

# Team Council and Committee Annual Reports

## 2023-2024

### Committee on Human Resources (CHR)

Reporting Date: April 2024

Strategic Plan Goal Report:

**Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world.**

Action

- A. CHR has been participating in support to the Ministerial Support Committee by reviewing UUA salary data and the proposed interim ministerial contract. CHR undertakes these actions to help ensure that the process of ministerial search affords the best outcomes to the congregation and the interim minister.
- B. The updating review of the personnel manual is near completion. This review will clarify some of the language and processes inherent in the manual.
- C. There is an addition to the disciplinary policy being created by the committee that will address the sparsity of the current policy and address differences that may be required between the policy for the employees and the policy for the contracted minister.
- D. CHR has outlined the need for a procedural policy for reporting employee complaints in interpersonal relationships and any workplace issue. How and to whom an employee reports a problem in the workplace needs to be clarified. We work to create a simple plan of steps that pertains to employees and will make sure all know. It is important that we have such a policy to assure confidentiality and the maintenance of dignity for all involved in a workplace issue. Such a policy is being developed with guidance from the UUA policies and procedures.
- E. Ministerial Search/Contract reviewed.
  - a. The Interim Minister Contract was reviewed and discussed.
  - b. Updates are being created to UUCS Disciplinary Policy for employees and the minister with specific pertinence to the Interim Minister contract.
  - c. We defer to their collective experience and leave the final decisions to Lynn, Christine, and Craig to decide what specific needs there are for the contract to meet HR guidelines and congregational needs.
- F. It was discovered that, per the Personnel Manual, the chair of CHR is responsible for making sure that all employees get a performance review from their supervisor.
  - Some impromptu interviews with staff were conducted and it was determined that staff are behind in annual reviews. CHR will work with

supervisors to ensure that a review is completed for all employees by the end of June.

- It is agreed that the Employee Review form Craig has, which focuses on support of employees, (rather than pointing out flaws or shortcomings) will be used going forward. We intend to encourage completion of these by the end of June.
- G. An addendum to the Personnel Manual concerning credit card usage and provision of timely receipts was adopted.
- H. The Covid-Pay Policy was amended to the “Declared Emergency Pay Policy” when the federal government ended the emergency Covid-19 status of the nation. The revised policy, amended by CHR and passed by the Board, will better serve both staff and congregation in the face of any emergency declared by the appropriate governmental authority.

## **Goal 2: To promote liberal religious exploration.**

Action:

- A. CHR seeks to address issues, write policies/procedures, and relate to each other with the intent of creating a comfortable supportive environment for all to enjoy. We consistently listen completely to each other and honor the ideas and positions of each member of the community and the committee. We support the committee and the congregation by working with each other in harmony and respect of the UU covenants.
- B. CHR has discussed elements of the LRE leader’s responsibilities that are pertinent to expenditures, specifically for childcare for church events. CHR also discussed the newly updated policy for teams to use money with discrimination and to reach consensus with Team leader, as authorized signers for team funds.

## **Goal 3: To foster stewardship, friendship, and shared ministry in our congregation.**

Action:

- A. Each of the members of the CHR committee takes on responsibilities, far beyond the committee, that contribute to the character and personality of the UUCS congregation. Emma and Lynn hold everyone together with the duties they perform including administrative, organizational and communication skills. Christine plays a leadership role in every way, on every committee that she serves. Christine and Meryl both sing in the choir, which is a ministry of its own.

Craig, using his administrative and communication skills has provided boundless knowledge, mentorship, and support to all.

- B. In the amalgamate, the CHR committee supports the religious exploration of all.
- C. CHR is working on defining some policy premises and examining the intent of personnel policies and how we can integrate Safer Congregation approaches and general UUSC goals commensurate with UUA guidelines.

### **Other Actions and Issues:**

- A. Work continues on the procedural document to outline protocols for dealing with interpersonal and workplace issues.
- B. CHR discussed an issue with Kaleidoscope and a former employee who is a church employee. This was deemed to be self-resolving and not requiring any input from CHR.
- C. The committee has determined to be in support of higher levels of compensation going forward, commensurate with the budget and pledge-drive considerations,
- D. Schedules for Audits of hiring documents and employee reviews are in process.
- E. CHR was brought an interpersonal relationship issue between staff which was reasonably resolved (if not optimally) with supervisory action employing restorative techniques.

