Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax
Annual Report 2018-19

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Social Justice                  Wini Atlas
Worship and Arts                Susan Bennett

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Senior Minister*                Rev. David A. Miller
Assistant Minister*             Rev. Sarah Caine
Intern Minister                 Pippin Whitaker
Operations Manager*             Bill Braband
Interim Director of Religious Exploration     Diana Tycer
Dir. of Music and Arts/Worship Coordinator Laura Weiss
Finance Manager                 Gayathri Tillekeratne
Director of Communications      Mary Lareau
Young Adult Community Leader    Byron Tyler Coles
Youth Ministry Coordinator      Courtney Firth
Administrative Coordinator      Mary Foster
Communications Specialist       Sarah Creel
Education Assistant             Melissa Campos-Poehnert
Audiovisual Technician          Alison Raffaldt
Audiovisual Technician          Jonas Verbusaitis
Children's Music Director       Mary Gaskins
Child Care Coordinator          Tasha Jackson
Sexton                         Rony Cabellero

Coordinating Team

Peter Krone and Kathy Smerke Hochberg, lay members, along with these (*) staff members
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Senior Minister’s Report
Rev. David A. Miller

I begin my report this year with what for many of us on the staff is the context of all of the joys and challenges of this year - the traumatic loss of our beloved colleague and longtime member of our UUCF family Flori Diaz and her husband Vladimir Ralda. Their loss has deeply impacted our staff and we are still trying to both contextualize and fill her absence as best we can. We miss her every day and we dedicate our efforts of helping this world to be a better place in her memory.

Last year in my annual report I spoke about the shifting landscape in our country, our congregation and in our faith tradition; this year it feels like all of those things have become more pronounced. As I write this, I have just delivered a sermon referencing the 200th anniversary of William Ellery Channing’s sermon on Unitarian Christianity, which in part was about traveling through periods of realignment. This year in particular feels like a period of realignment for our world, our faith and our congregation.

Programmatically, our congregation continues to flourish in creativity and the number of participants. Our worship together continues to be engaging and meaningful. Generationally, many of our Unitarian Universalist congregations and congregations of mainline traditions are experiencing a shifting landscape in financial support and actual membership as the wealth and commitment to organizational membership by baby boomers also travel through generational realignment. Studies tell us post-baby boom generations are joining organizations less frequently and don’t have the same levels of disposable income as previous generations. This means we are examining the impact all this will have on “church” as we know it and attempting to understand what this means for the future. I continue to work with the Board of Directors, the Coordinating Team (CT) and the Generosity Team to help us understand what lies in our future and how to plan to meet expected challenges.

As this current congregational year began, there was the need to move on from the capable hands of Assistant Minister Rev. Sarah Caine and Interim Director of Religious Exploration (DRE) Diana Tycer to assemble a more permanent version of the staff team to help UUCF move forward into the future. The board, working with the CT, faced some challenges in staffing and have come through on the other end with a strong team of Bill Braband as operations manager, Gayathri Tillekeratne as finance manager, Diana Tycer accepting the position of DRE and the Assistant Minister Search Team finding the highly regarded Rev. Lara Fuchs-Holm as our incoming assistant minister.

These transitions also include the conclusion of the 2-year internship of now-Rev. Dr. Pippin Whitaker. Rev. Pippin has been a wonderful intern and will make a fine minister at Accotink UU in Burke. It was an honor to host her ordination in April.

Aside from the aforementioned activities, events and administrative work, I am working with the staff, board and CT to also focus on longer-term strategic goals. We are all attempting to view these goals through a number of frameworks that include our UUCF vision, the goals of the current strategic plan, formulating a new planning process and the challenges and opportunities of religious life at this time in our culture and country. With
those thoughts in mind, here are some updates for some of the major areas of focus:

- **Innovation Project.** The leader of “The Community,” Tyler Coles, has been creating a program to meet the terms of the Innovation Fund through a ministry to Young Adults. As Tyler is submitting an annual report as well, I will just say that we are grateful for Tyler’s efforts, wisdom and commitment.

- **Reach Social Justice Project.** With the cooperation of the Social Justice Council, we undertook a re-visioning of social justice efforts at UUCF called the Social Justice Reboot. From this effort, current and former social justice lay leaders came together and agreed to recommend that Reach campaign funds be used to hire a social justice coordinator to help guide and empower UUCF’s social justice efforts. This proposal will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

- **Beloved Conversations.** This program, launched in coordination with the Cedar Lane congregation, has been a deep and meaningful exploration for participants. We hope to continue building from this year’s launch.

- **Congregational Covenant of Right Relations.** The task group developed and implemented a process of congregational input and design over the last year and the covenant has been completed and will be voted on at the Annual Meeting. The next step will be to form a Right Relations Team to support UUCF in living and fulfilling the covenant.

Other highlights from the year:

- **Communities of Trust.** I have deepened my involvement with this Fairfax County-sponsored group to support dealing with relationships between public safety and traditionally marginalized communities, specifically focusing on contending with hate speech and crimes. This included a visit with members of law enforcement to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC.

- **Fairfax County Interfaith and Equity Committee.** I have been asked to be a founding member of the new committee set up by the county. Here is our newly created mission:
  o *Heeding the call of our moral obligation to create a more just society, the Interfaith and Equity Committee is guided by our love of the Divine and the love of all humanity to dismantle the long-term impact of structural racism and to build the Beloved Community. This Committee works to create racial and social equity in Fairfax County. The objectives are to:*
    ▪ Create a shared knowledge of understanding around racial and social inequities.
    ▪ Share the historical story of the impact of structural racism through the lens of the faith communities of Fairfax County.
    ▪ Transforming and unifying community relationships.

- **New Day Rising Conference.** Helped to create and design this regional conference where we joined with Central East Region staff and UU congregational leaders for a day of learning, growing and rising. We heard from each other about what has worked and why, while assessing our congregation’s next steps to deal with systems of supremacy.

- **UU Ministers Association (UUMA) Collegial Development Team.** I continue to serve as this team’s chair, which this year included a short trip to Vermont to pilot a program doing a collegial workshop for a UUMA chapter.
• **Speaking Appearances.** I was asked to give the sermon at Rev. Dr. Julie Kain’s installation at our congregation in the Shenandoah Valley as well as presenting at the Fairfax County Building Resiliency in the Faith Community Conference. I will speak again this June at James Madison High School’s 2019 baccalaureate service.

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**Assistant Minister’s Report**

*Rev. Sarah Caine*

It’s been a joy to serve as your Assistant Minister for Congregational Engagement and Spiritual Development this past congregational year! It seems like the time just flew by (maybe the 3 months at Fort Jackson, SC, had something to do with that). Though I’m leaving after this congregational year, UUCF will always hold a special place in my heart. You are an incredible congregation!

