annual Meeting minutes

**Article 2:** To adopt a budget for the coming year

**Article 3:** To nominate and elect officers and committee members for the coming year

**Article 4:** To vote on David King's tenure on the Board of Trustees

**Article 5:** To hear all other annual reports

**Article 6:** To remember members of this Society who have passed during the year through a moment of silence

**Article 7:** To recognize committees' chairs and other members for their service to the congregation during the past year

**Article 8:** To take up any other business that may come before this Society

You are directed to serve this warrant by posting an attested copy thereof within the Society's church building before the time of said meeting.

Hereof, fail not, and make return of said warrant by the Moderator with your doings thereon at the time and place of said meeting.

Given under our hands and seals this 3rd day of June, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twenty-one.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Judith Nicholson, Co-Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kim Hall, Co-Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Owens

\_\_\_\_\_  
David King

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stacy Spies

A true copy. Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ashleigh Swain, Clerk

**Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting  
Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society of Westborough  
64 Main Street, Westborough, MA 01581**

**Sunday, June 14, 2020**

**Present:** 40 voting members were present, in addition to six non-voting friends. See the attached attendance list.

**Moderator:** Andrew Koenigsberg

**Clerk:** Robin Fleming

The Moderator reviewed online procedures and voting, and then called the meeting to order at 11:45.

**Reading of the Warrant:**

- 1) The Warrant was read by the moderator, Andy Koenigsberg at 11:54 am.
- 2) The Clerk, Robin Fleming, verified that a quorum of voting members was present.

**Article 1: To review the 2019 annual meeting minutes:** No one wished to discuss the minutes. John Metzger motioned to accept them, and Andrea Burdick seconded the motion. *The motion was passed unanimously to accept the 2019 annual meeting minutes.*

**Article 2: To adopt a budget for the coming year:** The moderator recognized Lisa Shumway as Treasurer. Lisa reviewed the information found in the finance committee report: although the church lost rental income from the preschool and from Indian Dance, several anonymous gifts were made by family and friends of members to boost our income. In addition, we have received \$7,500 from Wake Now Our Vision matching funds. The Spring Auction also raised over \$10,000. Staff worked extra hours due to extra planning and work to get the church up to speed with virtual services. They were compensated for the extra working hours. Operating expenses were about \$2,000 less due to the closing of the church and preschool due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the balance from Building and Grounds maintenance will be carried over to the summer. The church will have an anticipated surplus of close to \$26,000 at the close of this fiscal year. We also applied for and received a PPP grant in the amount of \$22,100. This will be used for payroll and operational costs. The loan shows now as a liability but will turn into income if it is forgiven.

**Next year's budget:** it is largely unknown how soon the congregation will be able to meet in the building again due to the coronavirus pandemic. Lisa proposed that we vote on the first quarter of the year now, and vote on the next quarter or more in September. Lisa reviewed income for the next year. We go into the new year with another endowment distribution anticipated in July. We raised about \$113,000 in pledges for the coming year. #3 School Street will be continuing with payments, and there will be no income from Tanya's Preschool or Indian Dance during the summer months. Fortunately, we have the \$26,000 of extra income from this past church year adding to reserves.

**Expected changes in expenditures:** Elisa Scully will be given a promotion and raise. Kala Farnham will receive a 2% increase in salary and will be paid for contributing to virtual services over the summer. The Minister's hours will be increased by six hours as she will become head of staff and to reflect workload. Her hours will increase from 30 to 36 on August 1. The need for an RE Director will be

reviewed in the fall. During the summer some maintenance funds will be spent, mostly for cleaning, landscaping, and somewhat diminished electrical costs.

**A motion was made by Ann Maloney to pass the 2020 first-quarter budget, and it was seconded by Stacey Spies.** A discussion was held. Scott Weiss commended Lisa Shumway for her thoughtful and diligent work on the budget and for acquiring the PPP grant. Sharon Barrett asked why the church uses so much electricity when it is not being used. Andy K. and Lisa S. have investigated and had found some unexplained electricity drawn, although it does not cost a significant amount of the budget. Their investigation will continue. **The moderator asked for a vote to pass the budget. *The motion passed unanimously.***

**Article 3: To nominate and elect officers and committee members for the Society for the upcoming year. Kim Hall motioned to move the article, and Diana Beck seconded that we vote to approve this article.** Meredith O'Brien-Weiss thanked everyone who helped on the Nominating Committee. The slate for 2020/21 includes Judith Nicholson, David King, and Kim Hall on the Board, and new members Stacey Spies and Scott Owens. Clerk Ashleigh Swain will replace Robin Fleming. On the finance committee are Scott Weiss, Bruce Hall, Lisa Shumway (treasurer), Susie Wells (collector) and Kathe Scott (assistant collector). The Nominating Committee members remain the same. We do not have chairs for Ways and Means and the RE Committee. Diana Beck commented that there is an RE Committee and a RE Task Force working on recommendations regarding the RE structure and DRE hiring. Meredith O'Brien-Weiss stressed that volunteers for committees are always welcome. Tim Nourse offered to chair the RE Committee. The Nominating Chair nominated him. **The moderator asked that we have a vote to accept the slate as presented. *The vote, electronically recorded, was unanimous. The moderator swore in the newly elected slate of members.***

**Article 4: To hear all annual reports.** Juliana Spofford questioned how many new members we gained this year. Lisa Shumway said we gained three new members this year: Ashleigh Swain, Nanda Barker-Hook, and her mother Carol Barker. **Andy asked for a vote to accept the annual reports. *The vote passed unanimously.***

**Article 5: To remember members of this Society who have passed during the year through a moment of silence.** Minister Laurel Gray commented that although no one died in the past year from our congregation, it has been a time of loss as many in our community have lost friends and family throughout the year and all those who have died of the coronavirus.

**Article 6: To recognize committee chairs and other members for their service to the congregation during the past year.** Janet Purney-Balabanis recognized and thanked Kathie Metzger for her long and tireless work on the Program Committee. Kathie is being replaced by Sharon Barrett. Judith Nicholson thanked retiring Board Members John Metzger and Janet Purney-Balabanis, and the Clerk, who are retiring from their positions at this time. She welcomed new board members Stacy Spies and Scott Owens, and Ashleigh Swain as Clerk. She offered extra thanks to Lisa Shumway as Treasurer, committee chairs, new members of committees, and task forces, as well as the new "Re-opening Advisory Panel." Finally, she thanked Kim Hall for agreeing to co-chair the Board next year. Minister Laurel Gray also thanked and applauded everyone who helped this year, and especially those who helped her personally on the Committee on the Ministry.

**Article 7: Other business.**

1. Pauline Sciarappa spoke about the "Share the Plate" program, which will continue next year.

2. Kim spoke about social justice, urging the membership to take part in social action in the next year. She urged that we coordinate with other area churches on racial justice activities. **Jerry Breecher made a motion to formulate a “Racial Justice Committee”** for the purpose of increasing awareness, coordination within the congregation, and within the wider community. **Kim Hall seconded the motion.** Jerry suggested that this committee will operate in coordination with the Social Justice Committee, but operate as an adjunct to it. Lisa Borchetta asked why it is separate, and Jerry commented that he expected there to be overlap between the two committees. ***The moderator asked for support from the congregation for this new Committee. The motion passed.***
3. Tanya Trainor brought up plans for painting the church steeple. Tanya said that she has received prices for the work but the company has a long waitlist so not likely it would happen this summer and would necessitate another meeting to approve spending. She also mentioned that a structural engineer reviewed the steeple last year and it is structurally sound. Window restoration was not included in the contract.

**The moderator asked for a motion to close the meeting. Andrea Burdick moved, Sharon Barrett seconded the motion, and the vote was voted in by a majority.** The meeting closed at 1:07 pm

**Attachments:** The Warrant for the 2020 Annual Meeting, the Reports to the Annual Meeting 2020, and the Attendance sheet and screenshots of participants (the meeting hosts, Andrew Koenigsberg and David King, were not counted as voting members, as they did not vote during the meeting).

*Respectfully submitted, Robin Fleming, Clerk*

**Voting Members in attendance:**

Vince Aquilino	Amy Martellock	Scott Shumway
Sharon Barrett	Kris Medinger	Nancy Siegal
Diana Beck	John Metzger	Sylvia Sirignano
Lisa Borchetta	Kathie Metzger	Stacy Spies
Jerry Breecher	Judith Nicholson	Tracy Spadafora
Ed Burdick	Tim Nourse	Juliana Spofford
Andrea Burdick	Meredith O’Brien-Weiss	Ashleigh Swain
Robin Fleming	Wendy Oeser	Tanya Trainor
Bruce Hall	Janet Purney-Balabanis	Scott Weiss
Kim Hall	Ellen Rutter	Susie Wells
Don Harvey	Phyllis Samara	Charlie Wolfson
Jim Kirk	Pauline Sciarappa	Ken Young
Paula Kirk	Kathe Scott	
Ann Maloney	Lisa Shumway	

**Non-Voting Friends in attendance:**

Kris Allen  
Kala Farnham  
Ben Gold  
David Lambert  
Ed Walsh  
Jane Walsh

## ***Nominating Committee Report***

The following is the slate of candidates for trustees, church officers and members of the nominating and finance committees for election by the congregation. We are pleased to also present those who have agreed to serve as chairs of other committees. Thank you to all who will give their time and energy to serve as trustees, officers, committee chairs and members for the 2021-2022 fiscal year which begins July 1, 2021.