## **Committee On Ministry (COM)**

Strategic Plan Goal Report: March 2024

### **Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world.**

Action: 1. With Aesthetic Team members continued work with stained glass artist Gary Swanson, who presented a design in February for the five windows surrounding the front entry doors, a retirement gift in honor of Rev. Rick's 30 year service to UUCS. Met with UU Board about fund-raising for the project. Board wants this project to be reconsidered after reaching UU operating budget goals in pledge drive 2024-2025. COM plans to meet with Gary Swanson March 8 to update.

## **Goal 2: To promote liberal religious exploration.**

Action: 1. Support minister in his services to the congregation. Continue to support the minister in his goals for the 2023-24 year. Reviewed Rick's current goals.

*Homilist Team Development:* Making strides with the Homilist Team which has new members. Rick is developing a manual for its continuation. Wants to emphasize accomplishments and have the congregation be aware of its importance in our shared ministry.

*Healthy Congregation:* Furthering member connection to each other and awareness of our shared ministry

Having a good "Goodbye" in this last year of service. Expect the unexpected.

In addition, Rick is hoping to form a *Meditation Group* because the current group is leaving our building.

Also, he has been working with the Social Justice Committee on a project to use our former north parking lot for unhoused people who need a place to park RVs at night.

## **Goal 3: To foster stewardship, friendship, and shared ministry in our congregation.**

Action: COM and Aesthetics committee work together on a gift for Rick's retirement. COM and Board communicate on Rick's retirement gift.

## **Communications Team**

Strategic Plan Goal Report April, 2024

### **Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world.**

Actions:

- Provided monthly Newsletter, *The Chalice and the Flame* to the 500 plus mailing list on Breeze.
- Provided weekly mailings, *This Week at UUCS*, to the mailing list

- Moved to a new website host which provides much faster response, which is useful to users and to the web support team. Revised the Website *Teams* and *Committees* pages including a new organizational chart and a link to the color-coded new Team Leader List.
- Provided updated website information on services, activities and goals of our congregation.
- Updated policy links on the website from team and committee pages to the corresponding policies. Repaired many other links on the website.
- Monitored UUCS list
- Provided Facebook content relevant to our congregation and our principles.
- Publicized Pledge Drive, Easter Activities, Mardi Gras Masquerade, Christmas activities, Parent's night out, Women's Alliance Christmas Bazaar, Halloween activities
- Publicized Music Concerts, November 12, March 16 and April 18
- Publicized Family Promise and Microfinance activities
- Publicized Chalice Circles, Connections groups, Women's Retreat, Writing Group, and Starting Point new member classes.
- Publicized Same Sex Unions service
- Publicized Banned Book Library
- Publicized Share the Plate Recipients and their information.
- Provided posters of the Covenant of Respectful Relations and Our Mission and Vision Statements for posting in Fellowship Hall.
- Publicized GA news, Annual Salem Peace Lecture, promoted UU voices for Justice

**Goal 2: To promote liberal religious exploration.**

Action:

- Published Lifespan RE (LRE) information, including monthly column in the newsletter
- Publicized LRE Halloween, Christmas and Easter services and activities.
- Provided publicity for planned *Our Whole Lives* classes on several platforms.
- Publicized Dances of Universal Peace New Year's celebration
- Publicized change to Salem Zen Center location, new UUCS mediation group.

### **Goal 3: To foster stewardship, friendship, and shared ministry in our congregation.**

#### **Action:**

- Publicized “news of the community” with personal news
- Publicized *Life Story* groups sign-ups, and Coffee service yearly sign-up list
- Publicized Women’s Alliance Bazaar, the Giving Tree
- Publicized many events and posted Facebook photos after the event.
- Publicized men’s group meetings, Jolly Diners, Mask Making Workshop and LRE classes.
- Publicized requests for volunteers by various teams.
- Publicized volunteer-created new benches in Bateman Woods
- Held our own team meetings with up to 8 attending via Zoom or Google Meet

#### **Other Actions and Issues:**

- Through great teamwork, (and use of our aliases) we are handling absences due to vacations, and life in general.
- It would be great to have more volunteers for editor positions, web support, and for Facebook and other social media.