**What We’ve Done Together This Year**

- **Membership.** Signed up 13 new members (though one of those members sadly passed away), celebrated the Anniversary Dinner and hosted five Newcomers Orientations with 32 attendees since September 2018. (See the Lay Ministry for Membership and Outreach report for more details on this work.)
- **Wellspring.** This year started off with some strong interest in the Wellspring program, but due to scheduling difficulties we were not able to have any groups complete the curriculum. The Steering Committee is open to new members and we have people capable of facilitating this wonderful program if we are able to work out the scheduling details. Wellspring will take a break in programming for the 2019-20 congregational year.
- **Covenant Groups.** The Covenant Group Leader Team conducted a facilitator training in the fall and has one planned for the spring. Quarterly Covenant Group facilitator check-ins kept the facilitators connected to each other and the leader team. There were nine active groups and strong interest in the program next year.
- **Spiritual Docent Program.** Training for docents was conducted and five docents attended. There were a couple requests during the congregational year for docent matches; however, the follow-through needs work. Spiritual Docents have been incorporated into the Newcomers Orientations, which seems to be a good way to introduce the program to congregants.
- **Pastoral Care.** The Pastoral Care Associates have been very active this year! Our new database has made communication and continuity much easier, despite a learning curve. The team continues to be available and engaged in the wholeness of our community’s well-being.
- **Leadership Development.** Due to scheduling difficulties, I wasn’t able to attend as many meetings this year. The Leadership Summit went well, with a lot of engagement in the “Emergent Strategy” model of leadership and Youth Adult Liquid Leadership training with Pippin Whitaker.

**Beyond Regular Committee Work and Preaching**

From Jan. 9-Apr. 11, 2019, I attended and completed the Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course (CHBOLC), which makes me a qualified Army chaplain!
Board of Directors
Anthony Salvi, president

Purpose and Responsibility
The board operates under a policy-based form of governance. The board’s primary purpose is vision, strategy and decision-making on major matters that affect the long-term well-being of the congregation. Day-to-day management of operations is handled by the Coordinating Team (CT) within limits established by the board. The board’s primary activities are to communicate with the congregation, articulate UUCF’s goals and priorities, envision ways to enlarge or strengthen congregational programs and systematically evaluate the performance of the senior minister, the CT and the board itself. The board has adopted the following mission statement: The purpose of the UUCF Board of Directors, as the stewards of the congregational mission, is to create an evolving vision and strategy that challenges the congregation to live its mission by nurturing relationships of love, respect and trust.

Committees
The Board Executive Committee is made up of the president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. The other board-chartered committees are the Financial Oversight Committee, Ministerial Assessment Committee, Coordinating Team Assessment Committee, Board Self-Assessment Committee and Generosity Team.

2017-20 Strategic Goals
The board works under the current strategic goals. In a time in the world that calls for boldness, these UUCF goals create opportunities and initiatives to expand the reach and impact of Unitarian Universalism both within and beyond the congregation. The purpose of the goals is to focus attention on the three to five top-level priorities we want to give attention to within the defined time period. Quality worship and the Religious Exploration program, adult programs, music and arts and regular social justice work are always important and will continue to be given high priority. The four goals in the plan address the areas where we believe we need to grow and change to meet the challenges before us. They can be summarized as:

- Collaborate with area UU congregations to expand the impact of Unitarian Universalism in Northern Virginia.
- Take new and bold actions to expand the impact of Unitarian Universalism in Fairfax County.
- Increase congregational cultural competency and diversity.
- Focus all we do on furthering the mission of the congregation.

(For further explanation of these four goals, see the Coordinating Team report.)

Policy and Fiduciary Tasks
The board completed the following foundational policy and fiduciary tasks during 2018-19:
• **Lay appointments.** Appointed lay leaders in various roles, including Nominating Committee, Annual Giving Campaign and the Program Evaluation Committee.

• **Staff Hiring.** Voted to convert the Interim Director of Religious Exploration (DRE) Diana Tycer to a permanent position. Supported the realignment of positions to operations manager and finance manager to take the place of the director of administration position, which was eliminated. Supported the decisions to hire Bill Braband as operations manager and to promote former bookkeeper Gayathri Tillekeratne to finance manager. Approved the Assistant Minister Search Committee recommendation of Rev. Lara Fuchs-Holm for the position. Approved her salary and signed the contract.

• **Approved grants.** Approved recommendations for Endowment Fund Committee grants and multiple supplemental out-of-cycle grants.

• **Congregational Covenant.** Assisted the CT in its efforts to establish right relations within the congregation, and approved the statement supporting the Covenant of Right Relations, which the congregation will vote on at the Jun. 2 Annual Meeting.

• **Special congregational meetings.** Organized and conducted special congregational meetings to approve the ordination of Pippin Whitaker. Participated in Pippin’s ordination. Bringing the co-ordination of AJ van Tine for a vote at the Jun. 2 Annual Meeting.

• **Annual assessments.** Formed committees to perform annual assessments of the board, the CT and the senior minister.

• **Ordination.** The congregation ordained Rev. Sarah Caine, with President Anthony Salvi leading the act of ordination.

**Board Development**
The board participated in several trainings, including a local cluster board training, a UUCF board orientation at UUCF and a retreat held at UU Arlington during which we decided on the following goals for the board year.

**Board Goals for 2019-20**
This year the board decided to focus on a long-term strategic approach for the congregation and established the following two questions and sub-committees to address them:

1) Who are we serving?
2) How are we serving?

The discussion has begun and will continue into the next congregational year.

**Fundraising**
- The board hosted an Auction event on Sep. 21.
- Board members participated in the new approach for “The Last Campaign” Annual Giving Campaign. When it became clear that pledges were lagging, the board drafted communications to the congregation as well as appeals to the congregation and individuals.

**Social Justice**
UUCF works in a variety of social justice fields to fulfill our principle of justice, equity and compassion for all. To support these efforts, the board endorsed or participated in a number of projects, including:
• **Implementation of a UUCF campaign to support The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith for Black Lives of UU pledge.** This will enlist the congregation’s support in fulfilling a pledge by June 2019 to support Black Lives UU (BLUU) to raise awareness of the importance of its work and to encourage participation in racial justice work. UUCF held a well-attended concert in May 2019 to generate funds to support BLUU.

• **Social justice demonstrations.** Board members participated in social justice demonstrations in Fairfax and Washington, DC, in support of immigration rights and gun violence prevention.

• **Board member participation in social justice groups.** Board members are active on the Racial Justice Steering Committee, Rebuilding Together and Hypothermia Shelter Project.

**UUA Engagements**

Board members will attend the upcoming Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly in June 2019. The board participated in several President’s and Leaders’ Roundtables hosted by the Central East Region.

**Volunteers and Staff**

Anthony Salvi (president), Milo Valenzuela (vice president), Rich Williams (secretary), Scott Kestner (treasurer), Ashley Rothermel (assistant treasurer), Kaye Cook, Betsy Bicknell, Paul Atelsek, Peggy Hillman (at-large); Rev. David A. Miller (ex-officio); Bill Braband, operations manager (staff)

**Coordinating Team**

*Bill Braband, operations manager*

The mission of the Coordinating Team (CT) is to implement the policies and achieve the ends developed by the UUCF Board of Directors on behalf of the congregation and to manage the day-to-day operations of the organization. Senior Minister Rev. David A. Miller, Assistant Minister Rev. Sarah Caine and Operations Manager Bill Braband are staff members on the CT. Two lay members selected by the board also serve - Kathy Smerke Hochberg completed her fourth year and Pete Krone completed his third year. Intern Minister Pippin Whitaker contributed to the CT and volunteer member comptroller Joanne Schneider also provided valuable help to the CT.

This year, the CT also addressed several major staff and physical plant matters:

• Reorganization of the director of administration staff position into two separate positions: operations manager and finance manager.
• Assistant minister search.
• Director of Religious Exploration search.
• Custodial changes.
• Revised lease agreements with Compass Homeschool Enrichment and Hunter Mill Montessori School.
• Septic system improvements.
• Water damage to Sanctuary and Administration buildings.
• Work toward a new Sanctuary roof.
The CT also developed specific annual goals and its progress is summarized below. These annual goals relate directly to the 2018-19 UUCF Strategic Goals, which were finalized during the year.

