

# **Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek – Annual Meeting 2018**

“We are a community that invites you to awaken to Love”

June 10, 2018

## Agenda

1. Welcome – Judy Pappenhagen, president, Board of Trustees
2. Quorum Confirmation
3. State of the Society
  - Highlights and Recognitions
  - Committee Updates (via written report)
    - Adult RE - Karen Rege
    - Building Maintenance – John Springer
    - Chalice Circles – Joanne Knowles/Helen Springer
    - Finance - Adam Kegley
    - Generosity Committee – Fran Gulino
    - Hospitality – Diane Hofer
    - Membership – Maggie McLaughlin/Tracy Morgan
    - Music –Heather Doty
    - Pastoral Care – Brian Hanson
    - Religious Education – Jamie Kegerise
    - Social Justice – Chitra Vaidy
    - Sunday Services – Stephen Petersen
4. Budget Proposal, Discussion and Vote
5. Acknowledgement of outgoing 2017-2018 Board Members and Nominating Committee
  - Board of Trustees
    - Michele Cavanaugh, Seetha Colman-Kammula, Stephen Selph,
  - Nominating Committee
    - Mary Pat Knauss, Larry Stomberg, Vicky Tosh-Morelli
6. Election of incoming 2018-2019 Board Members and Nominating Committee
  - President
    - Judy Pappenhagen—nominated for (only) one more term
  - Board of Trustees – 2-year term
    - Melissa Bryson, Anna Hull, Stephen Peterson
  - Nominating Committee
    - Names here
7. Closing Words – Rev. Greg Pelley

## Letter from the President of the Board of Trustees

Dear Members and Friends,

We have been growing and growing up in many ways this year. Growing in people and resources and programs. And growing up in our commitment to our mission, our children and our community.

It is hard to believe now, but last year at this time we were looking at another year without a director of religious exploration, hoping to find one or maybe two very part-time coordinators to give our dedicated volunteers a break. And now look at us! We welcomed our wonderful Terry Vodery to partner with our awesome minister, Rev. Greg Pelley in spiritual leadership as a three-quarter time director of religious education in August. We received a grant from the UU Central District to help us stretch to full-time partnership with Terry, which happened in April.

We welcomed dozens of new members and friends (28 new members since July 2017) and increased our pledging households from 76 to 91, a 20% increase. Look around! Our average worship attendance is 81, up 29% over last year, our average religious education attendance is up 68% over last year and our average in the building on Sunday morning is 103 up 32% from last year. This kind of growth is an adjustment and there were and are a few bumps to smooth but all and all, we are heading in a lovely direction.

But growing in numbers does not tell the whole story. We are what I call “growing up.” After all we will be celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in February next year and 30 is really too old to claim adolescent angst. It is time to realize and celebrate the full-service congregation our founders envisioned.

- We installed solar panels, a long-held dream made possible by estate gifts and donations from our members. And now our yearly electric budget is Zero. Thank you for your leadership Matt Doty.
- We asked hard questions about our response to the call for racial justice with the *Waking Up White* workshop, “The Stain” play, “Dear Martin” Letters to Martin Luther King, and the All-church read and discussion of *Just Mercy*. Our Black Lives Matter banner is only a beginning, but it is a grown-up move for a church that, in the past, was shy about public statements. Thank you Chitra Vaidy, Mary Higgins, Rev. Greg, Jack Guerin, Gladys Smith and Linda Lucero.
- We conducted a professional assessment of our meadow and have weekly maintenance teams working to increase sustainable enjoyment of this precious resource. Thanks to Richard Lyon and Pam Allenstein, Jamie Kegerise, John Springer, Amy White, Brian Coleman, and all who have volunteered their time as stewardships of our meadow.
- We launched our new church communication and management software REALM to help us transition to efficiency, transparency and enhanced congregational community. Yes, we are still learning but the possibilities are inspiring.
- For the first time in a number of years we enjoyed a children’s Christmas play called “The Year Mrs. Claus Saved Christmas,” which had some very grown-up messages. Children and Adults enjoyed our Deck the Halls Holiday Party. We can’t forget our fabulous chili cook-off which kicked off the generosity campaign. And speaking of generosity, our annual service auction raised \$22,300 in 4 hours!

- Our hospitality endeavors have expanded (no longer under Membership) with a new team headed by Diane Hoffer.
- I haven't mentioned much worship or religious exploration which I will leave to Rev. Greg's and Terry's letters below. But I remember with pride the blessing of the animals, the prayer wall altar, our focus on spiritual practices and our traditional Big Music Sunday.

Music, Art, Spirit, Community, Learning, Laughing—oh and eating. We have shared much this year. I am truly grateful for every person--the tall and the small--who chooses once or again and again to enter into the Mill Creek experience and look forward to next years' many invitations to Awaken to Love.