## **Connections Team**

Strategic Plan Goal Report, April 2024

### **Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world.**

#### **Action:**

- Connections Groups doing well, 6:7 groups remain, group numbers remain constant. 60-70 people have been involved this year, both in-person and on Zoom. All facilitators are returning for next year.
- Chalice Circle has 2 groups, an invite for new people to join in January added a couple of people.
- Coffee Service with all members of the congregation continues this year. The need for leads for the groups that are doing the coffee service remains. Positive comments include getting to know people through doing this and feeling like one is contributing to the congregation.

## **Goal 2: To promote liberal religious exploration.**

### **Action:**

- Connections Group Facilitators were asked to give input into next year's Soul Matters themes.
- One Connection's Group started the Banned Book lending library here at UUCS.
- Soul Matter topics for Connections Groups – including interdependence, transcendence, pluralism, renewal, among others.
- Facilitator created current event topics for the Chalice Circle Groups continue including homelessness, Gaza, reproduction rights, among others.

## **Goal 3: To foster stewardship, friendship, and shared ministry in our congregation.**

### **Action:**

- Connections Group Facilitators all agree to return for next year.
- Chalice Circle will continue next year, 2 new facilitators have expressed interest.
- Connections Group Facilitators were asked by the Team Council to review and update the UUCS Building Scheduling Policy. They did and it is now being reviewed by the Team Council before coming to the Board.
- Connections groups have added lunches, walks, and social gatherings outside of set meeting times.
- Men's Group continues to meet on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays.
- Women's Retreat raised \$500.00 toward scholarships, registration has completed and scheduling of activities is underway. Theme this year *is Be Here Now*.
- Jolly Diners meets 1x/month to foster friendships.

## **Facilities Team**

Annual Reporting Date April 20, 2024  
Strategic Plan Goal Report

## **Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world.**

**Action:** Facilities is charged with keeping the building and grounds in working order. To that end, we have worked this year in several areas.

- Heating system - A new heat pump system was installed this church year. Bids were received and decisions made. The system then had to be integrated into our monitoring system. At this time everything seems to be working well. This system will also provide air conditioning when needed.
- The team worked on normal building needs. Those include plumbing, electrical and fire marshal issues such as a leaky toilet, electrical outlets needing replacement, gutter cleanout, light bulb replacement, setting up annual inspections, etc.
- There were some minor issues with our annual fire inspection which were taken care of promptly—replacing batteries in exit signs, replacing extension cords to meet code and space heater use and regulations.
- Landscape Committee - John and Patty Davenport and their great team have kept the grounds looking wonderful this past year. There have been work parties for weeding and pruning, regular lawn mowing and other projects. John has also worked with Kaleidoscope to build a gate into the RE area from the parking lot and to fence in part of the back lawn. He also has built a fence around the 2 heat pumps in the RE area to prevent damage and vandalism. The team has worked to secure the sheds in the back from vandalism and theft.
- Aesthetics and Design - This group has been cataloging the art owned by UUCS and repairing it as needed. They have accessed the various storage areas and cleaned out and purged those areas. They worked with John and Patty to remove the unused office door, move the badge rack and repaint the hallway. We thank John and Patty for their tireless work on behalf of UUCS.

## **Goal 2: To promote liberal religious exploration.**

**Action:** Facilities has worked with LRE and Kaleidoscope to maintain and make safe the children's area.

- Gates and fences have been erected.
- Splinter-less wood chips were used in the play area.

- Greg Gregg built a garden structure to be used to grow food and flowers.
- Electrical outlets and door handles were repaired. A gate was also installed at the end of the hallway near the RE area that can be retracted for weekends and evenings.