**Strategic Goal One: Collaborate with area UU congregations to expand the impact of Unitarian Universalism in Northern Virginia.**

- Seek opportunities for collaboration with other congregations.

- **Music**
  - Arlington UU adult choir for concert to benefit victims of gun violence.
  - Rockville adult choir for worship (Vivaldi).
  - Arlington UU bell choir.
  - Arlington UU adult choir in worship.

- Instigate, support and host the regional classes/trainings on issues related to white supremacy systems - Beloved Conversations retreat held on Jan. 18-19 at Cedar Lane UU; New Day Rising Conference held Jan. 26 at UUCF.

**Strategic Goal Two: Take new and bold actions to expand the impact of Unitarian Universalism in Fairfax County.**

- Support and monitor the NOVA UU Young Adult Community Innovation Fund Project as directed in the plan.
  - Track disbursement of Stan Richards’ bequest to ensure it meets the intended objectives.
  - Review the draft/final project plans and reports before they are presented to the board.
  - Review and approve of hiring additional staff. The congregation hired Tyler Coles.

**Strategic Goal Three: Increase congregational cultural competency and diversity.**

- Raise our own consciousness regarding white supremacy culture.
- Read “Emergent Strategy” by November (CT) - Completed and first CT discussion held in November. Change made to CT reporting process to replace minister reports with CT member reports. Consider how the reading informs the next style and period of congregational strategic planning.
- In collaboration with the Racial Justice Steering Committee, support efforts to increase congregational cultural competency.
- Instigate, support and host the regional conference on issues with white supremacy systems.

**Strategic Goal Four: Focus all we do on furthering the mission of the congregation.**

- Nurture spiritual grounding throughout congregational activities and programs.
- Following the Program Evaluation Committee recommendations on membership, utilize and evaluate effectiveness of strategies for engaging new and longtime congregants and facilitating active engagement in the life of the congregation.
- Assess whether the Covenant Group process is more accessible and clear.
• Continue to lead and support young adult ministry while creating a plan for sustaining and transitioning the program.

**Day-to-Day Operations**

• Reviewed and updated the Dealing with Dangerous, Threatening or Disruptive Behavior Policy.
• Complete Reach-related grounds and energy conservation projects, including Sanctuary roof, Administration Building bathrooms, outdoor grading and septic system. (Work began in January 2019 and continues.)
• Monitored key indicators and proactively addressed budget matters throughout the year.
• Addressed support systems impeding UUCF’s ability to carry out its mission.
• Managed the director of Religious Exploration and assistant minister searches.
  o In March 2019, Diana Tycer agreed to stay on as director of Religious Exploration after being in the position on an interim basis since fall 2017.
  o In May, Rev. Lara Fuchs-Holm was offered the assistant minister position pending successful completion of immigration processes.
• Focused on filling open lay minister, Auction chair and CT positions to ensure smooth transitions in cooperation with the Leadership Development Team specifically related to the area goal four in the Strategic Plan.
• Begin to develop succession and contingency planning for all positions.
• Identified and supported Auction leaders and Generosity Team.
• As of this writing, the staff is working to close out the Annual Giving Campaign.

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**Director of Music and Arts/Worship Coordinator**

*Laura Weiss*

**Purpose and Responsibility**

To work with the ministers and staff to execute excellent worship services and maintain high-quality music and arts programming led by the congregation's overall mission.

**Committees, Programs and Activities**

*Committees/Groups:*

**Music & Arts Team:**

• Shannon Williams - Spoken Word
• Susan Bennett - Lay Minister for Worship & Arts/Theater Arts Coordinating Team (TACT)
• Pete Rafle - Bands
• Bob Carr - Bands/Children’s music ministries
• Mary Gaskins - Children’s Choir Director (staff)
• Munit Mesfin - ARTspeaks
• Laurel Ohlson - Classical Music
• David Addis - Vocal Music/Community Chorale/TACT/Band program
• Brian Cole - Jazz Band program
• Gina Wells - Handbells program
Laura Weiss - Director of Music & Arts/Worship Coordinator

**Theater Arts Coordinating Team:** David Addis, Susan Bennett, Carol Campbell, Cami St. Germain and Kathy Splitt

**Visual Arts Team:** Peggy Hillman, Bob Kaminski, Munit Mesfin, Kristin Moyer and Jim Tetro

**Arts Ensembles:**
- Revolution Ringers handbells ensemble - Gina Wells, assistant director
- Jazz Band - Brian Cole and Dave Anderson, directors
- Merry Makers children's choir and Young Arts Ensemble - Mary Gaskins, director
- Community Chorale - Laura Weiss, director
  - Section leaders 2018-19: Karen Wolf (alto), Martha Malone (soprano), Peter Exner (tenor) and Robert Damashek (bass)
- Catalyst – 16-member auditioned vocal ensemble
- House Band - Coordinated by Laura Weiss
- Compassion Choir - Meeting as needed throughout the year
- ARTspeaks visual arts community - coordinated by Munit Mesfin

**New items from 2018-19 (in addition to regularly scheduled programs):**
- $2,472 Endowment Fund grant received to advance the handbell program, buy new materials and support a new family bell program visioned for 2019-20.
- Participated in the ReelAbilities nationwide film festival in partnership with the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia.
- Partnered with The Art Connection in the Capital Region to provide thousands of dollars of artwork in support of various social justice organizations throughout DC, Maryland and Virginia (DMV) and to provide an exciting show for the UUCF community.
- Established the UUCF Music & Arts member web page for information sharing and program integration for singers and musicians. Site is now managed by lay leaders in several areas including handbells, visual arts, theater and music.
- Established the Theater Arts Coordinating Team that engages the UUCF community with theater arts as a way of enlarging and expanding our social justice activities. The team produced and staged its first show, Eve Ensler's “The Vagina Monologues,” raising $5,000 for V-Day with actors and audience members from within the congregation and beyond.
- Held our first Community Chorale retreat. Chorale and handbells retreats are planned for 2019-20.
- Partnered with Empowered Women's International and DMV artists of color and various backgrounds to provide a worship service and day dedicated to celebrating creativity and spirituality. This included vendors, new relationships and a fabulous service and crafts sale afterward.
- Partnered with UU Congregation of Rockville to stage the Vivaldi “Magnificat” in December 2018, which included a full orchestra at both congregations and transporting risers.
- Secured a new and exciting partnership with the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, which will now call UUCF its home. This 60-piece orchestra will provide five full-length concerts a year at UUCF.

- Partnered with All Souls Unitarian and the UU Church of Arlington, Temple Rodef Shalom and a 30-piece orchestra on May 4, 2019, to perform Gabriel Fauré’s “Requiem” with 120 singers. The event raised money for victims of school gun violence and included a partnership with the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence.

- Partnered with Olam Tikvah, Temple Rodef Shalom, Mosaic Harmony and UUCF adult and children’s choirs on Apr. 27, 2019, to perform “Voices,” a benefit concert that raised money for Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism as part of a partial fulfillment of our pledge to contribute money to the work.

- Partnered with the UU Church in Reston to support and perform for Reston Pride, Jun. 1, 2019.

- Staff member Mary Gaskins launched the Young Arts Ensemble, an interdisciplinary arts group that meets during the 11:15 service to explore spirituality through various artistic media. The group partnered with Shari MacFarlane on self-portraits, which were shown during a March 2019 installation. Ensemble members also performed all major character roles in the pageant and as part of the “Voices” racial justice concert.

