

Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek – Annual Meeting 2017

June 4, 2017

Agenda

1. Opening Words – Rev. Gregory S. Pelley
2. Quorum Confirmation – Membership
3. State of Society – Judy Pappenhagen, Board President
 - Highlights and Recognitions
 - Awakening our DNA – Mission, Values, Beliefs – Rev. Greg
 - Committee Updates
 - Adult RE – Jack Guerin
 - Building Maintenance – Dick Cronin
 - Pastoral Care – Brian Hanson
 - Finance – Adam Kegley
 - Membership and Hospitality – Maggie McLaughlin
 - Music – Heather Doty
 - Religious Exploration (Children and Youth) – Jamie Kegerise
 - Social Justice – Chitra Vaidy
 - Sunday Services – Stephen Petersen
4. Budget Proposal, Discussion and Vote – Steve Selph
5. Acknowledgement of Outgoing 2016-2017 Board Members and Nominating Committee
 - Board of Trustees:
 - MQ Riding, Larry Stomberg, Vicky Tosh-Morelli
 - Nominating Committee
 - Bruce Koepke, Tracy Morgan, Ivonne Antongiorgi
6. Election of incoming 2016-2017 Board Members and Nominating Committee
 - Board of Trustees – 2 year term
 - David Bonner, Ram Ray, Helen Springer
 - Nominating Committee
 - MQ Riding, Larry Stomberg, Vicky Tosh-Morelli
7. Closing Words – Judy Pappenhagen

Letter from the President of the Board of Trustees

Dear Members and Friends,

Sometimes I am introduced to people as the president of the church and receive a look of sympathy of how hard my job must be. While I appreciate the compassion I try to explain that this is a wonderful congregation with talented, generous people willing to help. Of course, there is always room for more volunteers, but as president of the board of trustees I feel the support of a team of people who truly care about this congregation, its present, past and most importantly its future. It is an honor to serve.

This year we are connected in to our past through the legacy gifts of Frank MacArtor and Ann Roschinsky. The breathing room that these gifts allows our financial circumstances should not be misunderstood. It is a call to action, not a call to pull back into a comfort zone. The world is in need of what our congregation has to offer. In this house and in this place, everyone who comes in peace with an open heart finds acceptance and a home for the spirit. There is so much to do and this is a time to celebrate where we are, and what we have accomplished. Committee reports follow but I also want to lift up some highlights of the church year.

- Losing our director of religious education in July could have become a continuing crisis that brought our progress on everything else to a standstill. Thankfully, a group of dedicated members and friends re-imagined our program as lay led for a year, jumped to the challenge and came through for our children. Thanks especially to MQ Riding, Jamie Kegerise, David Bonner, Steve Selph, Brian Coleman, Seetha Coleman-Kammula, Eileen Selph, Marina VanRenssen, Jeanne Hanson, Ivonne Antongiorgi, Roberta Headley, Kelly Sparrow, Tracy Morgan, Vicky Tosh-Morelli, Rudy Nyhoff, and Lisa Coates.
- We conducted three leadership and congregational meetings on discovering our deepest values and beliefs. A small team with thanks especially to Seetha and Brian Coleman.
- Our first foray into a statement of conscience signed by the board to declare as a community our fundamental principles of justice, equity and compassion and to truth and the core values of American society.
- On January 14, 2017 Chris Crass, a nationally known Unitarian Universalist community organizer came to Mill Creek. We hosted 113 people who came to learn more about social justice work in our turbulent times. Few congregations our size have pulled off a nationally recognized speaker so successfully. We also began the work of consciousness raising issues around racial justice with a Being White in the Black Lives Matter Movement class and congregational meeting, and a viewing of the documentary *Thirteenth*. Thanks especially to Linda Lucero and Jack Guerin.
- Recommitment to generosity in all its forms including financial and other support of the church. Separating the pledge drive from the budget allows us to reach for our sky-high aspirations not simply meet the bottom line (or close to) of a budget. A fabulously successful Celebrating Our Legacy campaign to allow more operating funding by reducing our mortgage debt. Thanks especially to Adam Kegley, Fran Loeffelholz, Bob Broesler, Ram Ray, Melissa Bryson, Steve Selph, MQ Riding...plus Lauri Rickard and Debby in the church office.

