

# **Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek – Annual Meeting 2019**

*We are a community that invites you to awaken to Love.*

June 2, 2019

## Agenda

1. Welcome – Judy Pappenhagen, president, Board of Trustees
2. Quorum Confirmation
3. State of Society
  - Highlights and Recognitions
  - Committee Updates (via written report)
    - Book Group – Deanna Koepcke
    - Building & Grounds Maintenance – John Springer
    - Chalice Circles – Helen Springer
    - Finance – Adam Kegley
    - Generosity Team
    - Hospitality – Diane Hofer
    - Membership – Tracy Morgan
    - Music – Heather Doty
    - Natural Lands Stewards – Jamie Kegerise
    - Pastoral Care – Brian Hanson
    - Social Justice – Roberta Headley
4. Budget Proposal, Discussion and Vote
5. Acknowledgement of outgoing 2018-19 Board Members and Nominating Committee
  - Board of Trustees
    - Helen Springer, David Bonner, Ram Ray
  - Nominating Committee
    - Seetha Coleman, Steve Selph, Mary Pat Knauss
6. Election of incoming 2019-20 Board Members and Nominating Committee
  - Board of Trustees – 2-year term
    - Larry Dickerson, Lemaine Peo, John Springer
  - Nominating Committee
    - Helen Springer, David Bonner, Ram Ray
7. Closing Words – Rev. Gregory S. Pelley

## Letter from the President of the Board of Trustees, Judy Pappenhagen

Dear Beloved Millcreek Community,

This was a year of settling in and celebrating our past. Yes, we looked to the future, but future did not look back the way we had hoped.

We welcomed 13 new members. Our pledging households grew from 91 to 99. Our average building attendance on Sunday mornings held steady. We had a very successful generosity campaign of \$195,146 with 99 pledging units compared to the prior year pledges of 182,810 and 94 pledging units. Our service auction brought in \$17,482. However, we did not see last year's membership growth repeated. Both newer members and friends AND longer-term members and friends did stay as involved as we would have liked.

We did welcome back old friends for a wonderful evening of fellowship and inspiration as we took the opportunity of our 30<sup>th</sup> birthday to celebrate our heritage. We marked 30 years as a chartered Unitarian Universalist society. 51 adults started this church in 1989. And nine of those founders are with us today: Esther Steffens; Pat Loeffelholz; Fran Loeffelholz; Judy Cronin; Joanne Hartline; Tom Hartine; Gordon Roth; Doris Roth; Bea Webb. From the beginning, our founders wanted to be a full-service congregation. And we have done that. We are just on the cusp of being a smallish church of 149 members to the next level of 150 members.

The settling in part comes when it became evident that we have been staffing for the future, a future envisioned to be a significantly bigger church. And settling in to our current reality—that is we are not growing by leaps and bounds—means we had to make some difficult decisions. The growth from many directions that allowed us to fund a full-time director of religious education did not stick. Today's actual participation of children and youth is averaging 19 which includes the Our Whole Lives youth program. Each family has its own reasons for falling away which we may never really know.

Despite this setback, our programs with the help of dedicated volunteers and staff are still strong. Please read the minister's letter and the letter from our director of religious education. Some highlights of the year are below:

- Poolside theology summer worship series
- Tree planting and natural lands stewardship of our meadow
- Waking up White workshop
- Shared pulpit workshop
- Blue Christmas program for those feeling loss
- Generosity campaign and chili cook-off
- Second Sunday potlucks
- Wednesday evening art
- Deck the halls holiday party
- Sock hop intergenerational party
- Gift wrapping fundraiser (Freedom for Girls)
- Consent video produced by Our Whole Lives Sexuality class (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders)

- Listening to our Lives
- Faith Like a River
- Spirit in Practice
- Solar Project saved over \$3,500
- Social justice projects: Share our plate, share of warmth, share our bounty, share our supplies and more...

Next year we will look at ourselves and our current situation with more clarity, communication and discernment. How are we going to live our mission and values? How can we do more for the community? What truly matters to this congregation. We will look at how to set our goals in a way that everyone who walks in the door understands where we are going and is invited to take a journey with us. A journey of committed, settled, vibrant, energetic, and compassionate people who work hard to be a community that invites you (us) to awaken to Love.