- Participated and helped to envision and carry out the first area-wide UU Battle of the Bands as a second project following our regularly scheduled Banding Together event. This event was well attended.

- Participated in the first-ever handbell exchange with Arlington UU. UUCF ringers and Arlington ringers rang for worship at both congregations in November 2018.

- Hosted Oakton High School artists for the “Making the Impossible Possible” exhibit.

- Produced second annual LoveFEST hosted by Catalyst and including multiple poets/musicians, many from Vienna and Oakton.

**Volunteers and Staff**

Director of Music and Arts/Worship Coordinator: Laura Weiss

Children’s Choir Director: Mary Gaskins

Children’s Choir Assistants: Liam and Rachel Bloom

AV techs: Bill Braband, Jonas Verbusaitis and Alison Raffaldt

Librarians: Judy Penniman and Kathy Splitt

Regular piano subs: Dave Anderson, Nancy Dalzell, Ben Eggleston, Marsha Giusti, Molly Niehaus and Kathy Splitt

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**Director of Religious Exploration**

*Diana Tycer*

**Purpose and Responsibility**

The Religious Exploration (RE) program staff works under the guidance of the senior minister to teach and model Unitarian Universalist principles and bring children, youth and families into community. The staff, in collaboration with Religious Exploration Committee (REC) members and volunteer teachers and youth mentors, supports individual faith
formation, provides children and youth the chance to explore diverse spiritual practices and nurtures them to live in accordance with UU values and work actively for a more just world.

**Committees, Programs or Activities**

RE provides 37 weeks of classes year-round for preschool, elementary, middle and high school students. This year, the change to the new Realm database greatly improved the ability of the RE program to maintain accurate enrollment and attendance records.

The REC works with the director of RE and the youth ministry coordinator to manage special events and workshops, provide advice on programming, support RE teachers and recruit volunteers. This year REC members were actively involved in training teachers and creating strong curriculum teams following small-group ministry models.

The Youth-Adult Committee provides leadership for the youth program. It is youth-led with adult advisors.

**Preschool and Elementary Programs.** Thirty-eight children ages 2-5 participated regularly in either the Hello Friends or Treasure Hunting curricula this year. One hundred-nine children in Grades 1-6 participated regularly in one of the classes provided for this age group, a decrease from 2017-18. A marked population shift has occurred in RE, with 70% of these younger children attending at 9:15 a.m. In addition to the 37 teaching Sundays, five Special RE workshops throughout the year offered children opportunities for social justice work, stewardship projects and creative endeavors. An important component of the elementary RE program is weekly participation in worship, in either the Sanctuary or the Chapel.

**Youth Program.** Seventy-five middle and high school (HS) youth attended RE classes regularly this year, participating in the Coming of Age, 8th Grade OWL (Our Whole Lives, the sexuality education curriculum) or high school Exploration and Building Bridges classes. HS students explored Hinduism in the fall and Judaism in the spring. Twenty-five adult mentors from the congregation supported the 7th graders as they developed their credos, which culminated in the May 19 Coming of Age service. This year, youth had more chances to attend worship services as they worked with Intern Minister Pippin Whitaker on her focused initiative to increase and improve intergenerational worship services. Youth representatives served on the Social Justice Council Reboot and the Director of Religious Education Search Team.

**Sexuality Education.** RE provided four levels of the highly regarded OWL curriculum to UUCF children and youth. The 8-week 1st Grade classes and 10-week 5th Grade classes were held this spring. The 26-week 8th Grade classes ran September-May. Also this year, OWL was offered to junior and senior high students as an overnight weekend intensive (Friday through Sunday) facilitated by two RE staff and two volunteers.

**Child Care.** Our child care coordinator and child care workers provide regular Sunday morning care for infants and toddlers and care for children to age 12 at numerous UUCF events. Child care was routinely provided on second Sunday afternoons to enable more parents to attend meetings and participate in small-group ministries.
**Family Fellowship.** The RE program supports a variety of lay-led activities that unite RE families and build friendships among our children. These include the Labor Day weekend All-Congregation Retreat, a fall festival in October and December holiday party, monthly family potluck dinners, the toddler playgroup, the Parent Support Group and activities following services at Ingathering, Easter and after the Annual Meeting at the end-of-year picnic.

**Youth Fellowship.** The Middle School Youth Group met monthly for movies, games, potlucks and other activities. HS youth gathered periodically for fun activities including IHOP brunches, the beach trip to Cape Henlopen, DE, in August and the senior weekend at Massadoah in June.

**Service Activities.** Service activities supported by RE this year include Thanksgiving pie baking for the Community for Creative Non-Violence, Weekend of Service activities for the Fairfax Animal Shelter and UUCF's Hypothermia Shelter Project (middle school youth put together 45 health kits for shelter guests), supporting the bluebird box initiative to help wildlife on campus and collaborating with the Climate Action Group to reduce plastic use, increase family recycling and advocate for plant-based diets to help fight climate change.

**Young Arts and Spiritual Development.** The RE program collaborated with UUCF Music & Arts to provide a new class, Young Arts and Spiritual Development, for students in Grades 4-8. The class was offered at 11:15 and designed to engage students at an age where they sometimes begin losing interest in Religious Exploration. The program gave students an opportunity to explore and express spirituality through theater, music and visual arts.

**Volunteers and Staff**
Director of Religious Exploration: Diana Tycer

Youth Ministry Coordinator: Courtney Firth

Education Assistant: Melissa Campos-Poehnert

Child Care Coordinator: Natasha Jackson

Religious Exploration Committee: Laurie Cunningham (co-chair), Dillon Ginley (co-chair), Michelle Danis, Chris French, Tessa Grubb, Tom Hazzard, Paula Prettyman, Megan Reynolds and Sandy Shinn. (Tom Crowley, Christyn Levy and Emily Kohler rotated off the RE Committee in January.)

RE Liaisons (in addition the committee members above): Kathy Smerke Hochberg and Courtney Firth

Youth-Adult Committee: Courtney Firth (staff lead), Tessa Grubb (adult advisor), Zach Grubb (co-chair), Sidney Roth (co-chair), Annie Abruzzo, Ben Eggleston, Ian Foss, Ian Loft, Nora Mutarelli, Molly Niehaus and Andrew Zack

Seventy-four volunteer teachers, 25 volunteer youth mentors and 12 volunteer greeters gave significant time and talent to make the 2018-19 RE program possible.

In March, UUCF hired Diana Tycer as the director of Religious Exploration.
Young Adult Community Leader

*Byron Tyler Coles*

**Purpose and Responsibility**

The Young Adult Community Leader is tasked with supporting the formation of a Young Adult (ages 18-35) collective across Northern Virginia, tentatively called “The Community.” This initiative was proposed by UUCF congregants to promote Unitarian Universalist values across the region (outside of UUCF) through collaborative participation in art, music, learning, emotional/spiritual support and social justice offerings. It is funded through an Innovation Grant donated to UUCF by the late Stan Richards.

**Mission of The Community**

The Community is a collective of young adults with different paths in life who strive to be in meaningful relationship with one another. We gather intentionally to co-create community, make meaning and do justice across Northern Virginia. Rooted in the principles of Unitarian Universalism, we strive to live our values in everything we do.

