

## **Annual Reports Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin 2021-22**

### **Board of Trustees**

Over the past year, the Board primarily focused on Rev. Leland Bond-Upson's performance at our church. After several attempts to help him focus and improve his performance, he decided that it would be best for him to separate from UUCE. The board, along with much help from Mike Moutrie worked out a fair plan for his early departure from his contract with us.

The Board met with the Minister Search Committee when we realized that we wouldn't be able to hire a settled minister in the foreseeable future, and the mutual decision was made to disband the Search Committee.

The Board created The Revitalization Team with many of the members from the Minister Search Committee. Between not being able to meet in person due to Covid, unhappiness with the direction of the church and natural attrition, our pledges have dropped to a level that we may not be able to continue operation as we have been. The Team was tasked with helping to revitalize the church, help re-establish community among existing members and finally reach out for new members in order to help the church thrive.

Thanks to our volunteers and staff for all the work you do to support our congregation and its members.

Submitted by Steven Stultz, President of the Board of Trustee

### **Book Group**

Alice Macy has been Book Group leader since 1993, and Dotty Carringi has been assisting Alice during the past year. Our other members include Jane Kimball, Andrea Budasi, Bonnie and Dennis Schwank\*, Alice DuBois\* and Louette Rogers. Betsy Thrasher, Sandy Webster and Sue Sitter\* are members with occasional attendance.

On the last Monday of each month, we meet at someone's home, have a potluck lunch followed by discussion of the selected book. During the pandemic, we met via Zoom.

\*Not members

Submitted by Dotty Carringi

### **Buddhist Sangha**

The UUCE Buddhist Sangha is a self-directed group that meets weekly (6:00-7:15) to meditate and explore Buddhist practice and principles. During the past year, the sangha has met virtually (via Teams). Meetings consist of a brief check-in, a 20-minute period of silent meditation, an audio or video presentation of a "dharma" talk during which Buddhist philosophy, practice, or guided meditations may be presented, followed by group discussion. Although members have missed in-person contact, meeting

virtually has proven advantageous in several ways. For example, members who work or live a significant distance from the church (even out of state) can more conveniently participate in the sangha, and the use of streaming technology gives the group access to many on-line audio and video dharma talks by nationally and internationally recognized teachers. As a result, the sangha has decided to continue with a virtual format, although we may explore in-person meetings from time-to-time. Our sangha prides itself on its welcoming atmosphere and its rigorous approach to the exploration of Buddhist principles and practice. Questions about our sangha or requests to receive an invitation to our weekly meeting should be sent to: [sangha@uuce.org](mailto:sangha@uuce.org).

Submitted by Greg Waas

## **Building Team**

Members: Mila Brinker (staff), Joe Masonick, Mike Moutrie, Michelle Sweeney

Summary: The Building Team did not hold any scheduled meetings during the 2021-2022 church year. We did meet informally several times to discuss the issues listed below to review the plan and quotes given by the repair companies. Key Decisions and Accomplishments by Area:

- Exterior Maintenance:
  - Arranged execution of Phase 2 exterior building repair and sealing (remainder of SE and all of NW sides of building) o Several entrance lights were replaced with LED fixtures as part of this work.
  - The team monitored progress of the work and performed a final inspection upon completion.
- Mechanical Maintenance
  - The elevator is scheduled for the annual inspected per state requirements on 5/24/22. o All furnaces were cleaned and inspected to insure safe and reliable operation. o Furnace filters are being changed every 6 months by Michelle Sweeney.
  - Approved plan and cost of replacing the fire safety sprinkler pump check valve that was causing the pump to run frequently. o Approved plan and cost to replace the hot water heater which was no longer heating. The venting of the heater was also brought up to current code standards at this time. o Bathrooms
  - Upstairs float / flush mechanisms were inspected and repaired as needed in preparation for reopening the building ▪ Adding hot water to the sink in the children's bathroom was reviewed and deemed too expensive to do at this time. o Bulbs for lighting the stage in the sanctuary were replaced and repositioned.
  - Pest Control o A service was employed to address the high number of wasps and hornets on the third floor during Religious Education classes. The treatment has been effective so far. o Traps for mice were set and routinely serviced throughout the year, although few rodents were caught due to the building being closed.
  - Safety & Security o The fire alarm system was tested and passed, although about 8 smoke/heat detectors are past their expected normal life of service. o Although a generous offer of financial support to purchase equipment was made by the Cooper-Zobott's during the 20-21 church year,

no action has yet been taken due to the review of options not being completed. The team hopes to act on this in during the next fiscal year.