Thank you for being a part of our Mill Creek Community and all you do.

With love and gratitude,

Judy Pappenhagen, president, Board of Trustees

## Letter from Lead Minister, Rev. Gregory S. Pelley

Dear Friends,

Every month I have a telephone conference with three colleagues with whom I attended Meadville Lombard Theological School. We studied together, grew together, graduated, cleared the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, and searched for our first pulpits together. In other words, the four of us have been on parallel journeys into our ministries. So, we talk each month and reflect together on how it has been going.

I found an essay by Israel Gallindo many years ago called “Staying Put,” in which he outlined the first ten years of a parish minister’s call to a church. He writes about the challenges and joys from “which door does this key open?” to the dangers of burnout on a year by year basis. So, each year, my group and I take out the essay and read the part about the year we are in — a kind of check-in to see where Gallindo’s essay has it right, or where our experience differs. Mostly Gallindo has it right.

This year, we (you and I) are completing our fifth year of ministry together. In Gallindo’s essay, he calls the fifth year of ministry the “Latency Year.”

*Latency: the state of existing but not yet being developed or manifest.*

I’ve always had a kind of fascination with the growth rings of a tree made visible when a tree is cut down. As a child, my grandmother taught me to count the rings on the tree stump. She taught me that one ring was made up of both the light and dark wood. To learn how long the tree had lived I had to count the rings from the outside edge into the center. One ring per year.

I would count by years and pause when I knew it was a significant (to me) year. The year I was born. The years my sisters were born. The year my parents got married. My grandmother would tell me the year my father was born, and I would find it on the stump. If the tree was old enough, we could go back to the year she was born. Sometimes even further — looking into the past trying to imagine what history that tree had grown through.

I also learned that you could tell something about the conditions that the tree was growing in by looking at the width, the thickness, of the rings. Thick rings indicated robust growth, probably following a good period of healthy rain and temperatures that were not too hot or too cold. Thin rings indicated leaner years: drought, heat, a struggle to stay alive.

Sometimes, a series of thin rings indicated that there were other trees or plants crowding the tree, competing for resources. When the rings became thick again it usually meant that the competitors had been removed, the conditions changed and there was another burst of growth.

As I write this, it is raining outside my home in Landenberg. It’s been raining a lot lately. I suspect that this will be a robust growth year for the trees that surround my house. But, it could also happen that this is the last rain we’ll have for awhile, and this would end up being a lean year.

Many years from now, someone might cut down one of these trees and be able to discern how 2019 ended up - growth or lean. Of course, all this fascinating discovery is predicated on the tree

being cut down at the end of its life. We can only look back and see which were the growth years and which were the lean years at the end. We cannot ever do that in the present moment, or predict it into the future.

I have witnessed churches go through these growth years and the lean years. The growth years when everything seems to go right and there are an abundance of resources and energy and they burst forth and become more than they have ever been before. And, too, the lean years when resources are scarce and they get anxious about surviving, much less growing.

Then there are the years in between. The ones where things are just about average, when everything is moving along but the growth isn't obvious, isn't abundant. The thing to remember about those middling years is that the church (and the tree) is still growing. It is still becoming the thing it was created to be. It's just not as obvious as the extremes.

These are the latent years. The years in which the church is existing, but is not yet fully developed, fully manifest. These are the years where the wise leaders of the church know not to fall into the anxiety of scarcity, and not to jump into the exuberance of growth.

The latent years are the years where the congregation initiates creative programs and ministries. Leaders put forth challenging changes. The congregation takes inventory of its ministry skills and sets agenda to prepare for the next stage of growth.

As I have written in these letters in the past, the kind of work we need to do as a church 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.

This congregation has done amazing things in the last 30 years. I say 'amazing' particularly because none of it **had to happen**. This is an organization and a religious home that is built simply from the will of the people who made it happen.

We have grown. We have built. We have learned. We have become a strong group of people that care for one another and care for the larger world. And we have dreams. We aspire to a larger life — one that expresses our deep interconnectedness with the world. One that embodies all we know to be true about this life, and all we don't yet know.