**Committees, Programs and Activities**

- **Circles.** Small groups (6-10 people) that emphasize exploration and encourage deep connection among participants through common interests. Occurring monthly, Circles include the Creative Arts Circle and Dinner Church.
- **Gathers.** Large-group activities centered on food, fun and fellowship. Occurring roughly every 2 months, Gathers are exemplified through the two Community Gathers at Caboose Commons, Co-Creating Community (Values Session) and the Community Kickback.
- **Build.** Unique opportunities to engage and expand life skills. The first Build opportunity, being organized for late summer, will present the young adult Our Whole Lives (OWL) curriculum. This 3-day program will be open to young adults within and outside The Community and will be facilitated in part by Sana Saeed, assistant chaplain at the University of Pennsylvania.
- **Transform.** Community-wide opportunities to engage justice work that transforms both ourselves and our communities. Thus far, The Community has partnered with UUCF and a number of other spiritual communities to support Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism through the “Voices” benefit concert. Two future Transform opportunities are being organized with Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Northern Virginia to support the National Bail Out campaign during Black August and with Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions to clean up local parks.

**Volunteers and Staff**

Young Adult Community Leader: Byron Tyler Coles

Advisory Crew: Betsy Bicknell, Victoria (Vicky) Maldonado, Jeanette Walton and Karen Wolf
Lay Ministry for Adult Spiritual Development
*Cheryl Sadowski*

**Purpose and Responsibility**
The lay minister for adult spiritual development collaborates with the ministers, Lay Ministers Council and Adult Programs Committee on opportunities for spiritual deepening and enrichment as guided by UUCF’s mission, vision and strategic plan.

**Committees, Programs and Activities**
- **Adult Programs Committee.** UUCF’s Adult Programs Committee continued to refine online processes for ease of submission, class review and registration. For the winter-spring session, 19 classes or small groups were offered across six categories: newcomers/membership, UU identity and spiritual development, faith in action, leadership and life skills, creative expression, and small groups and retreats.

  The committee enhanced this year’s portfolio with several new and notable classes, including Destroyer of the Gods: Christianity’s Triumph in the Roman World, Whiteness in America, A Roll Call of Saints and Overcoming Polarization With Controversy Modeling. Science, Reason & Religion continued its forums following the second Sunday service.

- **Spiritual Docent Program.** The Spiritual Docent program was formally launched in fall 2018 with five docents who serve as guides to new or interested UUCF members, helping them deepen spiritual connection and engagement with other congregants and across the spectrum of UUCF’s activities. (Please see the Lay Ministry for Membership and Outreach report for more details on this program.)

**Volunteers and Staff**
Adult Programs Committee: Linda Rothbart (chair), Craig Clark, Pauline McCarthy, Mary Paxton, Jeanette Walton, Genie Williams and Rev. Sarah Caine (ministerial liaison)

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Lay Ministry for Caring & Wellness
*Libby Jenkins*

**Purpose and Responsibility**
The lay minister for caring and wellness works with the ordained ministers to provide pastoral care and support to congregants during times of illness, loss, transition or any other need for support. Pastoral care associates (PCAs) provide care to congregants through phone calls, cards and home visits, and are trained in reflective listening. The Caring Coordinators arrange for practical assistance such as meals, rides and child care.

**Programs, Activities and Successes**
This year, we assisted at four memorial services and provided various types of support to approximately 35 members of the congregation. We welcomed one new member to our
team, struggled with the tragic loss of longtime UUCF custodian Flori Diaz and provided support to the staff and congregation, and had some difficulty staying on top of congregant news during Rev. Sarah Caine’s absence for military training. The team grew to function well.

- We welcomed a new member, Paul Atelsek.
- **Healing Service.** This year, in coordination with the Worship Team, we changed the day of the week that the annual Healing Service was held. Presided over by Intern Minister Pippin Whitaker, the Healing Service was held on a Friday evening and followed a similar format to past services with a mindfulness meditation being added. Approximately 15 people attended the service. We agreed that holding this event on a Friday evening allowed for better attendance, which has been a challenge in the past.
- **Raising the Profile of the Lay Ministry for Caring and Wellness.** The work of the Pastoral Care and Caring teams continues to be advertised to the congregation through information in the bulletin and the Get Connected Fair. We’ve also more actively promoted these teams by doing staffed displays in the Sanctuary Commons after Sunday services almost weekly. We tried displays in the Program Building, but they were not useful because few parents were there at the time of our display.
- **Caring Coordinators.** Thanks to the efforts and wisdom of the previous lay minister Linda Zack, we changed our caring coordinator model from one primary coordinator and a backup to two co-coordinators. We welcomed two new caring co-coordinators, Amy Nordeng and Jennifer Damashek. This has been especially helpful in busier times. This arrangement works well because they are both busy moms and the lack of meetings and the ability to work from home works well for them. After an initial adjustment, Amy and Jennifer picked up the job quickly and have been great additions to UUCF’s caring community.
- **Proposal.** After the Hypothermia Shelter we realized that some of the guests seemed to appreciate having an attentive listener to talk to and the best chance to do that was over dinner. One of our members raised the idea of having some of the pastoral care associates provide that resource in the future. We have shared the idea with Jeff Snyder, Hypothermia Shelter Project lead, and will discuss it further.

**Challenges**

- **Realm.** We were consistently frustrated with the UUCF Realm member database and our inability to use it to its full capacity. Whether it’s a training issue or a software issue, we would like to maximize its usefulness to communicate, document our contacts with congregants and track numbers of contacts.
- **Recruitment.** Team members are busy people. Although we initially thought we were adequately staffed, at busier times of year, the team was stretched too thin. Therefore, we are looking to recruit new members.

**Goals**

- Continue to raise our profile to make the Pastoral Care Team more accessible to the congregation. The lay minister will write a Faith Matters blog and share a personal story at a fall 2019 service. Diana Tycer will include our member recruitment appeal in her monthly Religious Exploration newsletter. We will continue to generate other ideas.
• Recruit new members.
• Continue work to optimize Realm’s usefulness to the team.
• Further discuss and develop the idea of providing attentive listeners to Hypothermia Shelter guests.
• Discuss with the Membership Committee how we might add more congregant photos to Realm.
• Welcome new Assistant Minister Rev. Lara Fuchs-Holm to the Pastoral Care Team.

Volunteers and Staff
Lay Minister for Caring and Wellness: Libby Jenkins

Pastoral Care Associates: Linda Clark and Paul Atelsek (co-chairs), Ann King, Loretta Rowe, Jan Shubert and Jeff Snyder

Caring Co-Coordinators: Amy Nordeng and Jennifer Damashek

Lay Ministry for Membership and Outreach
Shannon Williams

Purpose and Responsibility
The lay minister for membership and outreach attends to, considers, serves and nurtures the membership journey of visitors to UUCF and new and longtime members. This individual works with the assistant minister to integrate membership, leadership and spiritual-deepening activities for a comprehensive approach to member involvement.

Committees, Programs and Activities
• The Membership Committee met four times in 2018-19 and held a half-day retreat in October 2018.
• There are nine regular committee members and several friends of the committee who serve at the Welcome Table and as greeters. No new members joined the committee this year. Several new volunteers also began serving at the Welcome Table.
• There are about 40 people signed up as welcomers; approximately six serve regularly at the Welcome Table.
• In March 2019, the committee hosted the UUCF Anniversary Dinner with 48 attendees.
• The Membership Committee hosts a newcomers/visitors reception in the Commons, generally on the first Sunday of the month.
• Newcomers Orientations. The Membership Committee, along with the assistant minister and lay minister, oversees Newcomers Orientations. Adjustments in the planning and setup have proven successful. The orientations now include a tour of campus. A spiritual docent participates in each orientation. An RE Committee member is also invited, and we are exploring including youth in some way.
• New Member Sign-ups. New members have an opportunity to sign the membership book in the Sanctuary Commons after Sunday services several times a year.
• **Spiritual Docents.** The lay minister for adult spiritual development and the lay minister for membership and outreach worked with the assistant minister starting in spring 2018 to further develop the UUCF Spiritual Docent program. Five spiritual docents were recruited and they participated in a training in July 2018. While the program has been explained in the order of service announcements and offered to Newcomers Orientation participants, few people have requested a conversation with a spiritual docent. We now have one spiritual docent attend each Newcomers Orientation to promote the program and provide another friendly face to newcomers. The program might benefit from a reinvigoration and a second launch in fall 2019.