**Goal 3: To foster stewardship, friendship, and shared ministry in our congregation.**

**Action:**

- Facilities coordinated the annual Sparkle and Clean Sunday to prepare the sanctuary and Hanneman Hall for the beginning of fall services.
- The facilities team gratefully have welcomed 3 new members to the team in the past 2 months. We are looking forward to their input and help.

**Other Actions and Issues:**

- We have received a quote on installing solar panels.
- A water leak was discovered in a section of a wall in Hanneman Hall. With the help of the team and the architect of the building, it was decided to use a roofing company to repair this section of the roof. A quote was accepted and we are working on the final details.
- Gutter covers will be installed on a section of the roof to see if this will help with gutter cleaning and leaks.

## **Lifespan Religious Education**

**Yearly Report** April 2023 through April 2024

**Meetings:**

- From April 2023-November 2023, the LRE Team met once a week to discuss the OWL Program and plan community events/activities for the families of the congregation. We also planned our Sunday Services out two weeks- 1 month in advance. In December we did and attended LRE

Team meetings on January 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th.

- The DLRE had meetings with Rev Rick 1-2 times per month (3-4 times per month before Multigenerational Services and special events like the Ice Cream Social and Easter) and the LRE Team and Volunteers met with Rev Rick on November 3rd, 15th, 22nd & 30th and on December 5th, 12th, 19th and 29th.
- The DLRE and Assistant DLRE met 3-4 times per month to plan events, Sunday Services, organize and brainstorm.
- OWL meetings took place on November 3rd, 10th, 15th & 21st and on December 2nd, 4th and 9th. OWL Parent Orientation held on December 5th. Second Orientation was canceled due to not enough children attending the OWL Program.
- The DLRE had meeting with the Transition Team on January 25th ● Had an LRE Parent meeting on January 11th.
- Meetings with Rev Rick on Feb 8th and Feb 13th to plan Multigenerational Service.
- Salem Youth Collective Meetings/Events on April 27th, Sept 24th, October 11th & 15th, November 19th, December 17th, January 2nd, 15th & 21st, February 11th, March 17th and 2 events still ahead on April 21st and May 19th.
- DLRE had meetings with Ann Krier from the First Congregational United Church of Christ on July 6th & 25th, August 8th, September 29th, October 4th & 12th, November 3rd, December 5th and Jan 2nd.
- DLRE had meeting with team April 17th, 2024 to volunteer to help with Rev Rick's Farewell Party. Will be making flyers, setting up activities on tables and a picture/message album station.

### **Programming:**

- Average attendance for the year has been 17 Elementary, Preschool & Younger. LRE children and 8 Youth Group Children. Our highest attendance of the year was 23 LRE children and 12 Youth Group. Our lowest attendance of the year was 6 LRE children and 1 Youth child.
- We continue to use Soul Matters Curriculum for our programming, mixed with the Reggio Emilia approach of learning (letting the children create their own art and learn about different subjects of their choosing).

- The Youth Group has their own classroom now in the LRE Wing and are working with volunteers Celeste, Annie, the DLRE Assistant Sara G. and Molly, the DLRE. They continue to build their relationships and have been invited to the Salem Youth Collective monthly events with children in churches/congregations from Salem, Eugene, Albany, Corvallis, Stayton and the surrounding area. DLRE is in constant communication with the SYC (Salem Youth Collective) and makes the flyers and social media posts for the events.
- DLRE sends out a weekly "Letter from the Director" email to all of the families in the LRE Program, volunteers and members of the community that have signed up to receive emails that we meet at events like Salem Pride, Parents Night Out, Salem Youth Collective, Trunk or Treat, Easter and families that attend the two Daycares and Preschool of which the DLRE is the Director.
- DLRE writes and sends out a monthly article for the UUCS Newsletter.
- DLRE wrote and illustrated a children's book for the children in the LRE Program and sent it to all of the families to read to their children during the holiday season.
- We had our first LRE Program lead Multigenerational Service this year. We had the LRE children make a video telling everyone what they love about UUCS and the LRE Program. The DLRE and Annie Joslin talked about the future of the program and the children passed out egg shakers and scarves to the whole congregation to use while singing fun songs led by Music Director Jon Chinburg.
- LRE Luncheon will be held April 28, 2024 to discuss the future of the LRE Program.