In service and gratitude,  
Judy Pappenhagen, President

### **Letter from Minister (attached separately)**

### **Letter from The Director of Religious Exploration**

Dear Mill Creek Friends:

I am filled with gratitude for the support and care you have shown the Religious Education program (and me, personally) during the time I have served as your R. E. Director. On September 10, 2017, I publicly accepted the responsibility to serve this congregation according to our shared principles. I give particular attention to our fourth principle - affirming a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. I take this responsibility seriously and it is my mission to facilitate appropriate opportunities for people of all ages to learn and to explore in a safe, friendly environment. I have learned that Mill Creek has always been a spiritual home for many, filled with family and friends who nurture strong relationships. This year, in particular, it has become a safe harbor and a welcoming community to many. For this I am most grateful.

#### **HERE ARE SOME 2017-2018 YEAR RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Served 46 total children and youth between ages 4 and 18
- Enjoyed an average Sunday morning attendance of 28 children and youth plus 6 adult volunteers
- Served children and youth from 3 states and 14 schools (including 3 home-schooled)
- Introduced Jane Goodall's Youth Service Program ("Roots and Shoots") for elementary school-aged participants
- Performed an original play for the congregation at Christmas
- Held a peace march in the park
- Provided a complete 10-month Coming-of-Age Program for 8 Youth including 4 field trips, ongoing instruction and mentor meetings
- Sent 8 Youth on a weekend retreat with UU Youth from other congregations in NJ and NY
- Held a potluck "Central Asian Banquet" to raise awareness for the state of education for women and girls in Central Asia
- Children raised \$230 for the Central Asia Institute
- Led Earth Day worship Services
- Welcomed Dustyn Thompson of Delaware United to talk to our youth about the impact they can make in the public square

- Enjoyed the time, talents and energy of 21 committed volunteers and instructors. We could not have done it without them!

These are just some of the highlights of our program to date. All these things (and more) we are able to deliver because of the willingness and generosity of the Mill Creek congregation.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

### **Expanded Programs...**

- I am particularly excited about the addition of Adult Religious Exploration (ARE) to my responsibilities. Religious Exploration is for everyone from children through Senior Adults. There is already a solid programmatic foundation set in place for ARE at Mill Creek. For this, I thank Karen Rege, who has given a great deal of her time and care. I welcome the opportunity to continue to develop this program which has great potential.
- Parent Workshops to support those who would like further materials, information and resources on raising UU children and liberal religious education

### **Serving a More Diverse Community...**

- We are looking into using social media and marketing to share information about our programs with a wider audience – particularly in those demographics with low to zero representation at Mill Creek.
- We are also seeking projects and opportunities for activities with other communities of faith - as well as justice making organizations - to make an impact on our community. We'll continue our search for volunteer instructors who speak ASL and/or Spanish. This is a priority.

### **Empowering and Supporting our Volunteers and Instructors...**

- There will be training opportunities throughout the year for our volunteers and instructors including First Aid Training, sessions on faith development stages, and classroom management. Teacher Orientation for 2018-2019 will be held in July.

Thank you (again) for allowing me to direct and develop this wonderful program. We are proud to be a resource for religious education and exploration for this community. The RE-Imagineers Committee and I look forward to another year in service to Mill Creek and to the larger community. I know we will continue to accomplish great things together as we learn more deeply, what it means to truly “Awaken to Love.”

Respectfully Submitted,  
Terry R. Vodery  
Director of Religious Exploration

## **Committee Reports**

### **ADULT RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION (A.R.E.)**

The Adult Religious Exploration A.R.E., saw significant growth this year. In addition to Rev. Greg's Listening to Our Lives program, several others were added including a Shared Pulpit workshop, a *Waking Up White* book discussion, and a music and imagery workshop. In the fall, the Spirit in Practice curriculum from UUA was offered pre-service on Sunday mornings. In the spring, the first half of the Faith Like A River curriculum was offered pre-service with plans to continue it in the fall.

A group that included Rev. Greg and Terry Vodery, along with 5 others mounted a congregational survey in October 2017 and has been working to develop a full curriculum for next year based on feedback from congregants that ties to the mission and vision of Mill Creek. The new comprehensive program will feature a variety of topics including UU history, spiritual practices, social justice, environmental issues, arts, and world religions delivered as workshops, discussion, retreats, and one day events.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Rege

### **BUILDING AND GROUNDS**

Last October Richard Cronin resigned his post as chair of Building and Grounds. We wish to thank him for all the great work he did over several years, especially leaving signs and notes everywhere so that those following in his footsteps would know the way. John Springer assumed the position, spending several hours with Dick getting to know the ropes. A cadre of folks have signed up to help and they had and will have many opportunities to meet the church's needs. Many hours have been spent power washing, changing lightbulbs, gardening, fixing toilets, cleaning the mechanical room, rearranging the closets, getting the heating system functioning properly, and many other tasks.