- Kaleidoscope Concerts delighted community audiences culminating with *Emma's Revolution*, an engaging duo of protest singer-song writers who shared not only their songs but their passion for justice. Thanks especially to Kristen Tosh-Morelli and Brian Hansen.
- Our church is lit up on weekday nights with Art Nights, Family Fun Nights, Book Group, Wednesday Gardening Group, Chalice Circles and more.
- We had a membership workshop that covered the full-spectrum of membership from curious individual to welcomed visitor to connected friend to engaged participant to integrated leader. More on this to come next year.

Please read the following committee reports. We have done a lot in a year with financial challenges (lower pledges), political turmoil, staff vacancy. We need to remind ourselves that we are a powerful home for the spirit. We need each other and the world needs us. We are a community that invites you to awaken to love.

In service and with extreme gratitude for all you do,
Judy Pappenhagen

Letter from Rev. Gregory S. Pelley

Dear Friends,

A couple of colleagues invited me to a Philly's game awhile back. I confess I am not a particular fan of baseball, or of professional sports in general, and I have moved around too often in my lifetime to have developed a loyalty to any particular team.

So, naturally, I accepted the invitation.

We ate Chickie's & Pete's Crabfries and drank beer.

We watched the rain pour down on the field.

Not a single pitch was thrown, no bats cracked, no bases touched.

Eventually the game was called off and we ran back to our cars soaking wet, and happy.

It was a glorious night.

An invitation is a powerful thing. It is an opening to relationship. It is an act of faith, a gift of presence. It is a generous offer of freedom - an invitation can be accepted or declined, we are not compelled or forced either way. When invited, we feel welcomed, seen, heard, appreciated, and respected whether or not we accept the invitation, we sense the possibility of being **known**. And when we invite, we are opening our whole selves to others, opening ourselves to be changed by the encounter, opening ourselves to be **known**.

Being known by another person is both frightening and deeply joyful. Frightening, because to be known is to allow ourselves to be vulnerable enough to share our deepest gladness and our deepest pain with someone. Frightening, because when we do share, we have no control over how another person will respond. Will they love me? Will they revile me? Will they fear me? Will they embrace me?

But being known by another is also deeply joyful. To be known is to bridge the separation we sense between ourselves and others; between the self we have invented and our true self; between ourselves and God, (or however you name the holy or divine). To be known by another is to be connected and to be connected is what it is to be whole. And it is, I assert, this longing for — this call — to wholeness, that draws us to gather in religious community. Everything this church does needs to be in service to this call to wholeness.

This church, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek, is an ongoing invitation, a constant offer to each other and to the world to a different way of being.

It may be a cliché, but we are living in what feels like difficult, precarious times. Disconnection, political upheaval, financial uncertainty, and challenges to our identities conspire to unsettle us. We often feel forced to a state of constant vigilance, a state of fear for our security, a state of uncertainty for our (and our children's) future.

Against all that, we who gather as a community of faith, push back. We make a bold claim that there is a different way of being in this world. A way of being that is grounded not in fear but in wonder. A way of being that is grounded not in uncertainty, but in imagination. A way of being that calls us to change ourselves, to grow ourselves into wholeness, into possibility, into love.

The work we have done together over the last couple of years, what we have called “Discovering our DNA,” has awakened us to who we are (and who we have been), who we - as a congregation - have the potential to become. Our DNA is the articulation of our core values and beliefs that form the mission of this community.

Through many, many conversations and a lot of deep listening, we discerned key ideas about who we are and who we are becoming. We found that we believe in the power of community and belonging; that we deeply value openness and acceptance; that we gather for spiritual growth. We also know that we express these values and beliefs through music and arts; justice and witness; compassion and caring; knowledge and learning. All of this in service to a mission that in many ways has been our mission from the start:

We are a community that invites you to awaken to love.

We are an invitation. Collectively and individually we invite each other and the world to awaken to love. It is really that simple, and really that life changing, life transforming. It is a call to a different way of being in the world. It is a call to relationship. It is a call to awaken to the love of self, the love of others, and the love that permeates the universe. It is an active invitation - one that can be declined, sure (but why would you?!), it is one that can be made again and again.

This is soul-stretching work. It requires us to be deeply intentional, deeply trusting, deeply loving. It requires us to be vulnerable. It requires us to hold each other in care and compassion. It requires each of us to be present — to show up and speak our heart's deepest yearnings, our heart's deepest stories. And it is work that we can do, that you can do.

Having accepted this invitation, I can assure you that it will be a glorious night, whether rain falls or not, whether the game is played or not, whether what we came for is what we leave with. We will be together, awakening to love, and we will transform the world.