### **Staff/Volunteers**

- Two new Childcare workers were brought in for events: Sabrina Handler and Shaylinn Baxton.
- LRE Program signed on 2 new volunteers in Nov and Dec; background checks turned in. Since then, we have had 5 more volunteers sign up this year, turn in background checks and volunteer!

- Staff is Molly Brown- DLRE and Sara Gonzalez- Assistant DLRE •  
Volunteers are: Lynn, Annie, Deanna, Kate, Kevin, Alice, Adam, James, Teresa, Savannah, Alex, Trey, Diana, Eric, Lorraine, Celeste, Rebecca, Jesse and Erin.
- Members of the congregation have volunteered during the summer program to come and tell stories to the LRE children and teach them about being a UU and what that means to them.
- Annie Joslin committed to handing out birthday cards on the first Sunday of the month to children who have birthdays that month. She has done that every month for 6 months now!

### **Outreach:**

- Parents' Night Out Events have been happening monthly. In December we teamed up with Kaleidoscope for a Parent's Shop, Wrap or Nap Day on Saturday, December 23rd and we had 17 kids show up ( Kaleidoscope brought 5 vs LRE brought 12 kids). This has turned into a popular community event; we have brought in several new families to the congregation because of Parent's Night Out Events. Our highest number of children in attendance for the year was 31 children. Our lowest number of children for the year was 15.
- The LRE Program continues to offer Ballroom Dancing Classes in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday nights in April and May 2023. It was offered again with Latin Dancing Classes starting in September 2023 and ending again November 15th 2023. Both classes started again on January 31st, 2024 and went until March 20th, 2024. The LRE Program offers childcare for these classes.
- LRE Program wrote letters and created works of art, puzzles, word searches and jewelry for the children whose families are involved in the Micro Finance Project. The children in Nicaragua are currently responding and making letters/art projects to send back to the UUCS LRE Program children in April.
- Easter was a huge event this year. The DLRE reached out to the community and there were donations from local businesses such as Starbucks, Costco and EZ Orchards. There were roughly 600 people in

attendance this year and we had people from the congregation stuff over 5500 eggs for the children. We had face paint, arts and craft, a bounce house, and a snack and coffee table. Every child left with something so it was considered a success.

- The DLRE and Assistant to the DLRE participated in Salem Pride this year and had a booth offering face paint and information about UUCS and the LRE Program. We are signed up to attend again in June 2024.
- The LRE Program volunteers helped with the Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball this year. The LRE children made their own masks and we offered childcare for the event. We had 12 children with us throughout the evening.
- The LRE Program puts on a Mother's Day and Father's Day Event every year for the families and friends of the congregation. We offer "Pastries with Parents" for

Mother's Day and "Donuts with Dear Ones" for Father's Day. We put out Polaroid cameras and get a backdrop for families to take pictures together. We offer activities on the tables to entertain people and coloring stations set up for the children.

- LRE Program staff and volunteers hosted a Spumoni Ice Cream Day with Reverend Rick in August!

Submitted by: Molly Brown, [DLRE@uusslem.org](mailto:DLRE@uusslem.org).

## Membership Team

Strategic Plan Goal Report March 2024

### **Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world.**

Action:

- Hosts are greeting at the front door each Sunday
- Send welcome email to visitors

### **Goal 2: To promote liberal religious exploration.**

Action:

- Starting Point winter session occurred on Jan 28, Feb 4, 11, 25
- We have 8 new members from this.

### **Goal 3: To foster stewardship, friendship, and shared ministry in our congregation.**

Action:

- Hosts staff the welcome table during fellowship time
- Updating Database (Breeze)
- Engagement team callers are calling the new members from the Spring Starting Point sessions
- Assemble welcome packets to hand out to newcomers
- Coordinate the making of name badges
- Engage with attendees during coffee service

#### **Other Actions and Issues**

Wanting training on how hosts can help keep the congregation safe on Sunday morning.