As we continue to do so, we must always remember who we do this work for:

We are for those we have not yet met.

For the people who move through their lives with a sense that something is missing, but not sure what it is or where to look for it.

For the child who is discovering a deep disconnection between who she's told she's supposed to be and who she knows herself to be.

For the man who fell off a ladder and is being prescribed a pill that will form an addiction hell in which he will lose himself.

For the new parents.

For the ones who have never known what it feels like to fit.

For the ones who have never cared to fit at all.

For the ones who have glimpsed the transformative power of open-hearted vulnerability, but are still too afraid to step into it.

For the ones on the edges, the borders between oppression and freedom.

For all those who wrestle with discovering and living into their authentic life.

For the young child who, perhaps for the first time, is discovering the overwhelming sense of joy that accompanies wonder, as she looks into the starry night, or as he feels the pull of the ocean tide.

For the all those who are lonely and have never been invited to awaken to love.

As I mentioned in a sermon a few months back, there is a proverb that says:

*“The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. ...*

*The second best time is now.”*

One day, long into the future, someone will be able to look at the growth rings of Mill Creek and notice the years we were lean, the latent years, and the years where our growth rings are wide, where we make manifest our mission:

***to be a community that invites you to awaken to love.***

With deep love,

Rev. Greg.

## Letter from the Director of Religious Exploration, Rev. Terry R. Vodery

Dear Mill Creek Congregation:

Thank you for allowing me to present this report for the 2018-2019 Religious Exploration Program at Mill Creek.

We began the RE year in July '18 by holding separate class team planning meetings. Three volunteers (Joe Snader, David Bonner, and Jamie Kegerise) attended off-site training to become certified "Our Whole Lives" Facilitators. In August, we held an "RE-Wide" Teacher Orientation Workshop with all volunteers and instructors together. During the Orientation, I presented class schedules, a new Mill Creek RE Handbook, Safe Sanctuaries Policies, brochures and guidelines for the Children's and Youth classes. We also updated background checks for all instructors and volunteers. The RE year launched in Mid-September and offered following classes:

**CHALICE CHILDREN:** The class used the UU preschool curriculum, "*We are Many... We are One.*" It was chosen because it gives children the opportunity to learn about Mill Creek and its traditions, as well as giving them freedom to express their own uniqueness. In addition to the curriculum, instructors emphasized themes of self-regulation and community throughout the year.

**ROOTS AND SHOOTS:** We welcomed ministerial intern, Heather Petit, to the teaching team. Heather Petit and Stephanie Reaves co-led the Roots and Shoots in their mission to engage in projects that make a positive impact on animals, the environment and people. Here are the projects they accomplished:

- Creating their own classroom covenant of Right Relations – an important step in learning leadership and clarifying their own expectations for a safe environment in their class.
- A Peace March
- A Movie Night to raise Funds for Jake's Diapers (offering environmentally safe diapering solutions for people in Puerto Rico). The group raised \$211.50.
- "Helping Lemurs" through the Madagascar Biodiversity Partnership
- A painted rock sale raising \$135 (and awareness) for the Partnership
- Creating and performing a skit to raise awareness for plastics and the environment.
- Meaningful time in the Mill Creek Meadow planting, identifying and learning.

**OUR WHOLE LIVES (O.W.L.):** During the 2018-2019 RE year, Mill Creek youth met faithfully following Sunday services to talk about a range of topics, including relationships, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality. Here's what they accomplished:

- Participants – and their trained facilitators – engaged in 25 workshops.
- Held a gift-wrapping fundraiser to raise \$331 in support of the organization, "*Freedom4 Girls,*"
- Donated hygiene products (30 cases of 80 count packages) to Mary Mother of Hope House in Wilmington (The products were supplied by an employee of Edgewell Personal Care, Inc., who learned about the Mill Creek O.W.L. group)

- Created a video about “consent.” This may be viewed on Mill Creek’s Facebook.

**YOUTH:** Individuals in grades 7-12 were invited to meet in the MacArtor Library Sundays during worship. They engaged in exercises such as

- Comparing UU’ism with other faith traditions
- Articulating their own personal values
- Watching and discussing a Ted Talk
- Discussing “What is love?” “What is truth?”
- Engaging in thought experiments such as “Seeing Beauty,” and “Seeing Who You will be 5 Years from Now.”