• **Restructuring Committee Activities.** Discussions with the Membership Committee over the past year have explored a future change in the organization and direction of UUCF membership activities. A decentralization of activities seems to be the consensus, with the functions of the committee (orientations, receptions, dinner, Welcome Table) each being managed by 1-2 people who oversee a team of volunteers. The Membership Committee has drafted an outline of this potential new structure and will submit it to the ministers in May.

### Membership Numbers

- **Member Count as of May 1, 2019:** 650
- **New members May 2018-19:** 23 (there were 24 but Kat Tynberg died)
- **Members since Sep. 1, 2018:** Susan Ball, Lori Barfield, Alexa Bilidas, John Catlin, Abby Criswell, Erin Gross, Ken Gross, Julie Hielen, Shannon Kentner, Brian Lavoie, Diana Malgari, Chip McCaslin, Jimmy Meritt, Leslie Merritt, Katy O'Grady, Ruth Perry, Megan Reynolds, Fred Ricci, Mandy Saunders, Ron Stanley, Janet Swanson, Stephanie Tacker and Darleen Wheeler
- **Births and Adoptions:** 1 adoption (Michele Ferris’ child)
- **Deaths:** 4 members: Tom Poeschl (Sep. 13); Polly Feuer (Dec. 3); Wilt Dickerson (Feb. 8, 2019); Kat Tynberg; 2 non-members with significant ties to UUCF: Tae Hyong Yi (Jan. 29, 2019) and Flori Diaz (Mar. 2, 2019)

### Other Membership Statistics

- **Members removed:** (moved, resigned or status change): 46
- **Have not signed the membership book, yet made a pledge for the current year (friends):** 119
- Of the 150 families with children in the RE program, 51 are not members. Of those 51 families, 20 are pledging friends who participate actively at UUCF and many others donate money.
- **Membership Committee volunteers at the Welcome Table have greeted 230 visitors.**
- **We have had 28 attendees at five Newcomers Orientations from September 2018-April 2019.**
- **Of the 19 new members, eight** have attended a Newcomers Orientation.

### Volunteers and Staff

Membership Committee: Arlene Wilder (chair), Roland Cyr, Barb Dutchak, Judy Gallimore, John Kun, Bill Repsher, Mary Jo Smrekar, Rich Williams and Sophie Zager
Libbie Ayers and Kendra Niehaus have both agreed to join for 2019-20.

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**Lay Ministry for Social Justice**  
*Wini Atlas*

Social justice at UUCF is primarily service-oriented. During my tenure as lay minister, Bob McCarthy started an advocacy group that has merged with UUs for Social Justice advocacy activities. We continue to strive to expand our activities to cover the pillars of social justice. What follows are reports from most of the social justice action groups. (*Note:* Rebuilding Together, led by Bill Haight, did not take place this April due to circumstances beyond the group’s control. They will hold the activity this fall.)

A group of interested parties, including former lay ministers of social justice, has been meeting to consider a Social Justice Reboot. We met three times and considered several possibilities. Interest focused early on the possibility of having a social justice minister or coordinator. At one of our meetings, Rev. Rob Keithan, social justice minister at All Souls UU, facilitated the discussion and spoke to us about his role at All Souls. Discussions will continue.

The council administers the social justice budget and the Share the Plate program. We are also considering how to distribute Reach funds designated for social justice.


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**UUCF Climate Action Group**

UUCF’s 2013 Congregational Resolution on Climate Change specifically charges the Social Justice Council “with reporting annually to the congregation on UUCF actions, progress and new initiatives related to addressing these resolutions on climate change.” The Climate Action Group (CAG) serves as a focus for the congregation’s commitment “to taking personal and congregational responsibility for reducing our own carbon footprints through our choices in transportation, in our homes and buildings, in use of renewable resources, and in eating and serving energy-efficient food that is locally produced and low on the food chain” and demanding “action from our elected leaders to implement effective solutions …” Efforts this year concentrated at all three levels: personal action, congregational commitment and political advocacy.

**Multifaceted campaigns:**
- **Plastics.** We participated in the Plastic-Free Fairfax campaign with Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (FACS) and Fairfax 350, which collected more than 2,000 personal and family pledges to reduce use of plastics. The single-use plastic bag and plastic film recycling program has already collected more than 612 pounds. This program involved Unity, UU Reston, Fairfax 350 and Woodburn Homes Civic Association. A Trex bench was donated to a school or park at the movie showing “Plastic Paradise” on May 31.
The CAG sponsored numerous activities and programs that were not part of these sustained campaigns.

- **Carbon Footprint Game.** The CAG developed a game toolkit based on its experiences at UUCF. It has been shared by UUSJ, FACS, the UUA’s Green Sanctuary program and the Parliament of World Religions. In April 2019, 10 NOVA congregations, including UUCF, played the game as part of Earth Month celebrations.

- **Drawdown.** Actively cutting greenhouse gases must be a priority. We participated with FACS in sponsoring a conversation with Drawdown editor Paul Hawken. We sponsored a Drawdown workshop at UUCF from which three more similar workshops were scheduled in Northern Virginia. A five-session seminar took place at UUCF on adapting the global Drawdown strategies to Northern Virginia. The CAG sponsored three movies followed by discussions on Drawdown themes: “From Paris to Pittsburgh,” “Let Us Be Heroes” and “Plastic Paradise.”

- **Environmental Justice.** The Covanta Fairfax trash incinerator in Lorton is the largest single source of greenhouse gases and other toxic air pollutants in the DC metro area. The CAG, with FACS, sponsored a field trip to the incinerator and I-95 landfill. We worked with the Fairfax Department of Health on a study of pediatric and adult asthma in the area. We participated in a FACS-sponsored advocacy meeting on the incinerator at the Mount Vernon UU church attended by more than 80 citizens, county supervisors and school board members.

- **Advocacy.** With FACS, members of the CAG successfully lobbied for significant policy change in Fairfax and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The new Fairfax Office of Environment and Energy Coordination will be responsible for cutting greenhouse gases countywide. The office will have the organizational stature, staffing, resources and accountability necessary to lead the county’s comprehensive approach to cutting greenhouse gases. The Fairfax Board of Supervisors approved a County Government Operations Energy Strategy and approved $4.5 million for first-year implementation. On Apr. 9, the Board of Supervisors approved contract funding and staffing for a comprehensive, countywide energy and climate plan. The county allocated $1.8 million to start the conversion of streetlights to LEDs. Renewable energy for county buildings and schools is being fast-tracked. Construction could begin this year on as many as 200 solar installations on county and school buildings. The Virginia Climate Crisis Forum, a FACS event that CAG participated in, drew over 400 to hear 2018 candidates for U.S. Senator from Virginia, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) and then-chairman at-large of the Prince William County Board of Supervisors Corey Stewart, respond to questions about climate solutions. CAG members testified before the Fairfax Board of Supervisors, School Board, the Northern Virginia delegation to Richmond, and participated in UUCF’s lobby day in Richmond and UUSJ’s lobbying Congress on climate policy.