### **Trustees**

Kim Hall – continuing 3-year term ending in 2022

Stacy Spies – 3-year term ending 2023

Scott Owens – 3-year term ending 2023

David King – 3-year-term ending 2024

Ellen Rutter – 3-year-term ending 2024

### **Officers (1-year term)**

Treasurer: Lisa Shumway

Collector: Susie Wells

Assistant Collector: Kathe Scott

Clerk: Hilary Cespedes

Moderator: Scott Owens

Historian: Stacy Spies

### **Members of Standing Committees (1-year term)**

Finance Committee: Scott Weiss, Bruce Hall (*Note: the Treasurer, Collector, and Assistant Collector are automatically members of the Finance Committee.*)

Nominating Committee: Lisa Shumway, Janet Purney-Balabanis, Pauline Sciarappa

### **2021-2022 Committee Chairs**

3 School Street: John Metzger

Buildings & Grounds: Tanya Trainor

Annual Pledge Campaign: Bruce Hall

Children's RE: TBD

Membership: Lisa Shumway

Music: Sharon Barrett

Program: Sharon Barrett

Social Action: TBD

Racial Justice: Jane Walsh

Ways & Means: no chair at this time

### **Socials Group Organizers:**

Book Group: Co-leaders TBD

UU's at Lunch: TBD

*Respectfully submitted, Diana Beck, Meredith O'Brien-Weiss, Lisa Shumway*

## ***Board of Trustees Report***

This is the quote from the June board meeting 2020-2021: “Our time in this place may have ended (for the church year), but our connection to each other and this community remains. Together may we walk the path of justice, speak words of love, live the selfless deed, tread gently upon the earth, and fill the world with compassion.” – Rev. Kathy A. Huff, Unitarian Universalist Minister

Having the Rev. Laurel Gray as our minister since August 2019 has been an ongoing blessing. Her steadfast support of our congregation through the “year of the pandemic,” resulted in over a year of remote church in every sense. She led us bravely through this unprecedented challenging time. Massachusetts churches and organizations closed their doors and stopped all in-person meetings in March 2020. We canceled the in-person auction and all committee meetings. We held our first online service on March 22, 2020. We continue to meet over Zoom, video, and phone dial-in as of this June 2021 writing.

Though we had no idea that this closure would continue for over a year, we have stayed connected through the joint efforts of the congregational leaders, both formal and informal, while supported by a dedicated team of staff along with Rev. Laurel Gray – the board thanks you all.

The board appointed a Re-Opening Advisory Panel to remain apprised of the latest information from the UUA, medical experts, and government guidelines to consult and advise the board on how to keep parishioners safe. At this time, the first steps are being recommended by the panel. This gives us hope that we may open in a “hybrid format” of in-person services in the fall of 2021 while continuing to offer technical support as needed. We appointed a specific task force to work on this endeavor, and a survey was designed to compile information to ensure we continue to meet the needs of this thriving congregation.

We use the word “thriving” to describe our congregation, as in this year of the pandemic, we have not missed a single Sunday service, we have ordained our minister, and we have had one of the most successful pledge campaigns to date, exceeding our target to ensure our financial sustainability, including an extra collection from generous congregants who were willing to donate additional funds to cover the many among us who had been financially impacted by economic shutdowns related to the pandemic. We were also able to hold the auction via Zoom.

### **Minister:**

Our second full church year of leadership under our new minister, the Reverend Laurel Gray, has been a success:

- The minister continues to be regularly supported by the Committee on the Ministry.
- The UUA received the minister’s evaluation from the board and the Committee on the Ministry in the fall of 2020.
- On February 6, 2021, we celebrated the ordination of Rev. Laurel Gray in our church via Zoom.

### **Board meetings:**

- The Board met monthly via Zoom, typically on the first Thursday of each month, from August 2020 to June 2021 with additional special meetings called as needed.
- In June 2020, several member delegates represented our congregation at the “virtual” General Assembly in June: Judith Nicholson, Kim Hall, and David King. Several other congregants



attended. They learned about the newly released report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change entitled: “Widening the Circle of Concern.” The multi-layered recommendations of this report are being slowly processed to be woven into all aspects of our congregation’s experience. The newly formed Racial Justice Committee, voted into existence at the June 2020 annual meeting, has been instrumental in providing various educational workshops through the year, and will continue to sharpen this focus and facilitate the entire congregation’s engagement.

- The church established ongoing communication with a local community initiative, “Westborough Connects.” They joined in a book group series sponsored by UUCSW. Church members were invited to participate in “Kindness Week,” initiated by “Westborough Connects.” Plans are being made to collaborate in the annual Martin Luther King celebration in Westborough.

#### **Virtual Sunday Service changes:**

- The Zoom attendees are still invited to log in early on Sunday, beginning at 10:15 am to greet and chat with one another before the service. Volunteers have been consistently online, coordinated by the staff of Rev. Laurel with administrative support by Elisa, and assisted by the hard work of the program committee, to help us stay engaged.
- We have included many of the elements of our in-person service into the virtual service which helps the congregation feel consistency during this challenging time.
- After the Sunday morning service, anyone who would like to stay for an additional fifteen minutes is invited to take part in a small group ministry experience. Attendees are divided randomly into small "breakout" groups to connect as we do at coffee hour.
- The congregants can continue to make contributions for their pledge, Share the Plate, or the Minister's Discretionary Fund by paying online through Realm or writing a check and mailing it to the post office box.
- The UUCSW Finance Committee collaborating with the Racial Justice Committee to promote an opportunity to invest in the UJIMA Project as an investment tool.

#### **Some things that continued despite the pandemic:**

- The Annual Auction was held virtually in May, led by Michelle Hirsch as auctioneer, and carried off flawlessly (and over targeted budget) by the fantastic auction team.
- Coming of Age was celebrated virtually.
- A Bridging Ceremony for our teens graduating from high school will take place in June.

#### **Some things that continue to go very well:**

- We continue to use Google Suite for our organization, for better documentation and professional emails. Rev. Laurel, Elisa Scully, Lisa Shumway, and David King work together to sustain and improve this.
- The Annual Pledge Campaign that was held in February exceeded our goal, with the highest pledge total to date. Personalized letters and a new brochure were shared with the congregants, with the theme of “Weathering the Storm.” A special fund was also collected to repair our “mast”- the steeple, which had seen ravages of time as well as a severe windstorm in October which blew over our weathervane. Furthermore, additional funds were collected to help offset pledges that could not be made by those suffering financially from the pandemic.
- Volunteers stepped forward into so many roles as committee and task force members. They volunteered to be on the Snow Removal Team, acted as greeters during virtual services, taught

RE classes, presented lay-laid services, served many roles in virtual church services, and participated in racial and social justice efforts throughout the year.

- We welcomed many new congregants who signed the membership book.
- A very long-term member, Bill Ames, relocated to Maine to be closer to his family, and his presence will be missed.
- The monthly meal packaging for a Worcester homeless shelter entered its second year and, though adapted according to the needs of the pandemic, continued via donation of food requested for meals, with the addition of clothing collections for needed items.
- Our “Share the Plate” project continues to support multiple community programs from collections.

#### **Connections still ongoing via Zoom:**

- Community Hours provided a chance to check in and chat informally with Rev. Laurel and one another during the week.
- The UU Knits meets virtually once a week to gather and chat while working on projects.
- The Book Group met monthly except for March. Zoom meetings were established and virtual monthly meetings are now held.
- The Covenant Group meets every other week to discuss thematic material from Soul Matters.
- Monthly “Listening Pods” were small groups initiated to foster continued connections, using the Soul Matters Sharing Circle materials.

#### **Communication:**

- A podcast of Laurel’s recorded sermons and monthly reflections, entitled “UUCSW Reflections,” is produced monthly and is available to all.
- A new private Facebook group, UUCSW Members and Friends, is used regularly as a space for conversation, sharing, and updates.
- Recaps of board meetings are reported to the congregation monthly in the Vista.

#### **More things stayed the same:**

- We continue our subscription to Realm which helps us more effectively administer information about people, contributions, giving, and groups.
- In February we held the Zoomapalooza, a fun tradition for all ages, where we gathered to celebrate everyone's birthday UUCSW style, but this year was online.
- We remain committed to The annual “Guest at your Table” initiative sponsored by the UU Service Committee and will resume it this year.
- The annual Christmas Giving Tree transitioned to gift cards that were purchased and donated to provide an opportunity to help people in need.
- We hope to bring back the Birthday Bank for people to donate their age in cash once we are again meeting in person, hopefully, this fall.
- We had ongoing fundraisers with Scrip, Amazon Smile, and Stop and Shop cards. Again, we hope to resume the Christmas Poinsettia sales.

#### **Things to look forward to:**

- This summer as we continue to follow the UUA's guidance for gathering, the Program Committee will share the hosting of online Summer Services with other churches, beginning Sunday, June 20. They will take place on Zoom and begin at 10:00 am.

- The UUA General Assembly will again be held virtually on June 23-27. Registrants will have access to the GA Virtual Participation Portal, which combines multiple modes of participant engagement.

**Support in this challenging time:**

- Parishioners may reach out to Rev. Laurel if they would like private support. The minister's discretionary fund is available which helps people who need immediate financial assistance to provide housing, food, or other essentials.
- Rev. Laurel provides confidential pastoral care.

**Board thank-yous:**

You may be saying that the church is doing so many things – how wonderful. We are doing so many things because of the efforts of our congregants who step forward to do them. We continue to rely on everyone's generous efforts to continue. The board appreciates their work.

The board is grateful to all the members and friends who served on committees and teams as well as all the staff that support the society. Please see reports elsewhere in the Annual Report for individual member's names. Fortunately, there are a lot of people who help. Thank you all!