**ADULT RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION:** This year, we established a weekly, ongoing Sunday Morning R.E. class (always 9:15 to 10:15 Sunday Mornings in the MacArtor Library), which has been well-received. Coffee is always provided. The a.m. class engaged in the following series:

- UU Faith Like a River Series
- An Overview of the Bible (Series)
- UU Tapestry of Faith Spirit in Practice Series
- “Genesis for UU’s”

In addition to the weekly Sunday morning class, we also offered a Drumming Workshop with Pape Demba “Paco” Samb and the “Waking Up White,” book study and discussion series, led by Rev. Mary Higgins. Rev. Greg also separately offered the learning opportunities, *Listening to Our Lives* and *The Shared Pulpit*.

**The RE-Imagineers** met monthly to discuss and support volunteer recruitment, attendance, engagement, and basic Sunday morning needs for Children’s and Youth programs. The RE-Imagineers supported Family Fun Nights which were held the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month. Among these events included:

- S’Mores and Campfire Night
- Stone Soup Night (Everyone was invited to bring ingredients to make a big pot of Soup – to be sold Souper Bowl Sunday)
- Movie Night and discussion (We showed the movie “the Children’s March” - which is about the 1963 civil Rights March in Alabama)
- Congregation Wide Sock Hop Dance
- The RE-Imagineers also sent care packages to some of the college students and supported volunteer appreciations and recognitions.

## **MANY THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS**

It takes a lot of volunteer effort to make these things happen. Our volunteers work behind the scenes, preparing, executing, filling in where needed, and giving. Here is the list of volunteers who showed up this year to make it happen. They are:

**Volunteer Instructors and Facilitators:**

Ivonne Antongiorgi - Chalice Children Teacher  
Anna Hull - Chalice Children Teacher  
Chris Hull - Chalice Children Teacher  
Cathy Blanchet - Chalice Children Teacher  
Stephanie Reaves - Roots and Shoots Teacher  
Heather Petit - Roots and Shoots Teacher  
David Bonner - O.W.L. Facilitator  
Jamie Kegerise - RE-Imagineers Lead, O.W.L. Facilitator, All Around Awesome Guy who fills in wherever he's needed  
Jeanne Hanson - O.W.L. Facilitator  
Brian Hanson - O.W.L. Facilitator  
Joe Snader - O.W.L. Facilitator  
Melissa Bryson - O.W.L. Facilitator  
Jack Guerin - Youth Meeting Facilitator, Adult RE Instructor  
Manisha Antani – Youth Meeting Facilitator  
Rev. Mary Higgins - Adult RE Instructor  
Karen Rege - Adult RE Instructor  
Rev. Robert Broesler - Adult RE Instructor

**Additional Volunteers We Just Can't Forget:**

Eileen Selph and Brian Coleman – Bravely confronted the monumental task of classroom decluttering, cleaning and getting rid waste prior to the beginning of the RE Year!  
Amy White – Easter Morning Meadow Guide  
Lauren Rickard – Easter Morning Meadow Guide  
Lisa Steinberg – Bringing Vision and Expertise to the Upcoming “Summer of Science”  
Prakash Vaidy – DJ Extraordinaire  
Claire Kegerise – Thanks, for opening your home and making a fabulous dinner for the RE-Imagineers!  
Steve Selph – For delivering hygiene products to Mary Mother of Hope House and for providing donuts and snacks to make the O.W.L. class comfortable and enjoyable.  
Diane Hofer – Always there in a pinch when the children need extra snacks!  
John Springer – He's always there when we need a repair!  
Blythe Duffy – For all your supply runs to the dollar store!