With Great Love,

Greg.

2017 Board Nominees

David Bonner

The Bonner's have been coming to Mill Creek since 1996 and signed the membership book on June 7, 1998. Over the years David has contributed to Mill Creek in a number of ways. First, he regularly set up chairs for Sunday morning services at the old CACC building. Shortly thereafter, Frank MacArtor lassoed David into the Finance committee, where he served until 2009. While serving on the Finance committee (and before we had a paid administrator to help), David set up the processes and the QuickBooks accounting system still used today. He set up the original sound system and security system in the new building, and led the building restoration after the 'big flood'. Since 2005 David has been soliciting bids and is the behind-the-scenes computer person for our annual service auction, and is always willing to help the church office with various computer issues. David has been a regular RE teacher since his children Stephanie and Kaitlin started at Mill Creek over 20 years ago.

Ram Ray

Ram is a new member who has jumped into service at Mill Creek with the Stewardship and Planning Team. He is a development communications professional with more than 30 years of experience in journalism, political campaigns and health care associations including wide-ranging experience in patient advocacy, consumer education, and medical education, and a successful track record in winning grants from \$5,000 to one million from corporations and foundations. He most recently served as development consultant, Christiana Care, Newark Delaware, National Medical Fellowships, New York and grant writer, Association of American Medical Colleges, Washington, DC. Ram previously managed corporate and foundation relations for the National Marrow Donor Program, Washington, DC and National Alzheimer's Association, Chicago.

Helen Springer

Helen Springer joined Mill Creek in May of 2016 after moving to Kennett Square with her husband, John, to be near their daughter's family. Helen has been a UU for 19 years and has served in a variety of capacities in three congregations in three states. She has been a Board member and has worked on or led various committees including: Finance, Welcoming Congregation, Chalice Circle, Sunday Services, Stewardship, Called Minister Search, Social Justice, Denominational Affairs, Sabbatical, Religious Education, Committee on the Ministry, and Long Range Planning. She has also been a worship associate. At Mill Creek, Helen serves on the Membership Committee, Hospitality Team 2, and is a Chalice Circle participant.

Committee Reports

ADULT RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION (ARE)

The ARE program was inactive at the end of this church year. This program presents an opportunity for re-imagining and revitalization with new formats, scheduling, and content. ARE has the potential to enrich the experience of Mill Creek members and enhance our service offerings. However, ARE does not have to meet every week, and the early Sunday morning schedule was challenging for many members. Hopefully, a mix of new and old volunteers will emerge to continue the program next year.

--Submitted by Jack Guerin

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

David Bonner and Jamie Kegerise, Co-Chairs

Members of the "RE-Imagineers" Working Group include Roberta Headley, Eileen Caldwell, Steve Selph, Ivonne Antongiorgi, Marina VanRenssen, MQ Riding, Tracy Morgan and Judy Pappenhagen.

We have had tremendous support and classroom help from our youth leaders including Kate Nolan, Grace Pelley and Malachi Redbird among others.

Adult help has been much appreciated and has come from a number of members and friends including Julia Smagorinsky, Maureen Rayburn, Seetha and Brian Coleman, Tracy and Joe Henderson, Jeanne Hanson, Kelly Sparrow, Jo Redbird, Vicki Tosh-Morelli, Adam Kegley and Reverend Greg.

We started this past August with an effort to get the kid's RE program back on track following the departure of our previous Director of Religious Exploration (DRE) Stefanie Anderson. This effort was largely led by our Board and MQ Riding was our fearless leader for the first few months.

Late this past fall, David Bonner and Jamie Kegerise were asked to co-chair this effort. Our focus has become more nature-centered, and we are calling our program "Butterfly Spirituality". We are teaching our children about our interconnectedness, our responsibility to the Earth and all its creatures, and about the ideas of growth and transformation.

Our children have been involved in outside activities including growing Milkweed and other native flowers to encourage Monarch butterflies and other pollinators to make their home in our meadow. In fact, our children have the "mission" of helping to save Monarch butterflies this year (and so many of our discussions have centered on the Monarch and its amazing migration and life-stages story).

A large part of our effort is to have adult supervision in place each Sunday, and also to create fun and meaningful lessons with an emphasis on venturing outside and enjoying Nature. Perhaps our most important measure of success is not the number of children, but the number of adults from

different generations and backgrounds who are willing to volunteer to help with RE. If we can foster connections between our kids and the adults of our church community, we will help our kids grow in knowledge and confidence.