- **Partnerships.** On many climate-related activities, CAG partners with Unity of Fairfax, UU Reston and FACS. We are now trying to get the four churches along Hunter Mill Road to jointly participate in the Adopt-a-Highway program from Maple Avenue to Vale Road. We will be responsible for collecting trash along the road several times a year.

The CAG sponsored numerous activities and programs that were not part of these sustained campaigns.

- **Paris Pledge.** Cutting greenhouse gases in UUCF buildings. The CAG monitors congregational energy use, led the conversion of all lighting to LEDs and replacement of single-pane windows with double-pane windows in the
Administration and Program buildings. When the roof leaked, we worked with the Coordinating Team and Property Stewardship Council to assess the feasibility of adding solar panels and insulation to the roof.

- **Movies and Education Programs.** We sponsored “What Lies Upstream,” “Bag It” and the three Drawdown movies mentioned earlier, one of which focused on the impact of dietary choices on climate and included a plant-based potluck supper. We led Earth Prayers Vespers in April, a Science, Reason & Religion presentation and an evening on dietary choices and climate. Jean Wright preached at Unity of Fairfax as part of a UUCF/Unity earth celebration. We presented on CAG activities at faith events at Ashby Ponds, Parliament of World Religions, St. Anne’s Episcopal Church and the UU Church in Linwood, NJ.

- **Donations to the UUCF Auction.** We offered two items to the UUCF Auction: a vegan dinner and a hike.

- **UUCF Social Justice Yard Sale.** We actively volunteered at the UUCF Social Justice Yard Sale to support the Social Justice Council.

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**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**

**Purpose and Responsibility**

Volunteers teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to adults in Reston, VA, to facilitate community integration and reduce the feeling of isolation among immigrants. Volunteers affirm students’ worth and dignity, support their English language development, share insights into American society and culture, and provide a safe haven in an environment sometimes unwelcoming to immigrants.

**Committees, Programs or Activities**

With a theme of “staying flexible in order to stay involved,” half of the ESOL Tuesday Morning team relocated to Hunters Woods Fellowship House after our main location, Southgate Community Center (SGCC), partially closed for renovations from January-March 2019. For those months, the morning team operated dual sites, with pros including three new students from Hunters Woods Fellowship House (HWFH) and three new students from SGCC. The cons were limitations in registering new students thoroughly at both locations and limited photocopying access at HWFH.

The Wednesday Evening team attempted to stay similarly flexible by changing its format from a traditional classroom lesson style to one focused on conversation and reading/discussing articles from monthly issues of “Easy English News” newspaper. The team worked closely with Stonegate Village Community Center’s Cornerstones representative David Thompson to provide his recommendation: earlier start times, shorter classes (one hour) and minimal breaks in the weekly schedule.

**Volunteers and Staff**

Morning Team: Lily Reider (team lead), Wini Atlas, Bob Hatfield, Libby Jenkins, Jimmie Juarin, Bob McCarthy, Sandy Moshos, Judy Penniman, Catherine Thornberry and Joanna Walker
Evening Team: Stacy Casey (team lead), Susan Ball, Melissa Fitzgerald, Ann King, Bill King, Rama Kotra, Raj Richardson and Carol Smoot (relocated)

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Muslim Liaison Group
“Embracing the Other: What Gets in the Way?” was held Nov. 4, 2018, and featured small-group discussions of the origins and consequences of prejudice and discrimination against those who are different. We reviewed various terms currently used in describing different kinds of groups and treatment of members of those groups defined by race, gender, nationality, religion and sexual orientation.

On Dec. 5, 2018, the Refugee Resettlement Project sponsored the showing of a movie titled “This Is Home,” an intimate portrait of four Syrian refugee families arriving in America and struggling to find their footing. With only 8 months of help from the International Rescue Committee to become self-sufficient, they must forge ahead to rebuild their lives in a new home: Baltimore, MD. They attend cultural orientation classes and job training sessions where they must "learn America" - everything from how to take public transportation to negotiating new gender roles.

When the newly imposed travel ban adds further questions and complications, their strength and resilience are put to the test. Through humor and heartbreak, this universal story illuminates what it’s like to start over, no matter the obstacles. “This Is Home” went beyond the statistics, headlines and political rhetoric to tell deeply personal stories, putting a human face on the global refugee crisis. After the film, Refugee Resettlement Project volunteers compared and contrasted the experience of the refugee family that was sponsored by UUCF and UU Sterling over the past 2 years.

Members of the American Turkish Friendship Association provided the evening meal on Feb. 14, 2019, during UUCF’s Hypothermia Shelter week. Jerry Poje of the Muslim Liaison Group introduced guests in attendance, which included Supervisor Cathy Hudgins of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors representing the Hunter Mill District and Fairfax County School Board member Dalia Palchik. Imam Ali Siddiqui gave the evening prayer, quoting from the Qur’an that we are all brothers and sisters and that it is our duty to share our bounty and that no one goes hungry. After the dinner, Jerry Poje led a group discussion about better affordable housing opportunities to end the plight of homelessness in Fairfax.

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Racial Justice Steering Committee

Purpose and Responsibility
The purpose and responsibility of the Racial Justice Steering Committee (RJSC) is stated in its mission statement: Identifying and alleviating the root causes and effects of racial injustice; proposing strategies to identify and coordinate initiatives that seek to alleviate the root causes of racial discrimination; addressing the effects of the aforementioned causes through direct congregational and expanded partnership engagement; and increasing diversity at UUCF. We do this through the use and implementation of our five pillars of social justice:
• **Service.** Providing support for persons and communities in need.

• **Education.** Educating ourselves and others about social justice issues, including interpreting such issues within the context of liberal religious values.

• **Community organizing.** Seeking to establish grassroots organizations or work with existing ones for purposes of increasing social integration and power in civil society.

• **Witness.** Making our convictions on social justice issues public by words and deeds.

• **Advocacy.** Working through legislative processes to have an impact on public policy on social justice issues.

**Programs and Activities**

During 2018-19, the RJSC participated in, offered, supported and promoted the following:

• On Jul. 14, 2018, the RJSC sponsored the Vienna’s Rich African American Heritage tour led by Sylvia Taylor and Gloria Runyon of Historic Vienna, Inc. The educational tour was offered to the congregation free of charge, and RJSC offered bus transportation at no charge as a result of having received a generous transportation donation from the Endowment Fund Committee. Sign-ups quickly reached capacity with a long waiting list.

• The RJSC held its annual retreat on Aug. 18, 2018, to reflect on achievements of the past year and set goals for the coming year. Rev. Katie Romano Griffin from Cedar Lane UU Church was present and conducted deep reflection exercises for the group.

• RJSC offered two workshops at the Fall Adult Retreat in October 2018: “Blind Spot: Exploring Whiteness” and discussion of the UU Common Read “Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity and Power in Ministry.”

• RJSC voted to present a proposal to the congregation to support The Promise and The Practice of Our Faith Campaign to Support Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) under the direction of the RJSC. Through the Unitarian Universalist Association, a donor agreed to match the funds of any congregation that committed to pledge at the rate of $10 per member and by making a statement of a long-term commitment to dismantling white supremacy, racism and oppression from within our congregation and beyond and uplifting the Black lives, voices and leadership of Unitarian Universalism. The RJSC sent its proposal to the Coordinating Team (CT) and, upon receiving the CT’s approval, submitted and received a Statement of Support from the UUCF Board of Directors.