Judith Nicholson has admirably served her terms as a board member and chair. Her hard work, time, humor, steady hand, and farsighted contributions have helped guide this congregation and promote our principles. Her dedication to the UUcsw is greatly appreciated. David King has completed a substitution of a previously vacated term, and we are grateful that he has agreed to continue for another term of his own. Ashleigh Swain, the clerk to the board, is moving to North Carolina. We thank her for her thorough detailed work to document the board meetings and wish her all the very best in her new adventures.

**At this point in the report, we remember the members who have passed:**

The Rev Cynthia Frado, our minister emeritus after years of service to UUcsw

*Respectfully submitted by the Board of Trustees 2020-2021: Judith Nicholson (Co-chair), Kim Hall (Co-chair), David King, Stacy Spies, Scott Owens. Ex Officio members: Ashleigh Swain (Clerk), Lisa Shumway (Treasurer), Laurel Gray (Minister)*

## ***Minister's Report***

What a year. It's wild to me that this has only been my second year as your minister at UUcsw – living through a global pandemic has a way of warping time. We've lived through so much in so short a span of time. We have adapted at an extraordinary rate and found ways to gather and feel connected while keeping our community safe. That's a pretty incredible achievement. I'm proud of all the ways we got creative and stayed rooted in our principles and our commitment to each other. I've heard from many of you that living through this pandemic year has made it even clearer how important this congregation is in your life. I'm thankful for all the ways we've rallied together this year.

In a year that was so tenuous, I'm struck by our capacity to both tell the truth in the hardest moments and to embrace as much joy as we could. Those spaces can be hard to find in life, ones that make space for the fullness of the human experience.

In truth, I find it hard to put words around the everythingness of the last church year. When we began in the fall, we didn't know when there would be a vaccine or what would happen with the presidential election. Then we had Zoom Christmas, there was an attack on the Capitol, you ordained me in a service that felt like the Olympics of Zoom church, vaccines started becoming available, Rev. Cindy died unexpectedly, we had the most successful pledge we've ever had and a fully virtual auction.

There are so many things we've learned and achieved this year, but I'm most proud of our heart. It has been a year filled with political turmoil and the endless grief of living through a pandemic, the constant fear of sickness. And I think we've journeyed through it with a kind of steadfast care, a commitment to tending to this congregation in new and creative ways. Pandemic life broke any sense of "how we've always done it" and we leaned into that reality by getting clearer about what matters and working from a place of rootedness.

The things we've figured out how to do this year are things we wouldn't have dreamed of trying a year ago. I find that heartening, and I hope you do, too. I hope you're proud of yourselves and of this congregation. It's been a really hard year. And thank goodness we've been navigating it together. We make a good team, and we have layers of good teams from staff to the board to all the various committees and the congregation as a whole.

And now, we're wrapping up the year, planning for how we want to enter next year, assuming that everything will change once again. But now we know what we're capable of – now we know how well we can adapt, how much we can count on each other. So, whatever next year brings, we'll find our way together.

*Many blessings,  
Rev. Laurel*

## ***Historian's Report***

The UUCSW Historian transferred care of two boxes of records to the Westborough Public Library in February 2021, per our 2018 agreement. This agreement allows UUCSW records to be kept in a climate-controlled library environment. UUCSW records can be accessed by the public through the library's local history archivist. Records transferred in February 2021 include an 1865 order of service for the ordination of Rev. George N. Richardson, Board of Trustees records (1918-1934), UUCSW Women's Alliance meeting minutes and financial records (1894-1981), and annual reports from the 1960s and 1970s. The first box of records, which contained UUCSW's earliest documents, was transferred in 2018. The UUCSW Historian also assisted in the ordination of Rev. Laurel Gray by researching previous ministers who had been ordained by our congregation.

*Respectfully submitted, Stacy Spies*

## ***Finance Committee Report***

### **FY20-21 Projected Finish FY21-22 Budget Proposal**

#### **FY20-21 in Review**

Let's begin by reviewing where we expect to finish the current FY20-21 fiscal year. Last June we passed a first quarter balanced budget that was then expanded to cover the full fiscal year in September. I am happy to report that we project to finish this fiscal year with a surplus of \$27,600. With that surplus included in our existing cash reserves, we should finish the fiscal year with an unrestricted cash reserve of \$105,000 to \$110,000, after funding repair and painting of the steeple. This is a very healthy position for UUCSW, especially after a year filled with so much uncertainty. Account balances are attached.

Here are a few more details on the FY20-21 fiscal year.

On the income side, we will underperform the budget with respect to rental income, due to COVID-19 impacts on our renters, Indian dance, who we had budgeted for return in the spring. However, the lost income was more than compensated for by the extraordinary payment rate on pledges. We had anticipated a lower payment rate due to Covid, but you all came through for UUCSW, matching the payment rate of previous years, better than 95%! We also exceeded the budget for loose collections, bringing in \$5,000 for UUCSW and matching contributions to our Share the Plate organizations. You all figured out how to make online giving work! Let's keep that up next year. We would also like to recognize the efforts of the auction team, who put together a lively, entertaining, and creative evening that raised 180% of target. Our deepest gratitude to those who donated and purchased items. In total, we project to surpass budgeted income by \$22,771 (14%)!

On the expense side, we expect to finish the year at 97% of the total compensation budget. Overall spending was lower because the budgeted RE position was not filled mid-year as planned due to the ongoing pandemic. Compensation was higher for the minister and office administrator to manage additional tasks this year such as establishing online service processes, leading Coming of Age, and increased pastoral care needs. The Board of Trustees also voted to provide year-end bonuses to our wonderful staff, Rev. Laurel, Elisa, and Kala, in recognition of their extraordinary efforts in keeping us running and thriving during the past year.

Within the Operations expenses, total spending is expected to be \$731 (2%) less than budget. Programs are also expected to run below budget by \$2,872 (36%), primarily due to not spending the Covid expenses budget that was allocated. The projected actuals on the expense side include funds that will be held for B&G work that cannot be completed until this summer.

Additionally, UUCSW was able to apply for and receive loan forgiveness for the Payroll Protection Program loan of \$20,759. We also paid off the balance of the heating system loan in the fall.

**Share the Plate** – As mentioned above, the Share the Plate program was very successful this year. In FY20-21, UUCSW made the following contributions: Westborough Community COVID-19 Fund (\$332.50), UU the Vote (\$187.50), Community Harvest Project (\$592.50), One Mission (\$614), UU Mass Action (\$686), Team Brownsville (\$700), New England Innocence Project (\$563), Dismas House (\$469), and the Pastoral Counseling Center (\$536.50).

## **FY21-22 Budget Proposal**

On to FY21-22. The Finance Committee is submitting a balanced budget proposal for the next fiscal year. A finalized copy of the proposed budget is attached.

On the income side, we had a very successful pledge campaign, raising \$122,924 between the regular campaign and giving to offset reduced pledging. Based on pledge payment history, we are proposing using 95% of the pledge total as the budget for FY21-22 income.

Beyond the raw numbers, we want to highlight some of the line items of our budget. Our budgeted income for the coming fiscal year is \$28,885 more than last year's budget. Following is a discussion of the noteworthy changes:

- The budget for loose collections is higher based on this year's actuals.
- The budget for pledges is higher based on higher pledging and a higher assumed payment rate (was discounted for Covid in the current year's budget).
- The budget assumes a return to a live auction.
- Our rental income will return to pre-pandemic levels.
- We have added a new income line item – "prior year surplus contribution." Now that our unrestricted cash reserves have surpassed \$100k, the finance committee is recommending that some of the surplus (less than 33%) be used for one-time or unusual expenses outside of our usual operating budget. More on this in the expense section.

Our budgeted expenses for the coming fiscal year are \$28,885 more than last year's budget. Following is a discussion of the noteworthy changes:

- Compensation:
  - The office administrator pay rate will increase from \$17 to \$18.65/hour to better align her pay with the UUA recommended pay range. Her hours will also increase to reflect additional responsibilities during the summer and the church year.
  - The music director will receive a 2% pay raise and will continue providing music for UUCSW hosted services during the summer, as we initiated last summer.
  - The minister's salary will increase by 2% and her professional expenses will increase to \$7,200, the level recommended by the UUA (prorated for 90% time). Additionally, UUA health insurance will increase by more than 10% this year.
  - The budget includes a 25% time RE professional, including benefits, if required, as well as childcare during services.
- Our contribution to the UUA has been increased by \$1,000. The requested contribution is \$10,242. We have only contributed \$2,500 for a number of years.
- The overall operating budget increased by \$8,819. Many line items increased due to typical year-on-year growth or to being back in the building again. Expense growth outside those areas is detailed below.
  - A one-year expense of \$2,500 for a detailed building inspection has been budgeted (utilizing "prior year surplus contribution") to help identify focus areas for future B&G projects, following completion of the steeple painting.
  - The landscaper & snow removal line item has increased to reflect current costs and the addition of some paid snow removal, which has not been budgeted for a number of years.
- The programs budget will return to pre-pandemic levels for most line items, with one exception. The technology budget has been increased to \$5,000 for the year to cover one-time expenses

related to hybrid service development, such as equipment purchases. This is another line item funded by the “prior year surplus contribution.”

Finally, we are extremely fortunate to have a team of dedicated staff and volunteers who continue to deliver high value to our community. Thank you to each of them. Between our salaried employees going beyond their job descriptions and many of our Committee heads and other members donating time and often supplies and/or money for their committee-specific needs, our congregation (and the budget) benefits significantly from the silent generosity of those that regularly shoulder a disproportionate share of the time and expense burdens for our congregation.