Submitted by Mike Moutrie

### **Care Team**

Due to COVID we did not meet in person but kept in contact with emails and phone calls. We also reached out to members with cards or phone calls. During the past year we delivered flowers or plants to 13 members who were dealing with illness or a death in their family. The expenses for this totaled \$285.81 which came from the Care Team budget.

Submitted by Chris Davis

### **Circle Supper**

Circle Supper has no activity to report.

Submitted by Kathie Wachholder

### **Endowment Committee**

Elizabeth King, Darla Musson, Ann Kremer

Annual Report:

1. This year the committee met via online conference calls.
2. Our fund has had no additional deposits.
3. Although the fund has not increased as we would have preferred, it has performed as expected in a volatile economy.

The vanguard account balances for the current fiscal year:

Balance on June 30, 2021 was \$130,283.79

Balance as of April 30, 2022 is \$120,648.21

Year to date percentage of growth from opening balance is -7.39%

Respectfully,

Elizabeth King

## Executive Team

Members: Marjorie Askins (staff), Steve Askins, Mila Brinker (staff), Mary Harlos, Mike Moutrie, Chelsea Musson (staff), Martha Pignataro

Summary: The Executive Team (ET) met once per month throughout the 2021-2022 church year. They also met multiple times as part of the Reopening Team formed during the COVID pandemic to review data and address building policy. The total number of meetings to date were:

- Executive Team: 11
- Reopening Team: 9

There were two additional meetings held without staff members to discuss salary levels for 22-23 budget planning.

Key Decisions and Accomplishments by Area:

- Pandemic Response decisions (in conjunction with the Reopening Team):
  - o Established metrics for closing and reopening the building for Sunday services and other uses
  - o Required all staff and volunteers be vaccinated before reopening and filed documentation
  - o Suspended building rentals and events
  - o Shared Kane County metrics regularly with congregation to support reopening decisions
  - o Coordinated several outdoor “Zoom” services in the Fall.
  - o Approved upgrade of internet speed and purchase of new computer and video camera to allow streaming of services.
- Building Maintenance:
  - o Approved execution of Phase 2 exterior building repair and sealing (remainder of SE and all of NW sides of building)
  - o Reviewed issues with Building Team and approved repairs of 1) Fire safety sprinkler pump leak and 2) hot water heater failure
- Teams & Staff:
  - o Met with Financial Secretary to improve communication regarding expenditures
  - o Supported the search for and hiring of and RE Coordinator, Marjorie Askins
  - o Supported the administrator in the review of the furloughed childcare staff
  - o Confirmed Chris Davis wishes to continue as chair of the Care Team
  - o Recommended to Board that lead childcare worker be let go due to communication issues
  - o ET representative attended several Worship Team meetings to better support their needs

- o Helped Board manage the early termination of minister's contract and transition to lay-led congregation.
- o Sponsored several meetings between the Board, ET and Revitalization Teams to support this transition to lay-led status.
- o Took over naming 'Share the Plate' recipient each month from the Social Justice team. ET is sharing this duty with the RE youth.
- ET Membership:
  - o Martha Pignataro's term ended in October
  - o Mike Moutrie's term also ended in October, but he agreed to serve an additional year

Submitted by Mike Moutrie, Chair

### **Equal Exchange UU Service Committee Coffee Project**

The UUCE congregation continues to purchase organic, fair trade, shade-grown coffees, teas, chocolates, and olive oil through Equal Exchange and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Coffee Project.

As a 501(c)(3), we do not pay sales tax. We avoid paying shipping charges by always exceeding the minimum order. Eight orders were paid between 7/1/21 and 3/30/22, with invoices totaling \$1,594.90. Income information from sales is not included here but is available from the UUCE financial secretary.

The products listed are available for purchase in Fellowship Hall. Purchases are made on the honor system, self-serve. Chocolate is only ordered between October 1 and May 1 to avoid increased summer shipping costs and excessive packaging. Therefore, we purchase a large quantity of chocolate bars in spring in order to last until October.

Income from the sale of these products is used to buy all the coffee and decaf consumed by the congregation at UUCE.

\* UUCE was closed from March of 2020 until March of 2022. Because of this, product sales were minimal.