## **Microfinance Committee**

Strategic Plan Goal Report, **April 5, 2024**

### **Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world**

#### **Action:**

Our UUCS Microfinance Project began over 15 years ago in 2008, and the UUCS Microfinance Committee is very proud to report that our UUCS Congregation has made a significant difference to the poorest and most vulnerable people in Laos, Peru, Kenya, Nicaragua and India. The UUCS Microfinance project is based on Unitarian Universalist principles rooted in social justice.

Our small loans are targeted for people living on the edge, primarily women, so they can increase their earning power, escape poverty and make a better and sustainable living for their families. Often, poor people are not able to borrow money to buy small equipment items or materials necessary for their businesses. Our donations continue to cycle allowing for additional loans, creating hope and opportunity with every family it touches. As loans are repaid, the payments go into a revolving fund to provide capital to keep lending to others, thus multiplying the impact of our donations.

Thanks to the generous contributions from members of the UUCS, we donated \$6,100 in the 2023-24 church year to our partner non-profit organization, The NEO Fund ([www.theneofund.org](http://www.theneofund.org)) serves the poor through sustainable community development via micro-lending and child aid programs in partnership with established local organizations in some of the most impoverished communities in the developing world. Since our inception in 2008, we have raised over \$83,000 to benefit women and their families.

The UUCS Microfinance Committee is very grateful for the strong and generous support the Congregation has provided over the years. We would also like to express our gratitude to the donations of beautiful handmade quilts by Lorna Youngs and jewelry crafted by Elenie Smith that were important to our fundraising efforts in the fall of 2023.

More information about our Microfinance project can be found on the UUCS website under the Connection/Affiliated Ministries/Microfinance tab.

## Music Team

Strategic Plan Goal Report, May 14, 2024

### **Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world.**

Action: We provide music to our congregation in person and to a wider audience through our YouTube streaming. Since September 2023, UUCS choir has sung for Sunday services on 18 occasions. Additionally, we have produced a series of concerts, featuring local as well as national performers. Revenues from these concerts have benefited the UUCS general fund

### **Goal 2: To promote liberal religious exploration.**

Action: Hymn choices for every Sunday service and selections performed by UUCS Choir reflect ongoing religious exploration. Other guest performers enrich our musical ministry as well. Guests this year included Queertet, Uhuru choir, Alicia Rasmussen, Greg Lief, Dennis Fischer, and of course our own UU members and regular contributors.

**Goal 3: To foster stewardship, friendship, and shared ministry in our congregation.**

Action: Music Team brings people from diverse musical backgrounds together in support of music ministry at UUCS. We continue to leverage the talents within our community to provide 'special music' on Sundays when choir isn't singing.

**Other Actions and Issues:** As previously reported, [David Yeakle](#) has done an outstanding job of composing original music for us to sing. We've recently begun recording these pieces which we will share through YouTube at some point in the future. In the meantime, we simply rejoice in our opportunities to sing his music.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Chinburg, Music Director

## **Nominating Committee**

Strategic Plan Goal Report, March 31, 2024

(Barbara Stebbins-Boaz, Sara Shatto, Connie Anderson)

**Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world.**

Action: Our focus is to our congregation as we search for and identify willing members of UUCS to serve on the Board of Directors. We are extremely grateful to have been successful in finding nominees for all the board vacancies in the upcoming fiscal year.

**Goal 2: To promote liberal religious exploration.**

Action: We have not sponsored leadership training in a liberal religious context due to lack of sufficient time and energy. We understand that Christine Ertl and Sara Shatto are eager to launch such a program next year.

**Goal 3: To foster stewardship, friendship, and shared ministry in our congregation.**

Action: We have found that members who have been asked to serve are very grateful that they were considered whether or not they are in the position to serve. For those that do serve, their connections with other members and understanding of the operations of UUCS are strengthened.

**Other Actions and Issues:** As of this date we are still looking for one nominee for the nominating committee.

## Safer Congregation Committee

Reporting Date: 4-12-2024

Strategic Plan Goal Report:

**Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world.**

Action: The Safer Congregation Committee provides the service of dealing with allegations of sexual harassment, child abuse or other disruptive behavior within our congregation.