The Finance Committee was thrilled to welcome two new members this year. We are grateful for their fresh viewpoints, great questions and active participation. The responsibilities of the Finance Committee are to set the annual budget, regularly monitor the monthly financial statements, provide up-to-date information and advice to the Board of Trustees and/or take action on issues pertaining to the congregation finances. The committee consists of the Treasurer, Lisa Shumway, Collector, Susie Wells, Assistant Collector, Kathe Scott and new members, Bruce Hall and Scott Weiss.

*Respectfully submitted, Lisa Shumway*



Account Balances 2020 - As of 6/3/2021  
(Includes unrealized gains)

Account	6/3/2021 Balance
<b>Bank Accounts</b>	
Avidia Checking	26,358
Savings @ Avidia	69,257
<b>TOTAL Bank Accounts</b>	<b>95,615</b>
<b>Liability Accounts</b>	
Covid Auction reserves	-6,495
HOLDING FUND	-1,994
Pre-paid Pledges	-19,245
RE OWL	-443
Ryder Organ Restoration	-819
Sabbatical	-3,600
Share the Plate	0
Social Justice Meal packaging	-297
Weathervane and Steeple Repair	-44,608
YG Service Project	-1,581
<b>TOTAL Liability Accounts</b>	<b>-79,080</b>
<b>Investment Accounts</b>	
LPL Financial	95,765
<b>TOTAL Investment Accounts</b>	<b>95,765</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>112,300</b>

Category Description	FY19_20			FY20_21			FY21_22
	Budget	Actual	Difference	Budget	Projected year end	Difference	
<b>INCOME</b>							
<b>Collections</b>							
Loose Collections	\$ 4,000	\$ 2,640	\$ (1,360)	\$ 1,600	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,400	\$ 4,000
Misc. Donations	\$ 1,500	\$ 34,447	\$ 32,947	\$ 3,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,000
Pledges Prev. Year	\$ -	\$ 280	\$ 280	\$ 2,332	\$ 2,532	\$ 200	\$ -
Pledges Current Year	\$ 96,570	\$ 100,711	\$ 4,141	\$ 92,537	\$ 109,000	\$ 16,463	\$ 116,706
<b>TOTAL Collections</b>	<b>\$ 102,070</b>	<b>\$ 138,078</b>	<b>\$ 36,008</b>	<b>\$ 99,469</b>	<b>\$ 122,532</b>	<b>\$ 23,063</b>	<b>\$ 122,706</b>
<b>Fund Raisers</b>							
Auction	\$ 8,500	\$ 10,675	\$ 2,175	\$ 4,000	\$ 7,300	\$ 3,300	\$ 10,000
Fall Fund Raiser(s)	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ (1,000)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Spring Fund Raiser(s)	\$ 1,000	\$ 80	\$ (920)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000
Ways & Means Fund Raisers	\$ 1,000	\$ 670	\$ (330)	\$ 200	\$ 386	\$ 186	\$ 500
<b>TOTAL Fund Raisers</b>	<b>\$ 11,500</b>	<b>\$ 4,223</b>	<b>\$ (7,277)</b>	<b>\$ 4,200</b>	<b>\$ 7,686</b>	<b>\$ 3,486</b>	<b>\$ 12,500</b>
<b>Interest &amp; Endowment Distributions</b>							
Savings Interest	\$ 1,200	\$ 63	\$ (1,137)	\$ 50	\$ 251	\$ 201	\$ 50
Endowment Distributions	\$ 6,500	\$ 8,598	\$ 2,098	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,318	\$ 318	\$ 9,500
<b>TOTAL Interest &amp; Endowment Distrib.</b>	<b>\$ 7,700</b>	<b>\$ 8,661</b>	<b>\$ 961</b>	<b>\$ 9,050</b>	<b>\$ 9,569</b>	<b>\$ 519</b>	<b>\$ 9,550</b>
<b>Property Usage</b>							
3 School Street	\$ 13,200	\$ 13,200	\$ -	\$ 13,200	\$ 13,200	\$ -	\$ 13,200
Nursery School	\$ 15,000	\$ 9,500	\$ (5,500)	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ -	\$ 15,000
Other Usage	\$ 6,500	\$ 5,845	\$ (655)	\$ 3,243	\$ 70	\$ (3,173)	\$ 6,500
Reimbursements (Ins. & Trash)	\$ 3,900	\$ 3,970	\$ 70	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,276	\$ 276	\$ 4,500
<b>TOTAL Property Usage</b>	<b>\$ 38,600</b>	<b>\$ 32,515</b>	<b>\$ (6,085)</b>	<b>\$ 27,943</b>	<b>\$ 25,046</b>	<b>\$ (2,897)</b>	<b>\$ 39,200</b>
5% from Stop & Shop Cards	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,620	\$ 220	\$ 1,400	\$ 865	\$ (535)	\$ 750
PPP loan forgiveness	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,759	\$ 20,759	\$ -	\$ -
Prior year surplus contribution	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 161,270</b>	<b>\$ 185,096</b>	<b>\$ 23,826</b>	<b>\$ 162,821</b>	<b>\$ 185,592</b>	<b>\$ 22,771</b>	<b>\$ 191,706</b>

		FY19_20			FY20_21			FY21_22
Category Description		Budget	Actual	Difference	Budget	Projected year end	Difference	Proposed Budget
EXPENSES								
Compensation								
Staff								
	Administrator +UUCSW paid FICA (7.65%)	\$ 8,416	\$ 9,123	\$ 707	\$ 10,130	\$ 12,113	\$ 1,983	\$ 11,389
	Childcare during services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,648
	Director Music +UUCSW paid FICA (7.65%)	\$ 9,495	\$ 9,674	\$ 179	\$ 10,654	\$ 11,760	\$ 1,106	\$ 11,054
	Director R.E. +UUCSW paid FICA (7.65%)	\$ 17,567	\$ 17,609	\$ 42	\$ 7,099	\$ -	\$ (7,099)	\$ 10,417
	DRE 401K	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 968
	DRE insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,400
	DRE Training	\$ 1,500	\$ 692	\$ (808)	\$ 300	\$ -	\$ (300)	\$ 750
	TOTAL Staff	\$ 36,978	\$ 37,098	\$ 120	\$ 28,183	\$ 23,873	\$ (4,310)	\$ 39,626
Ministerial								
Insurance								
	Dental	\$ 374	\$ -	\$ (374)	\$ -	\$ 293	\$ 293	\$ 580
	Disability	\$ 603	\$ 628	\$ 25	\$ 750	\$ 769	\$ 19	\$ 750
	Group Life	\$ 427	\$ 416	\$ (11)	\$ 520	\$ 497	\$ (23)	\$ 520
	Health	\$ 5,923	\$ 6,058	\$ 135	\$ 6,710	\$ 6,645	\$ (65)	\$ 7,566
	TOTAL Insurance	\$ 7,327	\$ 7,102	\$ (225)	\$ 7,980	\$ 7,980	\$ -	\$ 9,416
Expenses								
	Professional Expenses	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,917	\$ 5,917	\$ -	\$ 7,200
	Retirement Account	\$ 5,034	\$ 5,034	\$ -	\$ 5,917	\$ 5,917	\$ -	\$ 6,110
	TOTAL Expenses	\$ 10,034	\$ 10,034	\$ -	\$ 11,834	\$ 11,834	\$ -	\$ 13,310
Salary & Housing								
	Salary & Housing Allowance + 7.65% S&H	\$ 54,186	\$ 57,961	\$ 3,775	\$ 64,383	\$ 67,467	\$ 3,084	\$ 65,774
	TOTAL Salary & Housing	\$ 54,186	\$ 57,961	\$ 3,775	\$ 64,383	\$ 67,467	\$ 3,084	\$ 65,774
	TOTAL Ministerial	\$ 71,547	\$ 75,097		\$ 84,197	\$ 87,281		\$ 88,500
	TOTAL Compensation	\$ 108,525	\$ 112,194	\$ 3,669	\$ 112,380	\$ 111,154	\$ (1,226)	\$ 128,126

Category Description	FY19_20			FY20_21			FY21_22
	Budget	Actual	Difference	Budget	Projected year end	Difference	Proposed Budget
<b>Larger Fellowship</b>							
<b>TOTAL Larger Fellowship</b>	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ -	\$ 3,500
<b>Operating</b>							
Building & Grounds							
Building & Grounds Maintenance	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ -	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ -	\$ 6,000
Building inspection for future projects	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,500
Landscaper & Snow Removal	\$ 975	\$ 730	\$ (245)	\$ 800	\$ 1,710	\$ 910	\$ 3,300
Cleaning Service	\$ 4,125	\$ 3,780	\$ (345)	\$ 4,125	\$ 4,095	\$ (30)	\$ 4,300
Nursery School Maintenance	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ -	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ -	\$ 3,600
Lift Maintenance & Inspection	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,075	\$ (25)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,500
<b>TOTAL Building &amp; Grounds</b>	<b>\$ 15,800</b>	<b>\$ 15,185</b>	<b>\$ (615)</b>	<b>\$ 14,525</b>	<b>\$ 15,405</b>	<b>\$ 880</b>	<b>\$ 21,200</b>
<b>TOTAL Electric</b>	<b>\$ 4,800</b>	<b>\$ 3,609</b>	<b>\$ (1,191)</b>	<b>\$ 3,600</b>	<b>\$ 2,872</b>	<b>\$ (728)</b>	<b>\$ 4,500</b>
Natural Gas	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,521	\$ (79)	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,500	\$ (100)	\$ 3,600
Heating System Fund / Loan Debt	\$ 1,000	\$ 984	\$ (16)	\$ 246	\$ 246	\$ -	\$ -
Insurance, Business	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,343	\$ 343	\$ 9,500	\$ 9,277	\$ (223)	\$ 10,000
Office	\$ 850	\$ 502	\$ (348)	\$ 300	\$ 158	\$ (142)	\$ 600
Payroll Service	\$ 1,100	\$ 921	\$ (179)	\$ 1,000	\$ 885	\$ (115)	\$ 1,000
Postage	\$ 200	\$ 154	\$ (46)	\$ 200	\$ 155	\$ (45)	\$ 200
Telephone	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,476	\$ (24)	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,336	\$ (64)	\$ 2,400
Trash Removal	\$ 2,304	\$ 2,269	\$ (35)	\$ 2,460	\$ 2,493	\$ 33	\$ 2,600
Water & Sewer	\$ 1,050	\$ 980	\$ (70)	\$ 750	\$ 418	\$ (332)	\$ 1,000
Water Heater	\$ 150	\$ 146	\$ (4)	\$ 150	\$ 146	\$ (4)	\$ 150
Other Operating - church software	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,010	\$ (190)	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,309	\$ 109	\$ 1,500
<b>TOTAL Other Operating</b>	<b>\$ 22,954</b>	<b>\$ 22,306</b>	<b>\$ (648)</b>	<b>\$ 21,806</b>	<b>\$ 20,923</b>	<b>\$ (883)</b>	<b>\$ 23,050</b>
<b>TOTAL Operating</b>	<b>\$ 43,554</b>	<b>\$ 40,115</b>	<b>\$ (3,439)</b>	<b>\$ 39,931</b>	<b>\$ 39,200</b>	<b>\$ (731)</b>	<b>\$ 48,750</b>