Products in stock at UUCE 2021 Prices #/Case Cost/Pkg. Selling Price

Mind Body & Soul PPO 48/2.25oz \$55.50 48/case N/A N/A

Breakfast Blend Decaf PP 48/2.25oz \$59.50 48/case N/A N/A

French Roast Drip \$41.40 6/case \$6.90 \$8.00

Breakfast Blend Drip \$38.40 6/case \$6.40 \$8.00

Mind Body & Soul Drip \$41.40 6/case \$6.90 \$8.00

Decaf Drip \$47.40 6/case \$7.90 \$9.00

Peppermint Tea \$18.60 6/case \$3.10 \$3.50  
Green Tea \$18.60 6/case \$3.10 \$3.50  
English Breakfast Tea \$18.60 6/case \$3.10 \$3.50  
Black Tea \$18.60 6/case \$3.10 \$3.50  
Virgin Olive Oil \$72.00 6/case \$12.00 \$13.00  
Dark Hot Cocoa mix \$32.00 6/case \$5.33 \$6.00  
Milk Chocolate Bar \$29.60 12/case \$2.30 \$3.00  
Dark Chocolate with Almonds \$29.60 12/case \$2.30 \$3.00  
Dark Choc Lemon/Ginger/Pepper \$29.60 12/case \$2.30 \$3.00  
Very Dark Chocolate Bar \$29.60 12/case \$2.30 \$3.00  
Dark Chocolate Caramel Crunch \$29.60 12/case \$2.30 \$3.00  
Mint Chocolate Delicate Crunch \$29.60 12/case \$2.30 \$3.00  
Orange Dark Chocolate \$29.60 12/case \$2.30 \$3.00  
Milk Chocolate Caramel Crunch \$29.60 12/case \$2.30 \$3.00  
Dark Chocolate Minis \$32.00 150/case \$0.21 \$0.25  
Milk Chocolate Minis \$32.00 150/case \$0.21 \$0.25  
Submitted by Mary Alice Masonick

### **Landscape and Grounds Team**

1. Vision and Purpose: The UUCE Landscape Team strives to be good stewards of the land by maintaining and enhancing a landscape based on native plants that is ecologically sound, attractive, educational, inspirational, and provides functional space for ceremonial and recreational church activities.
2. Annual Planning Meeting has not been held since 2020.
3. Budget Request for FY 2021-22 is \$5585.00. Total paid was \$3345.00.
4. Paid landscapers: Angel Rodriguez was paid \$800 for two visits since 7/1/21. He did edging, trimming, weeding. The weeding was poorly done and weeds usually grow back. In 2021, Angel did not complete some requested edging and shrub/tree removal. Instead, he did something that was not requested or wanted. He cut down all the herbaceous plants around the building. This is a practice we no longer want done to the overwintering insects in the plant stems.
5. Tree service: Fowler Tree Surgery was paid \$400.00 to remove a broken tree branch in the wooded border.

6. Native landscape company: Tallgrass Restoration continues to provide prairie maintenance during the growing season. The quality of the prairie has improved and many forbs bloomed last summer. For 2022-23, I've asked them to help maintain the landscaping around the building since they are experts at caring for native species.
7. "Wooded Border": We flag unwanted trees/shrubs with orange tape for removal by Angel Rodriguez.
8. "Prairie Perimeter": Native flowers attract pollinators to the perimeter of the vegetable garden.
9. Vegetable garden: The raised beds were very productive in 2021 and a large quantity of produce was donated to two food pantries in Elgin. Susan Swing led the team of four volunteers.
10. Labyrinth: Corey Begalka was hired to periodically flame weed the labyrinth with his propane torch. He has been paid \$320.00 out of a total budget of \$400.00.
11. Meditation Garden: Much weeding and edging was done. Joe stained the pergola. Canada Thistle was herbicided. Two native honeysuckles which are climbing vines were planted next to the pergola.
12. Lawnmowing: 13 volunteer mowers took turns mowing. Lawn mowing was budgeted \$1000.00, but the actual cost was \$0.00.
13. Landscape Work Parties: No work parties were held since 2020, except in the vegetable garden. There are few prospective volunteers.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Alice Masonick, Chair

## **Library**

The UUCE lending library houses over 1000 volumes related to a wide spectrum of interests represented within the UUCE community including meditation and prayer, spirituality, world religions, UU history and philosophy, LGBTQ, ecology and environment, social justice, women's spirituality, and relationships. Visitors to our church often browse in the library making it an important recruitment tool for our community, and it is a significant intellectual and spiritual resource for established UUCE members, reflecting our rich tradition of spiritual exploration.

The library also maintains a small collection of both adult and children's books available for purchase by donation. These are located on book carts in Fellowship Hall. The vast majority of books in our collection are donated from UUCE community members, and a small annual budget is used to purchase a few new titles each year. Books received by donation, but not used in the UUCE collection, are donated to the Elgin Gail Bordon Library.

While the church building was closed during the COVID pandemic the library remained relatively inactive. However, with the re-opening of the church, both book borrowing and donations have resumed, and we look forward to an active new year. Short reviews of highlighted items from our collection continue to appear periodically in the Unichord Update.

