

UUC 2020-21

COMMITTEE/TASK HIGHLIGHTS



Many, many hours are volunteered by our dedicated congregants along with staff hours to provide all that we offer and all that we do. Below are just some of the highlights from this past year. For the complete reports from committees and task groups, go to the Annual Meeting webpage: <https://uucnr.org/members/uuc-annual-meeting/>. Note that this year, Covid-19 affected all committees and activities which had to meet via Zoom or not at all.

Lifespan Faith Development

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- * 93 children and youth were registered.
- * Children's RE (CRE) held online Sunday RE classes all year, with good weekly attendance in PreK, grades K-5, and middle school. Supply bags were delivered monthly to families registered in the PreK and K-5 class along with homeschool lessons for those that chose not to attend online.
- * Despite COVID restrictions, CRE implemented its traditional activities such as the annual *It's Scary to Be Hungry* campaign for the Interfaith Food Pantry, and the *Mitten Tree* warm clothing drive.
- * CRE held a Valentine's Day weekend *Stuffed Animal Sleepover* which culminated in the stuffies' attendance and participation in the Sunday worship service.
- * The Buddy Project paired 19 adult and child Buddies this fall .
- * YRUU online attendance remained a challenge all year. Since March, biweekly onsite in-person meetings were held to address the lack of engagement.
- * Coming of Age paired 5 8th graders with adult mentors for a year of discussion and introspection.
- * Our adult RE program continued the ongoing programs and added *Sacred Language and Sacred Translation* and *The Fifth Dimension for Adults*. We once again offered the class *Transgender Inclusion in Congregations* with strong congregational participation. All classes were held online.

Worship

Worship Services Team

- * Worked with Rev. Pam to plan weekly Sunday Zoom service. Note that due to Zooming services, congregants from afar and those traveling were able to participate in worship.
- * Hosted weekly mid-week (Wednesday) worship gatherings.
- * Worship Team members carried a heavier load during weekly services: Worship Associates regularly contributed personal reflections, homilies, and sermons.
- * Team members embraced technology and learned new skills to enhance worship.
- * Although Jared & Natalie Gibbs are not members of the Worship Team, they created *incredible* music to share with the congregation.

EarthSpirit Sisters

- * Although a difficult year due to Covid, held some amazing, rejuvenating online rituals and provided companionship both online and at the labyrinth.



Membership

Communications

- * Produced monthly newsletter, four weekly announcements emailed out.
- * Posted often to UUC's Facebook page including images, playlists, etc. related to monthly worship theme supplied by Soul Matters Social Media Toolbox. Events also posted as well as shared postings from the UUA and other UU-related groups.
- * Updated website weekly, as needed.

Connections

- * Provided 2 newcomers' orientations
- * Supported a new members ceremony with 13 new members.
- * Hosted weekly Monday meetups to keep people connected.
- * Starting in May, hosted monthly Mondays on the Grounds for in-person get togethers.

Greeting

- * Provided 3 ushers (greeters) for each Sunday service who monitored the waiting room, admitted people, watched for Zoom bombers, spotlighted individuals and candles, posted needed links to chat, sent welcome emails to newcomers.

Men's Group

- * Met via Zoom twice monthly to offer a safe place to share in confidentiality those personal concerns that one might not be comfortable talking about in another setting.

Quarterlifers

- * Group remained active via Zoom and meeting outdoors when possible at UUC and Heritage Park.
- * Focused primarily on events such as potlucks, hikes, and meetings for meals/drinks at local establishments.
- * Held weekly "Book Club" gatherings to discuss novels read together by the group.
- * Established a texting group-chat that is active and where members share life news, announcements, interesting articles, or ideas for upcoming events.

Finance

Stewardship

- * During this Covid year, conducted successful campaign exceeding our goal of \$345,000 with a record 176 pledges totaling \$347,800.
- * Again held successful and popular "early-bird" pledging.
- * After campaign ended short of goal, 2 anonymous members issued a challenge match for \$1000 and \$4000 which actually raised over \$18,000 (including the initial \$5000).
- * No group meetings or individual interactions occurred.

Auction

- * Held online auction June—October culminating in a Zoom talent show. 119 registered bidders bid on 323 items.
- * Held a small, online holiday bazaar in December focused on gift items.
- * Raised \$14,244 for UUC. Used Auctria online software.

Finance

- * Worked closely with the Treasurer and Board on the budget and other financial matters.
- * Worked with Treasurer to reduce our mortgage interest rate from 4.35% to 3.98% over the next 5 years for a savings of \$500+ per month.
- * Worked with Treasurer to convert our investment funds to funds meeting ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) criteria.



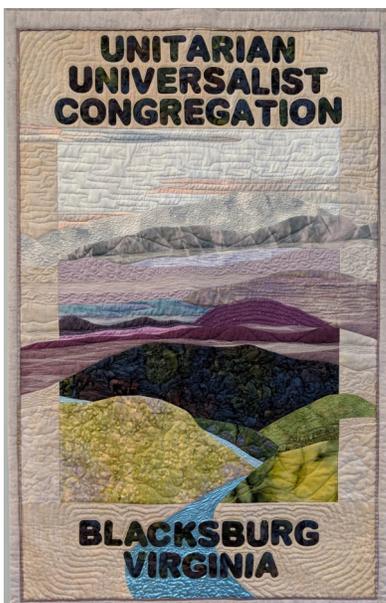
Facilities

Grounds

- * Volunteers provided a great deal of maintenance.
- * Replaced 4 rotting picnic tables with new ones with metal frames.
- * Hosted the winter light festival and provided all lighting, refreshments, organization and set-up.
- * Three additional trees purchased and planted as part of the tree sponsorship program.
- * Oversaw installation of a concrete sidewalk connecting the Memorial Garden and the picnic area requiring additional landscaping.
- * Created a fern garden along a section of the Meditation Path (used donated ferns).
- * Organized a fall and a spring workday; each workday made use of 24-32 volunteers.

Memorial Committee

- * Oversaw installation of a cement walkway from the Memorial Garden to the picnic area which made the Memorial Garden more accessible to all. The cost was \$7500.
- * Updated Book of Treasures as needed
- * Donated 2 bricks to UUC Auction.
- * Provided oversight for garden maintenance.
- * Four niches purchased by members.



Social Action

Community Service Team

- * Many regular activities canceled due to Covid.
- * Participated in community programs including To Our House, Adopt-a-Highway, and Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry (monthly bagging of food for clients, collecting food at UUC in outside bins and delivering).
- * April 2021 resumed monthly donation and delivery of treats for the children sheltered by the Women's Resource Center.
- * Continued membership in VICPP.

Anti-Racism Group

- * Wrote several articles for monthly newsletter encouraging group membership and discussion of the 8th Principle.
- * Meeting attendance and group participation have gone up.
- * Several members contributed to the Martin Luther King service in January.
- * Met for a strategic planning process, coming up with many ways to participate in anti-racism as a congregation, including lobbying and joining with more diverse congregations and service groups to engage in service.
- * Provided educational opportunities to congregation to further understanding of racism including exercises addressing why there is such a disparity in wealth between Blacks and whites as a whole and how structural racism relates to environmental damage.
- * In May, the group presented a written proposal asking the Board to support adoption of the 8th principle. The Board approved this for the agenda at the Annual Meeting on June 6. (Note: the congregation voted to approve the 8th Principle.)

Committees of the Board

Leadership Development

- * Identified and nominated the slate of Board members to be voted on at the June 6 Annual Meeting.
- * Working on developing a program, "Growth Through Service", as a tool to help match individual skills and service desires with the opportunities available at UUC.