Category Description	FY19_20			FY20_21			FY21_22
	Budget	Actual	Difference	Budget	Projected year end	Difference	Proposed Budget
<b>Programs</b>							
Adult R.E.	\$ -	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ 120
Board of Trustees	\$ 500	\$ 1,239	\$ 739	\$ 500	\$ 200	\$ (300)	\$ 500
Canvass	\$ 100	\$ 219	\$ 119	\$ 225	\$ 107	\$ (118)	\$ 225
Coffee Hour	\$ 250	\$ 172	\$ (78)	\$ 125	\$ -	\$ (125)	\$ 125
Membership	\$ 300	\$ 324	\$ 24	\$ 300	\$ 290	\$ (10)	\$ 300
Music	\$ 800	\$ 499	\$ (301)	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ -	\$ 800
Program Sundays	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,112	\$ (1,888)	\$ 2,800	\$ 2,623	\$ (177)	\$ 2,900
RE Expenses	\$ 900	\$ 640	\$ (260)	\$ 700	\$ 700	\$ -	\$ 700
Social Action/ Racial Justice	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 250
Technology	\$ 400	\$ 269	\$ (131)	\$ 400	\$ 127	\$ (273)	\$ 5,000
Worship Supplies	\$ 60	\$ -	\$ (60)	\$ 60	\$ -	\$ (60)	\$ 60
Extra Covid expenses (cleaning, supplies, etc)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ 191	\$ (1,809)	\$ 350
<b>TOTAL Programs</b>	<b>\$ 6,310</b>	<b>\$ 4,573</b>	<b>\$ (1,737)</b>	<b>\$ 8,010</b>	<b>\$ 5,138</b>	<b>\$ (2,872)</b>	<b>\$ 11,330</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 160,889</b>	<b>\$ 160,366</b>	<b>\$ (523)</b>	<b>\$ 162,821</b>	<b>\$ 157,992</b>	<b>\$ (4,829)</b>	<b>\$ 191,706</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 381</b>	<b>\$ 24,730</b>	<b>\$ 24,349</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 27,600</b>	<b>\$ 27,600</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>

## ***Annual Pledge Campaign Committee Report***

We had a great pledging year – **THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO PLEDGED!** As a reminder, the theme of our campaign was “Weathering the Storm” as conceived by the team and supported by beautiful materials from Elisa Scully, an incredibly inspiring kick-off sermon by Rev. Laurel, a direct mailing driven by Lisa and Bruce, and follow up emails and phone calls from the entire team. As usual, Lisa was the glue holding everything together.

**The results are in:** through the end of May we have received 61 pledges totaling **\$119,699** – \$6,349 more than last year – and the highest pledge total ever for UUCSW! Additionally, 17 pledges added **\$3,225** to help those struggling to meet their pledge commitments due to Covid. We also raised **\$14,655** for the steeple restoration, which is matched by an anonymous donor, and added to with another \$4,000 gift. The steeple work will start soon and be completed by fall.

Because so many of you stepped up so generously, we have the resources to work towards our stated goals of weathering the storm, repairing our mast, and ensuring the welfare of all souls on board. More details regarding the budget can be found in the finance report. **THANKS AGAIN!**

If you have ideas on how to increase our pledging rate in the future or any other ideas regarding the pledge campaign, please consider joining the Pledge Committee next year. We’d love to have you! **And, if you haven’t yet pledged and would like to, there’s still time!** Please either tell Lisa, fill out a pledge form, or pledge online at [onrealm.org](http://onrealm.org).

More details of the campaign: This year we reached out to 86 households via email, regular mail, phone calls and/or face-to-face chats. While the percentage of member/friend households pledging (71%) is still below the full participation we would like, we did see the average pledge amount go up from \$1,858 to \$1,962. The table below provides a breakdown of pledges received.

<b>Pledge Range (\$)</b>	<b>Number of Pledges in Range</b>	<b>Total Amount Pledged</b>	<b>Average Amount Pledged</b>
1 - 500	12	\$2,744	\$229
501 - 1000	7	\$5,234	\$748
1001 - 1500	15	\$19,310	\$1,287
1501 - 2000	9	\$16,360	\$1,818
2001 - 2500	2	\$4,560	\$2,280
2501 - 3000	7	\$19,666	\$2,809
3001 - 3500	3	\$9,905	\$3,302
3501 - 4000	0	0	0
4001 - 4500	3	\$12,420	\$4,140
4501 up	3	\$29,500	\$9,833
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>\$119,699</b>	<b>\$1,962</b>

*Respectively submitted, Bruce Hall, Laurel Gray, David King, Kathie Metzger, Elisa Scully, Lisa Shumway, Juliana Spofford*



## ***Membership Engagement Team Report***

The Membership Engagement Team (MET) mission is:

*To greet visitors each Sunday, coordinate coffee hour, hold New Unitarian Universalist classes as well as membership ceremonies at least once a year, help visitors and members find places to connect within the congregation, provide appropriate publications relating to membership, maintain contact with friends and members who come irregularly, provide caring for those in need.*

This year's team included Lisa Shumway (Chair), Pauline Sciarappa, Janet Purney-Balabanis, Paula Kirk, Robin Fleming, Ann Maloney, Rev. Laurel, John Metzger, Kathie Metzger, and Ashley Swain.

Throughout this pandemic year, we focused our efforts on maintaining and growing connections while we were physically separated, welcoming new visitors and members, and supporting our congregants.

Over the summer of 2020, the MET hosted twice weekly Zoom community hours to provide an opportunity for folks to check-in with one another. We also hosted three picnics and a hike at Mt. Wachusett, where we were able to visit in person, in a safe manner.

As we moved into the new church year, we were thrilled to see more formerly active members joining us for our online services. We reached out to the many new visitors who found us online this year and expect to see a few new families in our pews come September.

In December, we collaborated with Rev. Laurel to distribute holiday goody bags to our members and friends, spreading the spirit of the season in preparation for our candlelight service on Christmas Eve.

In February, we celebrated our Members and Friends with a special service including the membership book signing and a virtual celebration, Zuumapaluza, with Pauline's home-baked treats and online games. We are thrilled to welcome three new members this year: Kris Allen, David Lambert and Hilary Cespedes.

We held a well-attended game night in April, featuring "Name that Tune" and will be wrapping up the year's social activities with a picnic at Bay State Commons.

This year, UUCSW reported 107 active members. Sadly, in March, we lost Reverend Cynthia Frado, our Minister Emerita, after a sudden and brief illness. While we did not lose any other members and friends, we recognize that many of us have suffered the loss of loved ones over the past 12 months.

Thank you to the entire MET for your giving so generously of your time and talents this year. It was a pleasure working with you. Our heartfelt gratitude to all of our members and friends who have participated in events and have helped keep us connected. We end this year a stronger community than we began, thanks to all of you!

*Respectfully submitted, Lisa Shumway*

## ***Program Committee Report***

As I write this report, I cannot help but think that in years to come, UUCSW members and friends and perhaps others might be particularly interested in looking back on this year to see how church changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It changed a lot! We went from having in-church services with people sitting close together on pews, singing hymns, and chatting during coffee hour to having entirely online services in Zoom. It required a Herculean effort. We were incredibly fortunate to have had Rev. Laurel Gray as Minister, Kala Farnham as Music Director, and Elisa Scully as Office Administrator as well as dedicated Board members to support us in the rapid transition that was necessary. So many members and friends stepped up to help with services as you will see.

Several new roles emerged in 2020 as we learned what was needed to successfully deliver online services in Zoom. The “Worship Team” evolved to include a service leader, greeter, worship associate, and tech host. The greeter and tech host have Zoom-specific responsibilities; the greeter admits people into the Zoom meeting and keeps a lookout for “Zoom bombers” while the tech host runs the slide show that was created with words and music to be shared during the service. The Board has been filling the greeter spots while the Program Committee has been filling the worship associate and tech host spots as well as coordinating the team week to week.