• On Dec. 1, 2018, we showed the film “Wilderness Journey: The Struggle for Black Empowerment and Racial Justice Within the Unitarian Universalist Association, 1967-1970.” There was no charge to attend the screening; however, $130 in donations from attendees went toward our pledge for the BLUU campaign.

• The RJSC asked for and received approval for two Share the Plate offerings to support BLUU – in January 2018 and February 2019. Share the Plate funds went to the BLUU campaign pledge.

• The RJSC sponsored the Beloved Conversations retreat with Cedar Lane UU on Jan. 18-19, 2019. We were able to provide free bus transportation to attendees using the remaining Endowment Fund Committee funds. The retreat was followed by the continuation of the Beloved Conversations work through 8-week small-group sessions (two separate small groups) focusing on racism, white privilege, systemic white supremacy and how our congregation can move forward to becoming more racially diverse. The sessions also included panels of speakers from organizations that represent marginalized communities (OAR and Beacon House) as well as our
own internal leaders (Rev. David A. Miller represented the ministerial staff, Milver Valenzuela represented the Board of Directors and Peggy Hillman represented the RJSC).

- The RJSC participated in organizing the Martin Luther King Sunday service on Jan. 20, 2019.
- We hosted the Central East Region/NOVA Cluster racial justice workshop New Day Rising at UUCF on Jan. 26, 2019. More than 150 individuals attended from 30 UU congregations throughout the Central East Region.
- The RJSC and UUCF Music and Arts co-sponsored the "Voices" for racial justice concert on Apr. 27, 2019, that included music by the UUCF Community Chorale, Mosaic Harmony and the choirs from Temple Rodef Shalom and Olam Tikvah. Proceeds went to fund our congregational commitment to Black Lives of UU.
- The RJSC reached its pledge and commitment to BLUU by raising $6,610 by the end of June 2019 (the $10 per member commitment).
- The RJSC coordinated with the Climate Action Group and the Denominational Connections Committee to present a program on this year’s UU Common Read, “Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class and Environment” held in spring 2019. The RJSC also set up a table in the Commons to sell copies of the book after worship services.
- The RJSC requested and received approval from the Endowment Fund Committee for funds to present a workshop in fall 2019 lead by Chris Crass, a longtime organizer, educator, and writer working to build powerful movements for collective liberation.
- In addition, in 2018-19 the RJSC has devoted time during each of its monthly meetings to additional education of its members about racial injustice, white privilege and the effects of systemic white supremacy on ourselves, our congregation and our community.

Volunteers and Staff
Racial Justice Steering Committee: Susan Bennett, Betsy Bicknell, Mary Butler, Kaye Cook (co-chair), Adrian Hendricks, Peggy Hillman (secretary), Sharon Johnson (co-chair), Mary Lareau (staff), Ashley Rothermel, Malaika Walton and Karen Wolf

Lay Ministry for Worship and Arts
Susan Bennett

Purpose and Responsibility
The worship and arts lay minister works with the ministers and the entire worship team to create and support worship and arts experiences that are inclusive, welcoming and spiritually nourishing to members, friends and visitors. The worship and arts lay minister is responsible for assisting the ministers, the music and arts director, the director of religious exploration and worship associates in all worship experiences at UUCF, Sanctuary aesthetics and Music and Arts programs.

Committees, Programs or Activities
- **Worship Committee.** This year the worship team experimented with worship styles, tone and content with the goal of deepening the spiritual nourishment they
provide and widening our welcome by providing greater diversity in worship. An “Our Stories” segment, where congregants spoke in services about their connection to UUCF and what was most meaningful to them about their experience at UUCF, was added as a regular part of worship.

- **Worship Environment Committee.** This year the Worship Environment Committee operated on an as-needed basis and worked to replace the joys and sorrows candle stand in the Sanctuary with a larger and more stable candle stand.

- **Vespers Team.** The Vespers program continued this year to diversify its offerings by including visual arts and movement as well as words, poetry, music, ritual and meditation. Vespers included a labyrinth experience, Woven Green’s sound bath meditation, an Imbolc ritual, a visual arts program, words and music for connecting with your inner spirit and programs by Wellspring alumni and the Memoirs Writing Group.

- **Friday Night Worship Series.** The Worship Committee launched a new monthly Friday Night Worship Series in early 2019, with the aim of engaging congregants in diverse worship experiences. The series generally alternates between services for all ages with potlucks and more contemplative services aimed at adults. The series, on hiatus through the summer months, will start up again in the fall of 2019 and be held generally on the second Friday of the month, October 2019 through May 2020.

**Volunteers and Staff**

Lay Minister for Worship and Arts: Susan Bennett

Worship Associates and Worship Committee members: David Addis (chair), Craig Clark, Meg Harrelson, Bob Kaminski, Kristin Keen (relocated), Laurel Ohlson, g Ordun, Ashley Rothermel, Anthony Salvi and Katherine Wilson

Worship Environment Committee: Debra Eastham and Rich Williams (co-chairs), Bill Ades, Wini Atlas, Peggy Hillman and Mary Foster (staff)

Vespers Team: g Ordun (coordinator) and Barbara Dutchak

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**Endowment Fund Committee**

*Nancy Smith, chair*

**Purpose and Responsibility**

The Endowment Fund Committee (EFC) administers two endowment funds on behalf of the congregation: the Grants Endowment Fund and the General Endowment Fund. The General Endowment Fund - created to support current operating, capital or programmatic needs - is relatively new and currently unfunded. Thus, the activities described below relate to the Grants Endowment Fund, hereafter referred to as the Endowment Fund.

Grants from the Endowment Fund are made to support member- and committee-initiated projects and other needs apart from normal operations. Its other responsibilities include strategic planning, Endowment Fund management, congregational outreach and fundraising, gift processing, donor recognition, records management and reporting.

This year, the EFC awarded seven grants (see below). It also worked to improve its webpage on uucf.org and the brochure available to congregants and visitors. These
activities will continue into the next fiscal year. The gala event for recognizing donors was postponed.

**Financials**
The following table summarizes the Endowment Fund financials for 2018-19:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Market Value (AMV) of fund</td>
<td>$455,382.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal (sum of contributions, P)</td>
<td>$345,403.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Adjusted Principal (IAP)</td>
<td>$409,407.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution Ceiling (AMV-IAP)</td>
<td>$45,974.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The suggested annual disbursement from the Endowment Fund is 4 percent to a maximum of 6 percent of the Average Market Value (AVM) of the fund. For 2018-19, the disbursement for all grants totaled $24,493, 5.4% of the AMV.

**Grants Awarded**
The seven grants approved by the EFC and Board of Directors are as follows:

- $7,850 for redesign of uucf.org.
- $5,000 to Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions.
- $3,251 to the Racial Justice Steering Committee to conduct a workshop on cultural competency by an outside facilitator.
- $2,900 for Wi-Fi improvement, updating of administrative computers and firewall replacement.
- $2,472 for equipment for the adult handbell choir.
- $2,420 for Pippin Whitaker’s ordination.
- $600 to support the UUCF-FACETS Hot Meals Program.

**Volunteers**
Nancy Smith (chair), Leslie Beard (secretary), Randy Adams (treasurer), David Brummond, Steve Gold, Jennifer Yi, Scott Kestner (board treasurer) and Ashley Rothermel (assistant board treasurer)