Submitted by John Springer

### **CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION**

We have experienced exciting changes and have met new and wonderful children and young people. We are especially blessed to have 21 dedicated adult teachers and volunteers to guide and nurture our young people. The Children and Youth RE Committee, or the "RE-Imagineers" as we sometimes call ourselves, works to support the efforts of our amazing Director of Religious Exploration, Terry Vodery. Our main effort has been to seek and encourage new adult volunteers, and to provide recognition for our teachers and classroom assistants. We also are helping to plan intergenerational Family Social Nights throughout our church year. Our hope is that all of our adults will spend at least one Sunday out of the church year getting to know our delightful children and youth.

Submitted by Jamie Kegerise

## **CHALICE CIRCLES (SMALL GROUP MINISTRY)**

Note: Joanne Knowledges is stepping down from organizing our chalice circles, a role she has handled with aplomb for many years. Thank you, Joanne! And thanks to Helen Springer to stepping up.

The Chalice Circle program began at Mill Creek in 2005 and continues to thrive due to the Circle Facilitators, Coordinators and members who create a comfortable environment for the sharing of stories, experiences, and ideas in order for people get to know each other on a deeper level and develop a richer spirituality.

Currently, a total of 48 people are active in our five Chalice Circles. And recently, the focus has been on developing the newly formed Daytime Circle.

This year, various Chalice Circles provided Sunday coffee hour snacks, brought food and hosted for Family Promise, and were involved in other activities as part of their commitment to serve the church and the wider community.

Since the existing Circles are all near or at capacity, it is likely that at least one new Chalice Circle will be formed in the coming year.

If anyone would like to know more about the Chalice Circle program or is interested in joining a Circle, please contact Helen Springer at [helen\\_springer@msn.com](mailto:helen_springer@msn.com) or 484 999-4582.

Submitted by Joanne Knowles and Helen Springer

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The Finance Committee is comprised of Adam Kegley, Bruce Koepcke, Bob Broesler, and Stephen Selph. We meet with Lauri Rickard, our dedicated volunteer bookkeeper and Rev. Greg regularly throughout the year to review the financial position of Mill Creek, review financial results to budget, and provide financial guidance to the Board. Additionally, we provided assistance in planning and implementation of change 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

## **GENEROSITY COMMITTEE**

Last fall, the Generosity committee worked together to support two new initiatives.

First, we moved the pledge campaign to the fall so that it would not overlap with the auction, and it would also become separated from the annual budget meeting. This was done with the purpose of trying to separate pledging from somehow meeting or not meeting the annual budget.

Second, we hosted the first ever Chili Cookoff dinner, which acted as the kickoff for our pledge campaign. There were over 12 different kinds of chili and as many judges as there were hungry diners.

Our campaign resulted in a total of 91 pledges and \$181,150 pledged for 2018.

Submitted by Fran Gulino

## **HOSPITALITY TEAM REPORT**

Note: Formerly part of the Membership Team responsibilities, Hospitality is now its own team, thanks to the able leadership of Diane Hofer. Thank you, Diane! (Judy P.)

- Finalized a comprehensive Greeter Responsibilities document and a more organized Hospitality Hour food & beverage task list document.
- Sending out an initial advance reminder Email two-weeks in advance to the team that is scheduled, as well as, a reminder to the Chalice Circle leaders who will be providing food for that week.
- A follow up reminder is being sent out on Tuesday to the team members that are scheduled to serve on Sunday, as well, as the Chalice Circle Leader so they can make final arrangements for the food.
- Determined which of the current hospitality team members were interested in continuing to serve.
- Worked to assign congregation members that have expressed an interest in serving on one of the teams.
- Now that we have the teams adjusted with the current and new members we are starting to recruit additional team members especially from the newest members of Mill Creek.
- We need to identify at least two new Hospitality Team leaders.
- Created updated Brochures covering various aspects of the Mill Creek community.

Submitted by Diane Hofer

## **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Note: Thank you Tracy for stepping up as leader for this critical team. (Judy P.)

The Membership Committee thanks our long-time committee chair, Maggie McLaughlin, for her outstanding, faithful and spirit-led service to UUSMC, and we wish her the best on the next leg of her journey. We have had a successful year welcoming many new people into our community. We have been experimenting with new ideas over the past year including the Welcome Visitor center and name tags. We will continue trying out new ideas, keeping what works and learning from what doesn't.