- **Lay leaders** included Bruce Hall, Jerry Breecher, Scott Owens, Ellen Rutter, Catherine Nourse, Andrea Burdick, Jane Walsh, Amanda Hall, Anya Olsen, Jim Kirk, Helen Wolfson, Eric Thomas, Phyllis Samara, Meredith O’Brien, Sheila McPharlin, Pauline Sciarappa, Lisa Shumway, and Sharon Barrett.
- **Worship Associates** this year included Meredith O’Brien, Catherine Nourse, Ellen Rutter, Phyllis Samara, Scott Owens, Bruce Hall, Lisa Shumway, Jane Walsh, Sheila McPharlin, Kris Allen, Marge Fisher, and Sharon Barrett.
- **Greeters** included Stacy Spies, Scott Owens, Judith Nicholson, Kim Hall, Sharon Barrett, Pauline Sciarappa, and Lisa Shumway.
- Our mighty **Tech Hosts** are Bruce Hall, Lisa Shumway, David King, and Ben Gold!

And, of course, our services are elevated to a whole other level with the addition of beautiful music provided by our immensely talented music director, Kala Farnham. Look for more on music in the Music Committee report.

Our most joyous service this year was the ordination of our minister, Rev. Laurel Gray on February 6, 2021. It was an incredible feat and like all the services this past year, it took place online in Zoom! It required no less planning than an in-church ordination and perhaps a bit more to coordinate all the family, friends, and ministerial colleagues who came together to make it a most amazing experience for Laurel and all of us. It was an honor and privilege for UUCSW to confer and affirm ordination on Laurel as the host congregation.

We welcomed several guest ministers to preach during the 2020-2021 church year. We would like to thank Laurel for coordinating this effort – we have received very positive feedback on these services, and we hope to continue them next year.

I would like to acknowledge the passing of our beloved Minister Emerita, the Rev. Cynthia Frado. We were so fortunate to have had Cindy with us on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 when she preached on a theme entitled “Calling All Lightkeepers.” I had the privilege to work with Cindy as she prepared for that



service and she shared with me just how much it meant to her to be invited back to UUCSW. UUCSW held a very special place in Cindy's heart, and she in ours, and we will miss her.

Summer services in 2020 were held online through Zoom during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. UUCSW teamed up with the Marlborough/Hudson, Berlin, Northborough, and Grafton UU churches to offer weekly "Safari Sunday" services through the summer.

### **2020 Summer Services:**

June 21, 2020 – "Celebrating Dads"	Led by Sharon Barrett
June 28, 2020 – UUA General Assembly Sunday Service	Tech Host – Lisa Shumway
July 5, 2020 – 1 <sup>st</sup> Safari Sunday – "America the Beautiful"	Led by Lisa Shumway
July 12, 2020 – UUCSW Service – "Grace without God"	Led by Sheila McPharlin
July 19, 2020 – Safari Sunday	Hosted by Northborough
July 26, 2020 – UUCSW Service – "Freedom to Fail"	Led by Phyllis Samara
August 2, 2020 – Safari Sunday	Hosted by Berlin
August 9, 2020 – UUCSW Service – "Eye of the Storm"	Led by Kim Hall & Marge Fisher
August 16, 2020 – Safari Sunday	Hosted by Marlborough/Hudson
August 23, 2020 – UUCSW Service – "Intersectionality"	Led by Pauline Sciarappa
August 30, 2020 – Safari Sunday	Led by Grafton/Upton
September 6, 2020 – UUCSW Service – "Honoring American Workers"	Led by Lisa Shumway

We continued with online Zoom services into the fall of 2020.

### **2020-2021 Worship Services:**

September 13, 2020 – "Streams of Renewal"	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
September 20, 2020 – "Our to Care For"	Led by Tara Humphries, Guest minister
September 27, 2020 – "Renewal at Home"	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
October 4, 2020 – "The Color of the Leaves"	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
October 11, 2020 – "Moved to Tears by Music"	Led by Bruce Hall
October 18, 2020 – UU the Vote National Service	
October 25, 2020 – "Calling All Lightkeepers"	Led by Rev. Cynthia Frado, Minister Emerita
November 1, 2020 – "How to Listen"	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
November 8, 2020 – "My Greatest Gift"	Led by Rev. Michelle Ma & Rev. Laurel Gray
November 15, 2020 – "Hearts of Flesh"	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
November 22, 2020 – "100,000 Cars"	Led by Jerry Breecher & Christa Thomas-Sowers
November 29, 2020 – "All Souls"	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
December 6, 2020 – "The Sound of Snow"	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
December 13, 2020 – "Enjoy the View"	Led by Rev. Aisha Ansano
December 20, 2020 – "Waiting for the Light"	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
December 24, 2020 – Christmas Eve Service	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
December 27, 2020 – "Returning to Center"	Led by Scott Owens
January 3, 2021 – "We made it! Intentions and the New Year"	Led by Ellen Rutter
January 10, 2021 – "Awaken the Imagination"	Led by Catherine Nourse
January 17, 2021 – "One Dreaming: Martin Luther King"	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
January 24, 2021 – "Reflections on Our Racial Justice Journey"	Led by Jane Walsh & Andrea Burdick

January 31, 2021 – Members and Friends Sunday	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray & the Membership Committee w/ a reflection by John and Kathie Metzger
February 6, 2021 – Rev. Laurel Gray Ordination!!	
February 7, 2021 – Celebration Sunday, “Weathering the Storm”	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
February 14, 2021 – “Roots and Wings”	Led by Amanda Hall & Anya Olsen
February 21, 2021 – “Whose History?”	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
February 28, 2021 – “Discerning the Emergent in the Emergency”	Led by Rev. Katie Byron, Guest Minister
March 7, 2021 – “The Free Pulpit”	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
March 14, 2021 – “What We Bring to the Movement”	Led by Rev. Lisa Garcia-Sampson
March 21, 2021 – “Our Commitment to Hope”	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
March 28, 2021 – “A Model of Activism”	Led by Ellen Rutter
April 4, 2021 – Easter Sunday Service	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
April 11, 2021 – “Stories of Making It Through”	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
April 18, 2021 – “Trying to Do Good In a Complex World”	Led by Jim Kirk
April 25, 2021 – “It’s Sunday Morning – Why Are You Here?”	Led by Helen Wolfson & Eric Thomas
May 2, 2021 – “Stories: Things Gone Perfectly Wrong”	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
May 9, 2021 – “Radical Roots of Mother’s Day”	Led by Phyllis Samara
May 16, 2021 – “Stories of Serendipity and Awe”	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
May 23, 2021 – “A Single Story, Many Perspectives	Led by Meredith O’Brien
May 30, 2021 – “Stories of Resilience in Hard Times”	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray
June 6, 2021 – Coming of Age Service	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray & COA families
June 13, 2021 – Flower Communion and Bridging Service	Led by Rev. Laurel Gray

*Respectfully submitted, Sharon K. Barrett*

## ***Children and Youth Religious Education (RE) Program Report***

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the departure of the Director of Religious Education (DRE) in the spring of 2020, UUCSW revised its approach to religious education (RE) during the 2020-2021 year, reducing overall activities and focusing on maintaining connections for youth between each other and with the UU faith. RE was led by the RE Committee with support from Rev. Laurel and Board Liaison David King, and provided RE to two groups of children directly, conducted the Coming of Age program, and provided supplementary curriculum to all UUCSW families with children to encourage education at home.

### **Zoom RE for grades 6-8**

Zoom RE was successfully held for seven 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders using the “Crossing Paths” online curriculum. Crossing Paths is an interfaith learning program similar to the “Building Bridges” curriculum used at the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade level in the past. Its ultimate goal is to help youth build and clarify their own UU identity through engagement with other faiths. Teachers and students found the mix of online videos, games and activities engaging and there was consistent participation among students throughout the year. The curriculum was provided bi-weekly from October 2020 through June 2021 and covered the Unitarian Universalist, Judaic, Christian, Catholic, Islamic, and Hindu faiths.

### **In-person classes for grades 3-5**

Based on feedback from parents, the RE committee decided not to offer a formal curriculum via Zoom for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Instead, the committee tried to organize socially distant outdoor get-togethers with spiritual activities. One session was held in the fall of 2020 with seven participants. Inclement weather and ongoing concerns about transmission curtailed any other meetings in 2020 or 2021.

### **Soulful Home and Chalice Home**

To provide the opportunity for spiritual exploration at home, especially with pre-K to second grade, the RE Committee purchased two curricula – Soulful Home and Chalice Home. Interested families received packets at the beginning of each month organized around eight distinct family "spaces" with ideas and resources to fill those spaces with UU theme-based exploration. Rev. Laurel also drew inspiration from these curricula for her sermons.

### **Coming of Age**

Rev. Laurel and David King led Coming of Age activities through bi-weekly Zoom meetings in the spring of 2021 with five 8<sup>th</sup> graders and two 9<sup>th</sup> graders who had missed the opportunity in 2020. The Coming of Age Ceremony was planned by the COA youth and held on June 6, 2021.

### **Youth Group**

The youth group has not been active since 2018. While the RE committee and task force are very interested in nurturing a youth group, they decided that the pandemic did not provide fruitful grounds for doing so and instead agreed to focus on developing a relatively large 7-8-9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort into an active youth group once we can return to in-person meetings in 2021-2022.

### **Bridging Ceremony**

The Bridging Ceremony was held on June 13 during the regular church service to recognize graduating senior Mike Mahoney.

## **Religious Education Committee**

The Religious Education Committee consisted of Tim Nourse (Chair), Erin Gold (Co-Chair), Ann Mahoney, David Lambert, and David King (Board Liaison). Committee members have not yet committed to serving on the RE committee in 2021.

## **Religious Education Task Force**

The Religious Education (RE) task force was convened in February 2020 to determine a sustainable program for the next few years given that our existing program did not have enough volunteers or youth, and that Cassie Lengel, our Director of Religious Education (DRE), had announced that she was leaving at the end of the church year.