When adults become involved our community is strengthened, our children are nurtured and quite often it's not just the kids doing the learning.

Parents are provided with a weekly take-home note that includes what was read and discussed during class and include reminders of upcoming RE events. The "Take Home" is an opportunity for parents to add to the lesson and to foster discussion between parents and their children.

We also provide a weekly communication about RE happenings to the UUSMC community through the weekly e-mail blast. A shorter note about classroom activities is included in most Sundays' "Order of Service".

Although our efforts to have the kids propagate Milkweed and other beneficial plants were utterly unsuccessful (through no fault of the kids), the children did plant a lovely Butterfly Garden this past Earth Day. Part of their normal Sunday routine now is to care for the garden, and that includes filling watering cans from our rain barrel that they helped to decorate (with the wonderful design and direction from Jo Redbird).

Since January we have held monthly "Family Fun Nights" usually the third or fourth Saturday of the month, in an effort to have fun and build friendship.

Upcoming activities include looking for the arrival of Monarch Butterflies and seeing if they lay eggs on our Milkweed plants. We hope to maybe have some of the kids raise Monarch babies at home, and we also hope to have a day this summer when we will collect and tag Monarchs.

The Simulated Monarch Migration will also be happening later this summer, and it is a chance for our children to communicate with kids from Mexico and Canada (our children will be goodwill ambassadors and will also share what we have been doing to help the Monarchs).

Mill Creek is currently seeking a Children's RE Coordinator which will be a part-time paid staff position. Our hope is that this person will add to our current efforts, and to help to move our program forward in a positive direction. We are also seeking a similar coordinator who will work with our youth and maybe young adults.

We affirm and promote our Seventh UU Principle, *Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*. What a wonderful idea to teach to our children, and what a great value for all of us to live.

We welcome comments and questions about our RE program to DRE@UUSMC.org.

--Submitted by Jamie Kegerise

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee is comprised of Adam Kegley, Bruce Koepcke, Bob Broesler, Lauri Rickard and Stephen Selph. We have met collectively with Rev. Greg regularly throughout the year

to review the financial position of UUSMC, review financial results to budget, and provide financial guidance to the Board. Additionally, we provided assistance in planning and implementation of changing the pledge year cycle and other general assistance with planning for annual pledge campaign. The Finance Committee is the best keep secret when it comes to fun church related meetings. Let us know if you think you might want to join our fun Committee.

--Submitted by Adam Kegley

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee members are Maggie McLaughlin, chairperson, Eileen Selph, and Helen Springer. Jack Guerin assists by providing visitor name tags and replacement name tags for members.

Our mission is to create a sense of belonging and investment for all who worship at Mill Creek. Our goals include implementing and supporting programs, services, and procedures to attract new members and retain existing ones. To that end in 2016 - 2017, the membership committee welcomed visitors by greeting them every Sunday, by providing name tags and literature about the church, by emailing visitors to thank them for their interest, by holding Visitor Receptions, and by meeting with repeat visitors to provide information about becoming involved and becoming a member of Mill Creek. In addition to ongoing outreach, in September, Eileen Selph and other volunteers represented Mill Creek at the Newark Community Fair on the Green at the University of Delaware. In March, Maggie attended a CERG workshop in Gettysburg, PA which focused on membership activities for small congregations.

Other responsibilities of the Committee are to provide greeters for Sunday worship, to coordinate coffee hour following the service, to coordinate membership ceremonies, to register members for congregational votes, to update the UUA of changes in membership and to provide an annual Congregational Report. In January of 2017, at the suggestion of Rev. Greg, the committee acted to combine greeter and coffee hour responsibilities by establishing Hospitality Teams that with the help of Mill Creek Chalice Circles provides greeting, food, and clean-up activities every Sunday.

Needs: It would be helpful to have more members on the committee to share responsibilities and provide additional outreach. It would be helpful to have volunteers who are committed to fulfill the needs of the hospitality teams.

--Submitted by Maggie McLaughlin

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Background

The committee members are Kristen Tosh-Morelli, Heather Doty (chair), Gordon Roth, Brian Hanson, Pam Allenstein, Rudy Nyhoff, and Catherine Kegley, with Rev. Greg and office administrator Debby Damiani as ex-officio members. Past-chair Andy Levin was on break from the committee this year. The committee meets monthly, generally via videoconferencing using Google Hangout. We generally have at least one in-person meeting during the year. We maintain a document on Google Drive for meeting agendas, which become the minutes after the meetings. We always welcome new voices, suggestions and members.