Submitted by Greg Waas

## **Membership Team**

The Membership Team has staffed greeters for in-person Sunday services. Membership is planning a New Member Welcome and “signing of the book” as part of a future in-person service. No date is set yet. Prospective members include Sara Stultz, Doug Elwell, Paul Higginbotham, and Michele Ramsey. An informative class will be offered prior to the service.

Submitted by Kathie Wachholder

## **Pagan Group**

The Pagan Group formed a year ago and is still meeting on an irregular basis. We are not taking new members at this time. This could change. At this time, we don’t need assistance monetarily or otherwise from the church. We have 3-5 members who meet regularly and a couple who have not made it the last few gatherings.

Bright blessings,

Diana Heizer

## **Personnel Committee**

Committee Members: Andrea Budasi, Chair, Jane Kimball, Thomas Lesiewicz

The Personnel Committee is a standing committee of the Board of Trustees that provides on-going assistance and support to the minister and staff on personnel issues, including updating position descriptions, updating personnel policies and the employee handbook as needed, and other general church HR activities/tasks. Annually the Committee reviews paid staff compensation and makes a recommendation to the Board for the personnel budget. The Personnel Committee reports to the board and makes recommendations in all areas to the Board for approval. Meetings are held monthly or as needed to address personnel-related issues.

Due to Covid-19 the past three years the committee has not met in person. We have communicated by email and phone.

July, 2020 the Committee asked to find online sources to past office administrative job openings. Sources sent August 2020.

August, 2020 The Committee was asked by the Board to find a new member for the Personnel Committee to replace Ann Kremer. Several people were contacted and declined. In November, 2020 Thomas Lesiewicz joined the Committee as Liaison to the Board.

June, 2021 the Committee was asked to compile information regarding the DRE position job description.

In 2022 the terms of Personnel Committee members Jane Kimball and Andrea Budasi will be expiring.

Respectfully submitted to the Board of Trustees

Submitted by Andrea Budasi, Chair Personnel Committee, Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin

### **Religious Education**

Religious Education has been subject to a lot of changes this year. There are 16 children and youth who are registered and/or have been attending RE classes. At the time of this writing, RE classes have met 8 times, with an average attendance of 3 children and 4 youth per week.

At this time, the RE program is understaffed to operate in accordance with best practices or safety recommendations, but we have been doing our best. We have reduced the frequency of classes to every other week to hopefully try to prevent our two current (intrepid) volunteers from burning out, and giving them some freedom to attend Sunday Services or not attend church on some Sundays.

We have also been operating without a curriculum. Instead, we have focused on trying to create age-appropriate activities and discussions that go along with what is being discussed in the weekly service. The benefits of this are that it allows us to stay light on our feet and adaptable with the rest of the community, and it hopefully facilitates some intergenerational conversations around the things we think about as a community. The biggest drawback is that a set curriculum would make week-to-week planning easier, as learning objectives and activities would be decided on ahead of time.

During the Summer vacation season, the RE Program will be taking a break so the Coordinator can focus more energy and attention on recruiting volunteers and planning for the upcoming liturgical year. In order to operate at full capacity, we would need to have at least 3 volunteers per age group. This would allow for there to be two adults in the room, and give volunteers the freedom to alternate/rotate through coverage, so they could continue to attend services or take weekends off.

Submitted by Marj Askins, Religious Education Coordinator

### **Revitalization Team**

The origins of the Revitalization Team stem from the Minister Search Committee that was formed in 2021. Many of us were chosen to serve on that committee, but when it was decided that UUCE would be Lay-Led, there was no longer a need for that. A few of us that had committed to leading the search felt that our services and gifts could be combined for a different purpose—one that would help sustain the church as we navigate through our next transition. And we picked up a few new members along the way.

The functions of the Revitalization Team will evolve as needed as UUCE evolves. Right now, we are a group centered on the following:

- We value the relationships we have built here at UUCE and how those relationships feed us all in vital and impactful ways.
- We don't ever want people to forget the pride and hope that is a part of UUCE.

- We desire to engage and reengage members and friends of UUCE, making sure UUCE stays the spiritual home for everyone who needs it.

- We strive to create, maintain, and always improve being a safe and welcoming community.

To bring these beliefs to life, we are:

- Hosting church events like bonfires, hikes, movie nights, farm visits, and more.
- Leading Adult Religious Education on Sunday mornings
- Attending UUA-sponsored Small Congregation meetings to share ideas with other churches in similar situations
- Spotlighting members and staff on our community Facebook Group page
- Reaching out to members and friends we haven't seen in a while, as well as working on some other methods to help UUCE members and friends connect in new ways.