The group determined the interim all-volunteer structure for this remote year and is now working on next year's structure. They are envisioning each RE class meeting a few times a month at a different time from Sunday morning services. Sunday worship would be a whole church activity with paid childcare for children who do not stay in the sanctuary. The task force members have also attended some regional meetings about RE sharing between congregations – this could be very beneficial for aspects of our RE program that prefer a larger group such as Youth Group.

The task force has completed a job description for the quarter-time (10 hours per week) DRE position which would start in August. They are investigating making our quarter-time position more desirable by structuring it so it could work with another congregation's part time position. There are ongoing discussions with the UU Society of Grafton and Upton which is looking to fill a 30 hours per week DRE position. The task force has asked that the 2021-2022 budget include one-quarter of a full-time position's benefits in case it is necessary.

The Religious Education Task Force consisted of Tim Nourse, Erin Gold, Pauline Sciarappa, Cecelia Owens, Diana Beck, and David King (Board Liaison).

## **Teaching Team Members**

Congregation members who volunteered to lead classes in person or via Zoom included:

- Ed Boudreaux
- Erin Boudreaux
- Pam Bridges
- Erin Gold
- Ben Gold
- David Lambert
- David King
- Ann Mahoney
- Amy Mattelock
- Melissa Meehan
- Tim Nourse
- Tanya Trainor
- Jane Walsh

We thank all of them for their time, enthusiasm, and willingness to engage online!

*Respectfully submitted, David King*

## ***Music Committee Report***

Music Committee members include Vince Aquilino, Jim Kirk, Paula Kirk, Ken Young, Kim Hall, Nancy Avila, Erin Gold, and Sharon Barrett. This year, the Music Committee was chaired by Sharon Barrett, but has not met regularly.

This year, our Society continued to be challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, with all Sunday services moved to an online format via Zoom.

Kala Farnham continues as UUCSW's Music Director for her fourth year, adapting very flexibly to the demands of remote services, recording and uploading at least 3-4 pieces for each Sunday service – prelude, hymns, interlude pieces, and postludes. She chose lovely pieces of music in line with the weekly theme and performed these so beautifully – there was not a Sunday that went by without comments about the music.

Music Committee has been inactive during the pandemic. The pandemic necessitated that the concert scheduled May 3, 2020 be canceled. No further concerts have been planned.

Adult Choir members are Vince Aquilino, Sharon and Kevin Barrett, Robin Fleming, Naomi Gold, Paula and Jim Kirk, Andy Koenigsberg, John Metzger, Kim Hall, and Susie Wells. The Adult Choir performed remotely at special services via recordings coordinated and implemented by Kala.

### **Musical Highlights:**

- The Christmas Eve service
- Reverend Laurel Gray's ordination – special music was coordinated by Kala for this service on Zoom, performed both by her and guest choirs and musicians
- Reverend Cindy Frado's funeral – which was held in the sanctuary, which Kala attended and performed several selections requested by the family
- Please see the filed services for a listing of hymns, prelude, postlude, and musical interlude pieces performed by Kala, the adult choir, and special guest musicians in 2020-2021

### **Instruments:**

The 1916 Chickering Grand Piano was tuned in April 2021 to be used for Rev. Frado's funeral. Tom Driscoll advised in 2018 that our Chickering grand piano is nearing the end of its natural life -- he has difficulty getting all hammers to reach their strings and suggested that the budget to refurbish it would far exceed the cost to replace it.

The 1895 George H. Ryder Pipe Organ, Opus 180 has not received any servicing this year. Past maintenance was provided by Alex Belair and Michael Tanguay. They brought the organ back to a playable state in August 2014 after being dormant for over twenty years. This lovely antique will continue to need tender loving care on an ongoing basis. An estimate exists for how much it would cost to completely renovate the instrument.

*Respectfully submitted, Music Committee*

## ***Social Justice Committee Report***

At the Annual Meeting in 2020 the congregation voted to form a Racial Justice Committee separate from the Social Justice Committee. The purpose of this vote was to give emphasis to a special social justice need. A number of the congregation who had seen racial justice as a vital issue, now moved to that new committee while continuing to support the existing Social Justice Committee.

The Social Justice Committee this year has been involved in several activities.

For some years, we have monthly prepared lunches that we deliver to the SMOC shelter in Worcester with the help of many congregational volunteers to prepare and deliver these, including Jerry Breecher, Ed Walsh, and Marge Fisher.

Because of the pandemic, our operation has changed. In 2020-2021 food is now collected (without being prepared into meals) and delivered to the shelter, with food donations from the entire congregation. Libba Moore and Marge Fisher are spearheading this effort. In addition, we are collecting used clothing for the shelter under the guidance of Nancy Siegal and Pauline Sciarappa. Both of these activities happen monthly.

We supported efforts by “UU The Vote” and “Vote Forward” to send letters to unregistered voters encouraging them to register and vote. Our purpose was not to sell a particular point of view, but to talk about why we, the letter writers, were voting and see voting as important. In all, congregants prepared over 1,200 letters for these campaigns.

As always, we had a Giving Tree this year – made much more difficult by the logistics needed around the pandemic.

We are working in collaboration with other congregations for maximum impact using the newly formed UU Mass Action Worcester County group. Jerry Breecher and John Metzger have been attending on behalf of UUCSW and others are being recruited.

We expect to continue to support these efforts.

In addition, the congregation, under the guidance of UUA advisor Erica Baron, met to determine areas of interest in social justice among members. A separate report on that activity will be included as part of the congregational reports.

This has been a very exciting time for us to focus and re-energize efforts in social justice.

*Respectfully submitted, Jerry Breecher*

## ***Social Justice Visioning Workshops Report***

Prompted by the COIC report, we enlisted the help of Rev. Erica Baron, of the UUA NE Region staff, to help us gather congregational input about our social justice interests. Two well-attended visioning workshops were held (March 21 and May 2). This report is based on the information we gathered during those two sessions and our work with Rev. Baron to summarize outcomes and plan our next steps.

### **The most popular types of justice work were:**

- Projects, especially direct service projects
- Ongoing direct service, such as doing a regular meal
- Education – learning more ourselves and teaching our kids or others in the community

### **The UUcsw community is passionate about a wide variety of specific justice issues:**

- Economic Justice: food, clothing, holiday gifts
- Black Lives Matter/Anti-Racism (including some interest in decarceration and refugee support)
- Climate change and climate protection
- LGBTQ justice, especially OWL

### **The UUcsw community is interested in partnership:**

- With other UUs
- With interfaith community
- With partners in our community (e.g. library, Westborough Connects, Westborough neighbors)

Based on recommendations following both meetings with Rev. Baron, her recommendation is that we look at justice as “Living our Principles” holistically, versus focusing on justice work in only one committee (i.e. having a “Social Justice Committee”). We do justice work in many ways in many places.

We recommend empowering the Council of Chairs to act as a collaborating body who focuses on this idea of “Living our Principles” through all areas of the congregation. We recommend that the Council of Chairs meet regularly to communicate about their respective projects and efforts, so that we can coordinate the church calendar and create more opportunities for collaborating across committees.

We also ask that the Council of Chairs be the body that reviews Share the Plate nominations and recommends Share the Plate organizations to the Board of Trustees, to ensure that our plate donations are going to a variety of organizations.

During the visioning workshops, the below efforts were suggested as possible projects, in addition to all that we already do:

1. Regular community gathering, open to the public, focused on education (i.e. lectures, music, panels, film night) with multi-generational focus
2. Working in collaboration with other organizations for maximum impact:
  - a. Participate in local interfaith efforts like the MLK Day and Kindness Week
  - b. Participate in the Ujima Project initiatives
  - c. UUMass Action is creating a regional UU body to engage in policy change work, and we encourage congregants who are interested to participate in UUMass Action efforts
3. Ramping up efforts to make OWL accessible to more people
4. Naming and celebrating how we are Living our Principles in our individual daily lives
  - a. #SmallActsBigPrinciples weekly blog conversation with congregants
  - b. Short reflections from congregants during Sunday service about Living our Principles

*Respectfully submitted, Rev. Laurel Gray*

## ***Racial Justice Committee Report***

### **Committee Inception**

The committee was created at the Annual Meeting June 2020 with the passing of the motion: “to formulate a Racial Justice Committee. The purpose of this committee is to increase awareness, coordination, and advocacy both in the Congregation and in the wider community. This would be a specific dedicated committee, separate from but overlapping with the Social Justice Committee...” quoted from email circulated 06/16/2020 by Jerry Breecher.

Jane Walsh was recruited to chair the new committee. The following people also answered the initial call: Kris Allen, Jerry Breecher, Andrea Burdick, Marge Fisher, Don Harvey, Phil Mighdoll, Kathe Scott, Kim Hall (as liaison from the board of Trustees) and Rev. Laurel. David King, Amy Martellock, and Pauline Sciarappa asked to be copied on all communications with the thought of attending when able. Don Harvey stepped back due to time constraints. Later in the church year John Metzger, Kathie Metzger and Sheila McPharlin joined. Scott Owens attended a couple of meetings and asked to be copied on all communications. *(NOTE: A group email address was eventually created with the help of Lisa Shumway in order to avoid inadvertently excluding anyone from email communications.)*

All meetings were conducted via Zoom *(due to pandemic restrictions)*. The Committee initially met biweekly starting at the end of July before moving to a monthly schedule starting in September. The committee now meets regularly on the second Wednesday of the month from 4:00 to 5:30 pm. The committee aimed to use the first half of meetings to discuss business and to plan, while reserving the second half for discussion, activities, and learning opportunities.