Service Music

Live music was provided for every Sunday service this church year, at Winter Solstice, and at most summer services. This year Big Music Sunday took a new form: Flash Choir! Held on April 23, Flash Choir featured three songs from the rock band Queen. It provided an opportunity for church members and friends to channel their inner rock star and join the choir for a fun few weeks. In addition, May 14's educational/ informational Hymn Sing was a collaboration of Rev. Greg Pelley and Music Director Kristen Tosh-Morelli, with the invaluable assistance of accompanist Pam Allenstein and the choir.

Outreach

This year was the third season of the Kaleidoscope Concert Series. Through this musical outreach program we provide high quality, professional concerts featuring regional musicians, with an eye for diversity in genre and style. Another objective is for Mill Creek to become known as a good venue for live music, among musicians and concertgoers alike. We advertised the series using electronic and print media at a variety of locations. The concert series is not a church fundraiser -- income has been used to support future concerts. We held three concerts this year, all highlighting the music and/or voices of women: Brandywine Baroque, Minas Brazilian Jazz, and Emma's Revolution.

Facilities

Matt Doty continues to take lead on operating the sound system during church services. He would like to recruit more volunteers to help on a regular basis (no experience necessary).

--Submitted by Heather Doty

PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care Team endeavors to be aware of, and follow up on, any issues (medical, emotional and otherwise) of congregation members, learned either through personal contact or from Joys and Sorrows. We can be reached any time through pastoralcare@uusmc.org or by calling the Minister or Administrator.

--Submitted by Brian Hanson

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Chair: Chitra Vaidy

Share Our Plate, half of the collection cash is donated each week to the following charities:

Sept-Oct: Unitarian Universalist Delaware Advocacy Network
November-December: Meeting Ground (helps homeless), MD & DE
January-February: Planned Parenthood, DE
March-April: Latin American Community, DE
May-June: Kennett Adult Literacy, PA
July-Aug: Arts Holding Hands and Hearts

Share our Supplies: donated many book bags filled with supplies to East Side Charter School.

Charity Gala Fundraiser- The dinner spearheaded by Chitra Vaidy raised over \$6,000 which went to children and families facing social injustice: Family Promise, Neighbors to Nicaragua, Kalanjyam Trust in India to help school girls, Cambodian Krama Yoga which helps poor women and girls, UUSC for Syrian refugees.

Share our Bounty: We donated 15 boxes of collected food to YWCA Homelife.

Heifer International: This project is run by Lauri Rickard for two Sundays in December, and all donations provide animals for people in need and are sent directly to Heifer.

Souper Bowl Sunday: Containers were provided during January, and returned to church with homemade soup the first Sunday in February. These are sold and all profits went to the Food Bank of Delaware.

Family Promise: Chitra organized Chalice Circles and others to provide hosts and two dinners each week that St. Mark's hosted the homeless families during the year. Food was also provided for breakfast and lunches.

Fair Trade: This project was run by Joanne Knowles to sell fair trade/Equal Exchange coffee, cocoa, candy bars and tea. This helps farmers and provides a small donation to UUSC and our church. This project will be run by Matt Nolan in the coming year.

Children's Books were collected for pediatric offices and food for the Food Bank all year.

Against death penalty: Letters were signed after church on May 21st, in connection with UUDAN, to prevent the death penalty passing in the Senate in Delaware.

Being White in the Black Lives Movement class was given by Linda Lucero and members of the committee are working with her as we move forward.

Planned Parenthood Luncheon: organized by Melissa Bryson, with information session.

Solar Panels: The committee is working with Matt Doty and others to pursue the installation of solar panels for our church.

--Submitted by Roberta Headley and Chitra Vaidy

SUNDAY SERVICES

Members of the Sunday Services Committee continue to assist Rev. Greg as Worship Associates each Sunday morning on a rotating basis. In addition, committee members oversee visiting speakers as well as providing lay sermons throughout the year when the minister is off. Committee members also meet with Rev. Greg periodically to review the service format and to brainstorm monthly service themes. In the coming year, we will be looking both for new members to assist in the Worship Associate role, and for new lay speakers, drawn from the congregation, who will have the opportunity to develop and present sermons with guidance from Rev. Greg.

--Submitted by Stephen Petersen