Our current member roster is: Mila Brinker, Stephen Day, Sharon Fincher, Mary Harlos, Erica Lavine, Todd Underwood, Kathie Wachholder, Krista Wagner.

We're happily accepting new members who are passionate about UUCE and care about our future enough to help ensure we stay a strong spiritual community for years to come. If what we stand for excites you, and you think you'd like to join the Revitalization Team, please reach out to one of us or email us at [RT@uuce.org](mailto:RT@uuce.org).

Submitted by Todd Underwood

### **Social Justice: PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) of Elgin**

Tom Durkin resigned as UUCE PADS coordinator on June 7, 2021, and Dotty Carringi took over the position. Since then UUCE volunteers have provided 44 full lunches to the shelter each Monday, feeding an average of 20 guests. We suspended serving due to the COVID pandemic, and the staff took over that task. Last week Krista Wagner and her children brought the meal and served it.

We have a dedicated group of regular and occasional volunteers that includes: Dan and Kathy Hislip, Tom and Ruth Durkin\*, Mike Moutrie, Krista Wagner (Nolan and Caitlin), Heike Spaine, Susan Goldberg, Gladys Machlet\*, Susan Swing and Diana Heizer.

\*Not members

Submitted by Dotty Carringi

### **Stewardship**

I wanted to send a quick note out with totals for pledges for the year, and a few data points. Please take this with a grain of salt as we've had members move away, some pledges not in as of yet, and we know that some families are in flux.

For now, we have:

Total pledges received #54

Total pledges received \$122,961

- 9 people decreased their pledge (for a total of \$5,321)
- 18 people increased their pledge (for a total of \$7,219)
- 30 remained steady
- 2 "Win-Backs" (people that didn't pledge last year but did this year)
- 4 people have moved, accounting for \$10,600 lost

Pledges have gone down from last year by about \$24,000.

With 2022/21 being what it was, I consider this a decent pledge campaign. This was my 4th working on the team, and my last.

*Leadership team, please take into account that Stewardship will need to appoint a new chair and look for new members as only Teresa Stultz remains on the team. The best number of people would be 4.*

It has been a pleasure participating on this team for the past four years. Participating in stewardship has been a very positive experience, significantly more than expected, even though I feel that this area is not my forte. I'm glad to have helped and I have learned a lot overall! I also hope we have made the pledging a meaningful exercise instead of a financial chore, as well.

Thank you!

Submitted by Michelle Sweeney, chair

### **Trivia Group**

The Trivia group meets the first Tues of every month for fellowship and game playing. Attendance ranges from 3-12 congregants at River Street Tavern in East Dundee, IL

Submitted by Beth A. Cooper-Zobott

### **Worship Team**

The 2021-22 church year saw a number of changes to worship at UUCE. The year began with Krista Wagner and Stephen Day leaving the Worship Team to join the Ministerial Search Committee. When it was determined that the church's finances couldn't support a settled minister in the coming years, Stephen re-joined the Worship Team as the chair. In the early fall of 2021, it was announced that Rev. Leland Bond-Upson would be leaving his tenure as contract minister at the end of October. From

October 31, 2021 through the end of the church year, the Worship Team has been solely responsible for all Sunday services – either writing the sermons themselves or using other resources like the Touchstones service we subscribe to, using sermons found online, or from a collection of sermons from Minister Emeritus Dan Brosier. At the end of 2021, Paul Higgenbotham also left the Worship Team due to personal time commitments, but he has contributed two services since then.

In addition to the personnel changes, the year also had its ups and downs related to the COVID pandemic. The infection rates dropped low enough in the early fall of 2021 to allow us to meet in the sanctuary once again (for the first time since March 2020) but the joy was short-lived as infections began increasing again. For a time, we offered “hybrid” services with the worship leaders presenting on Zoom from the sanctuary instead of our homes, but the outdated hardware in the sanctuary couldn’t provide a high-quality experience so we reverted back to at-home Zoom services.

Thanks to generous donations from Alice Macy and Suzanne and Paul Hanifl, we were able to replace the sanctuary computer and camera so that when we were able to resume onsite services (on March 20) we could offer an online streaming option as well. That format has served us well in the two months since we began and we are averaging around 30 onsite attendees and 15-20 online attendees.

As of May, 2022 active members of the Worship Team are Stephen Day (chair), Chelsea Musson (Music Director), David Yaeger, Diana Heizer, Elizabeth Olson, Marj Askins (RE Coordinator), Rowan Fixemer, Sarah Stultz, and Susan Goldberg.

Submitted by Stephen Day, Chair