We also provide a Restorative Communication service which provides voluntary mediation for individuals who have conflicts with each other.

**Goal 2: To promote liberal religious exploration.**

Action: The Safer Congregation committee helps keep our congregation a safe environment which fosters learning and growth.

**Goal 3: To foster stewardship, friendship, and shared ministry in our congregation.**

Action: The Restorative Communications service offered by our committee helps maintain healthy relationships and friendships and keeps it a safe place to share in stewardship and ministry.

**Other Actions and Issues:** The Safer Congregation Committee plans to change our name to clarify our purpose of responding to emotional and relational safety, rather than the physical safety, of the congregation.

## Worship Team

Strategic Plan Goal Report, July 2023- April 2024

written by Barbara Stebbins-Boaz, chair

**Goal 1: To provide service to our congregation, our community, and our world.**

Action: The WT successfully collaborated with Reverend Rick Davis to provide Sunday services in spiritually and intellectually accessible formats. Integrated into the service are important UU values that we aspire to live. Perhaps most notable are values regarding the inherent worth and dignity of every person; compassion in human relations, respect for the interdependent web of all existence. These are manifest in the service with spoken words from the Life Lines Lay Ministry, a representative from Lifespan Religious Education, the Share-the-Plate and Marion-Polk Foodshare collection. These are in addition to Rev Rick's or guest/homilist's messages and the celebrant's chosen reading to support or expand the message. Our services have had a healthy in-person attendance. We appreciate the importance of being accessible to a wider audience with our on-line presence. This allows folks who are unable to attend in person for any reason to watch services.

We strongly encourage all folks on the WT to continue to discern how to improve how we reach our visitors, friends, and members both in content and technologically.

We have created a new position this, year AV tech lead, that will help in scheduling and training volunteer sound and video techs, trouble shoot tech issues, as well as provide support for special events such as memorial services. We hope our budget for the next FY will include this position.

**Goal 2: To promote liberal religious exploration.**

Action: Services throughout the year have had a wide range of themes from many sources. Rev. Rick's messages have encouraged reflection often using spiritual texts from a variety of traditions. Furthermore, we value music (choir and guest musicians), dance (Dances of Universal Peace, Annie Joslin), and art (service slides) as sources of inspiration.

Rev. Rick's established a Homilist group about two years ago composed mostly of lay members of UUUCS. It has been successful and received positive support from the congregation. Their messages are most often inspired from personal experience and help to build connections with others as well as to

encourage others to explore their own personal values. The Homilist group, which is within the umbrella of the Worship Team, has successfully put together an edited manual, Homilist and Storyteller's Manual: A Ministry of the Spoken Word, written by Rev. Rick to guide it into the future. We hope that future ministers will be receptive to what we see as an important strength in our congregation. Homilists generally spoke one Sunday per month.

**Goal 3: To foster stewardship, friendship, and shared ministry in our congregation.**

Action: To avoid repetition, please see the above for shared ministry (Life Lines, Homilists, celebrants) and stewardship. Every service has an early and important welcome, which we hope primes new connections, strengthens ongoing ones and may lead to real friendships. We actively welcome all, not just who we are used to but also the visitor.

As we end the Pledge season it is worth highlighting the need to make room for live Pledge Team announcements and updates during the service. Stewardship and financial support of our congregation are part of living our values.

Other Actions and Issues: At the end of this year the WT is transitioning from Trello as a communication platform to Google Drive. Thanks to Doc Hadley, Sara Pickett, and Loriann Schmidt, and the Office staff for their assistance.

We are implementing Doc's idea: at the end of each service, a slide indicates how many Sunday's Rick has left until retirement. In addition, notable quotes from Rick collected over the years by Sara Pickett are included on the slide. These are ways to honor his long relationship with us and to keep members and guests informed about this transition.

Plans are underway to give Rick, Gordana and the congregation a special service June 23 produced by the celebrants. This will be followed by Rick's Farewell Fiesta, a time of fellowship and gratitude for his long and inspiring tenure as our minister of 31 years.