Submitted by Tracy Morgan

## **MUSIC COMMITTEE**

### **Background**

The committee members are Kristen Tosh-Morelli, Heather Doty (chair), Gordon Roth, Brian Hanson, Pam Allenstein, and Rudy Nyhoff, with Rev. Greg and office administrator Debby Damiani as ex-officio members. The committee meets monthly, most months 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 for Big Music Sunday we returned to the traditional recital format.

### **Facilities**

Matt Doty and Dorian Pyle take lead on operating the sound system during church services. The Music Committee would like to recruit more volunteers to help with the sound system on a regular basis (no experience necessary--training will be provided).

Submitted by Heather Doty

## PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care Team shares with the Minister all the functions related to pastoral care:

- \* In-home and hospital visitation
- \* Cards, phone calls and e-mails
- \* Prepared meals delivered
- \* Transportation to appointments or errands

The team becomes aware of pastoral care needs through Sunday Joys and Sorrows, calls to the Minister, e-mails to [pastoralcare@uusmc.org](mailto:pastoralcare@uusmc.org), and word of mouth.

Submitted by Brian Hanson

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

**Share our Plate** - half of collection on Sundays sent to these organizations every month or two:

Family Promise, Arts Holding Hands and Hearts, Delaware Theater Outreach, Meeting Ground, UUDAN, Kingswood Community Center, Planned Parenthood, and Coalition to Dismantle the New Jim Crow.

**Souper Bowl Sunday** - all profits to Food Bank of Delaware

**Family Promise (homeless families)** - provide breakfast and lunch items, and dinners on two nights for three weeks during the year at St. Mark's Church.

**Share our Supplies** - sell book bags and collect school supplies, donated to East Side Charter School in Wilmington.

**Share our Bounty** - collected non-perishable food over several weeks, donated half to YWCA Homelife and half to Food Bank in Kennett.

**Share our Warmth** - collected gloves, mittens, hats, scarves and donated to homeless.

**Fair Trade** - sold fair trade coffee, teas, cocoa and chocolate. This helps farmers, UUSC and our church, run by Matt Nolan.

**Heifer International** - Donations taken on two Sundays in December by Lauri Rickard to provide animals for people in need, sent to Heifer.

**Ongoing Collection Bins in cloakroom:**

Children's books collected and taken to medical offices underprivileged children/patients.

Food & non-perishable items to donate to the Food Bank of Delaware.

All-church read of *Just Mercy*, and discussion at pot luck lunch.

Submitted by Roberta Hedley and Chitra Vaidy (chair)

## 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

## BOARD NOMINEES

### Melissa Bryson

Melissa Bryson found her home with Mill Creek in August 2015 when the congregation shared their plate with Planned Parenthood of Delaware. New to Delaware with her husband Steven, a new hire at PPDE, fresh out of graduate school, and looking for a community- seeing the generosity from Mill Creek was a timely sign to get involved! And that first visit? Welcomed with smiling faces, open hearts, and that beautiful sun-filled, window abundant sanctuary?! Oh, it was a done deal. Since then, she has joined the Choir, the Stewardship Committee, and continues to be grateful for the members of Mill Creek and the many gifts they share with each other as well as the greater community. Melissa looks forward to growing with other UUSMC members and friends, as they reach for new goals and achieve new successes together.

### Anna Hull

Anna Hull started coming to Mill Creek in the summer of 2017 and became a member not long thereafter. Before that, she was a member of the UUFN for more than 10 years. She has been active in the RE program of both congregations and served on the landscape committee and the leadership development committee at the UUFN, where she also lead and participated in chalice circles and hosted multiple workshops while serving on the transition team and ministerial search committee. ***Her favorite contribution to the UUFN was always to cook pancakes the morning after youth lock-ins!*** She loves leading workshops and working with young children and currently helps out with the chalice children at Mill Creek once a month. Her husband, Chris Hull also attends Mill Creek and their daughter Nora just completed the Coming of Age Program.

### Stephen Petersen

The Petersen family joined Mill Creek in 2005. Since 2006, Stephen has served as a co-chair of the Sunday Services Committee, performing a variety of functions both in front of the congregation (Worship Associate, speaker) and behind the scenes (planning, scheduling, etc.). He has helped to oversee minister sabbaticals and summer services and to provide continuity in services during gaps between ministers. In 2013 he was part of the Mission Vision Values task force at Mill Creek. He was also part of the search committee that brought Rev. Greg Pelley to the church. An art historian, writer, and curator, he has taught at University of Delaware, University of Pennsylvania, and George Washington University, and is currently preparing his fifth exhibit as Guest Curator for the University of Delaware Museums, scheduled for fall 2019.