### **Defining the Initial Role of the Committee**

The group took ownership of their charge by initially understanding their role as follows and with plans to revisit it during the year:

- Inspire members and friends to learn about racism/antiracism and to act to create racial equity;
- Cultivate a strong foundation of internal-congregational awareness of racism/antiracism while incorporating external-congregational initiatives;
- Serve as a repository of opportunities (internal and external to UUCSW) that promote racial equity through learning and/or action;
- Lead by taking advantage of opportunities. The opportunities that are pursued will reflect the interest of the committee member taking a lead. Opportunities will reflect one or more of the four pillars: Learn, Vote, Volunteer, and Donate.

### **Communicating with the Congregation**

The monthly Vista and the Weekly Update were the primary ways of communicating with the congregation. Occasionally posts to the private UUCSW Facebook page were made. Announcements included the Zoom link to the monthly meeting, information regarding events, and occasionally were educational in focus. Jane Walsh most often facilitated these communications.

### **Committee Sponsored Events**

- Two book discussions via Zoom facilitated by Jerry Breecher and Kim Hall. The first was held in September: *How To Be An Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi; the second was held in November: *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson.
- Get the Vote Out with voteforward.org. In August and September, six committee members successfully piloted engaging with this letter writing campaign to encourage under-represented voters to vote in the 2020 Presidential election. Jerry Breecher, wearing the Social Justice Chair hat, with the help of Marge Fisher, then brought the initiative to the wider congregation in September



and October by engaging with “UU the Vote” which had partnered with voteforward.org. Many members participated in mailing over 1,000 letters encouraging people to vote.

- The Committee collaborated with Rev. Laurel to craft a Sunday Service via Zoom that was led by several committee members on January 24, 2021 entitled “Reflections on Our Racial Justice Journey.” Andrea Burdick and Jane Walsh shared their personal stories. Kris Allen, Pauline Sciarappa, Marge Fisher and Sheila McPharlin participated.
- Two Lunch & Learn sessions were designed by committee members (Marge Fisher, Kris Allen, Kathe Scott, & Jane Walsh) and offered to the congregation via Zoom. The first in February (22 attendees) and the second in April (14 attendees). A white, volunteer external facilitator (Mary Hettinger) also interested in learning more about race-related matters helped design and facilitate these events. The first was “On the Origins of Race” from the Seeing White series; the second “The Hidden Costs of Racism” was rooted in the work of Heather McGhee and her book *The Sum of Us*. Both used recordings of public radio interviews followed by small and large group discussions.
- Boston Ujima Project. In collaboration with the Finance Committee, the Racial Justice Committee promoted the idea of supporting small businesses having owners of color by investing money into the Ujima Fund. One goal was to have this be a congregation-wide endeavor; consequently, donations from members and friends for this purpose will be matched up to \$2,500 with church funds already available for investing. Sheila McPharlin, John & Kathie Metzger, and Lisa Shumway inspired and/or guided this initiative. The fundraising effort is due to wrap up to coincide with Annual Meeting (June 13, 2021). It is anticipated that fostering ongoing relationship with Ujima in ways that augment financial investment will continue next year.
- Discussion topics covered throughout the year at well-attended monthly meetings included a discussion of the video of James Baldwin’s *I Am Not Your Negro*; characteristics of white supremacy, implicit bias, the relationship between race and housing, Black Lives Matter, engaging with Westborough Connects, and the ongoing, nagging questions of what can we *do* to be an ally with people of color? What can we do to counter systemic racism – individually or collectively?
- Members shared with each other resources and opportunities (e.g., for training, learning, lobbying).

### **Reflections and Visioning**

The committee will meet in June 2021 and look back as well as look forward. It appears that the committee may have organically moved from the four pillars of Learn, Vote, Volunteer, and Donate to three pillars of Educate (identify and learn about a problem issue), Raise Awareness (about the problem issue), and Act (to address the problem issue and which may include voting, volunteering, and donating). Already, Marge Fisher has expressed interest in continuing the Lunch & Learns and is positioning one on reparations to be timed with Rev. Laurel’s themes for October and November. And the promise of greater interaction with the Ujima project awaits. Other racial justice pursuits will reflect the interests of those involved. How the committee goes forward will be influenced by the outcome of the winter/spring 2021 congregation-wide discussions on social justice that were facilitated by UUA consultant, Rev. Erica Baron.

**In closing,** I, Jane Walsh, am grateful to the members of this committee who successfully met the challenge of meeting only virtually. I so appreciate the commitment of members as we journeyed together in gaining more awareness about racism and white privilege and in brainstorming actions within our reach. I am also grateful to Kim Hall from the Board of Trustees and Rev. Laurel for their regular attendance at committee meetings, their support of our projects and efforts. Their leadership guidance during this inaugural committee year was much appreciated. Special thanks go to Marge Fisher who reliably served as scribe by producing meeting minutes for us.

*Respectfully submitted, Jane Walsh*

## ***Book Group Report***

We have continued to meet every month this year via Zoom. In the past, the Book Group met once a month in members' homes on the second Friday of the month. The group often needed to meet in two homes to facilitate better book discussions. Our email lists thirty-nine members. We currently have no plans to start in-home meetings at this time.

The members meet in September for a "feast." Books are championed for the next year's list during the Feast. The members submit their suggestions for the new season. Detailed book descriptions are emailed to all members before the September meeting. A discussion is held, and a survey is emailed to all the members to vote on their choices. The chairperson compiles the results and the list is narrowed to eleven books by the members' votes.

Articles are posted in the Vista and Weekly Updates detailing the upcoming meeting. SignUp Genius is used to invite the members. We enjoy discussing good books and enjoying pleasant fellowship. The Book Group is open and welcome to all members and friends.

This is the last year that I will be the Book Group facilitator. I have truly enjoyed the position for over seven years. I will pass the "baton" in September. I hope the Book Group, which started in 2003, continues for many more years.

### **2020-2021 Book List**

<b><i>Book</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
<i>House of Broken Angels</i> by Luis Alberto Urrea	Oct. 9, 2020
<i>Caste</i> by Isabel Wilkerson	Nov. 13
<i>My Ántonia</i> by Willa Cather	Dec. 11
<i>Uncomfortably Numb</i> by Meredith O'Brien	Jan. 8, 2021
<i>My Notorious Life</i> by Kate Manning	Feb. 12
<i>The Space Between Us</i> by Thrity Umriga	Mar. 12
<i>A Long Petal of the Sea</i> by Isabel Allende	Apr. 9
<i>Unsheltered</i> by Barbara Kingsolver	May 14
<i>The Night Watchman</i> by Louise Erdrich	Jun. 11
<i>Still Alice</i> by Lisa Genova	Jul. 9
<i>The Yellow House</i> by Sarah Broom	Aug. 13
Zoom Feast	Sep. 10

*Respectfully submitted, Judith Nicholson*

## ***Covenant Group Report***

The Covenant Group is also known as “Small Group Ministry” and “Chalice Circles.” Covenant Group Ministry is a vital part of many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Groups of 7-12 people meet regularly, usually monthly, to reflect on and discuss significant life topics. At the UUcsw we currently have seven active members who meet every other Saturday morning from 10:00 -12:00 from September through June. We use the Soul Matters curriculum as the basis of our discussions.

The Covenant Group is a place to get to know other people and to get to know yourself. Over time, participants build deep connections with one another. Covenant groups are not simply discussion groups. Whether the topic is “Renewal,” “Deep Listening,” or sharing an emotional life event, the conversation is respectful and caring and leads to greater understanding. In each session, facilitated by a member of the group, all participants have an opportunity to share their perspectives, tell their stories, and listen deeply.

We are meeting via Zoom to accommodate our members’ needs to continue social distancing during the Coronavirus pandemic.

### **2020-2021 Themes**

*What Does It Mean to be a People of...*

September: Renewal

October: Deep Listening

November: Healing

December: Stillness

January: Imagination

February: Beloved Community

March: Commitment

April: Becoming

May: Story

June: Play

*Respectfully submitted, Judith Nicholson*

## ***Reopening Advisory Panel Report***

Members of the Task Force/Reopening Advisory Panel:

Ann Maloney  
Phyllis Samara  
Juliana Spofford  
Andy Koenigsberg (for the beginning part of the church year 2020).

The RAP, as it became affectionally known, started work in the summer of 2020 by reviewing UUA and CDC guidelines for planning on return to church and use of the church building during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The committee worked on:

- Main mission for the committee has been and is developing a plan for back to church and church-related activities based on UUA, CDC and MA houses of worship COVID-19 guidelines.
- Developed a plan for building use during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Established that the nursery school had an approved plan and approvals from the Department of Health/Department of Early Education and Care to start up the nursery school program in the building according to MA COVID-19 guidelines.
- Established hand sanitizing cart and plan to keep it stocked.
- Set budget for supplies and other possible needs for the church during the pandemic.
- Developed a Google form document for those wanting to use the building to fill in that could also be used for contact tracing, which was used for each group wanting to use the building, if the Board deemed the use to be low risk and high benefit to the church.
- Developed a plan that was submitted to the Board in March 2021 for a phased approach to gathering together as a community and using the sanctuary again.
- Gave advice to the Board and minister for use of the sanctuary for Rev. Frado's funeral and memorial service at the end of March 2021.
- Continue to liaise with the Board and the Hybrid service committee to work on plans and guidelines for the rest of the church year 2021 and for coming back to the sanctuary for Hybrid (both in person and online/Zoom) services in September. We will be using CDC guidelines and the UUA's published guidelines for coming together in Covenantal Community:  
<https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/masking-guidelines>

*Respectfully submitted, Juliana Spofford*



Unitarian Universalist  
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of Westborough