Mill Creek, thank you (again) for allowing me to direct and develop this lovely program. The RE-Imagineers and I are happy to be a resource for religious education and exploration for this community.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Terry R. Vodery  
Director of Religious Exploration

## **BOARD NOMINEES**

### **Larry Dickerson**

I discovered my home with Mill Creek in Spring of 2017 when I randomly attended a Black Lives Matter course over a period of several weekends. As a Delaware resident for over 12 years, I started my journey to this UU community working in local government and now serving in field of addiction treatment as a Human Resources/Talent Acquisition professional. Originally from Virginia, and migrating across the country twice, I enjoy travel, openness and getting to know people of many backgrounds. As an animal rescue volunteer and environmental activist, my political interests have been well nourished within Mill Creek. In my quest for personal growth and civic involvement, I've enjoyed getting involved with the Social Justice Committee, Family Promise Homeless initiative, and am looking forward to serving on the Board. I've found many liked minded people in this community; friends that I know I will have for the rest of my days, and I look forward to growing within this welcoming space. I officially joined Mill Creek in November 2017.

### **Lemaine Peo**

Lemaine Peo began attending Mill Creek in July 2017 and became a member in the autumn of the same year. Prior to that, she attended UUFN for a year, after several years without a spiritual home. At Mill Creek, Lemaine is a member of the choir and a Chalice Circle and serves on the Hospitality Team. Lemaine enjoys the warm Mill Creek community and the many opportunities for connection in such activities as book groups and religious education workshops.

Lemaine devoted the last decade of her career to non-profit operations management, having held the Director of Operations position at the Nature Conservancy's Delaware chapter and that of Chief Administration Officer at American Red Cross—Delmarva Region. She also has worked as a high school and middle school social studies teacher and as an interpreter for a Deaf middle school student. Additionally, she devoted several years to homeschooling her own children.

Lemaine's interests include hiking/walking, communing with Nature, meditation, reading, psychology, music, religion and spirituality, nutrition and herbal medicine, all things cat, and most importantly her family, including her new granddaughter. Recently she has also begun volunteering as a crisis line volunteer.

### **John Springer**

John Springer has been a UU since 1999 and member of four congregations. At the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fredericksburg in Virginia he served as Secretary and Vice President of the board, Chair of Social Concerns, Assistant Treasurer, and House Captain for Rebuilding Together. At the First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque in New Mexico, he served as Chair of the Social Justice Committee. At the Nature Coast Unitarian Universalists in Beverly Hills, Florida he served as Chair of the Welcoming Congregation Committee, Chair of the Long Range Planning Committee, and President of the Board. He is currently Chair of Building and Grounds and member of the Finance Committee, the Natural Lands Stewards Group, and the Service Auction Team. Since retiring in 1999 he has served as an officer on 7 nonprofit boards and as a member of 2 other boards. John and his wife Helen have been members of Mill Creek since January 2016.

## **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **Book Group**

Submitted by Deanna Koepcke

The Mill Creek Book Group meets six times a year on the third Tuesday in the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November. Members take turns bringing book suggestions, both fiction and nonfiction, which are voted on to determine our next read. Everyone is welcome.

### **Building & Grounds Maintenance**

Submitted by John Springer

Accomplishments to date over the past year include: replacing the water damaged exterior wall in the coat room; solving the water pipe freezing in the nursery; having maintenance done on major equipments; painting and cleaning as needed including the lampposts, rooms, and sidewalks; putting a TV in classroom 4 along with internet connection; putting up white boards in classrooms; replacing burnt out lights and fixtures both interior and exterior; and other tasks as requested or required.

A monthly Building & Grounds Chore Day was established along with the Natural Lands Stewards. It is on the first Saturday of the month from 9:00 till 12:00. All are welcome to participate in doing chores on our building, gardens, meadow, and forest. Afterwards we have lunch at a local cafe', The Perfect Cup, in Hockessin.

Many thanks to all who helped over the last year.

### **Chalice Circles**

Submitted by Helen Springer

Chalice Circles were initially established at Mill Creek in 2005. The program supports ongoing small groups that meet once or twice a month in which participants get to know others on a deeper level, augmenting and strengthening Sunday's experience. Circle Facilitators, Coordinators and members work to create a comfortable, welcoming environment for sharing stories, experiences, and ideas. Each Circle creates a covenant, an agreement shared among members concerning how they will be with each other, honoring confidentiality, welcoming differences of opinion, and listening to each other with open hearts.

Currently, we have 50 participants in 6 Circles. A new Thursday evening Circle was created last fall. There are openings in several Circles and we have been advertising for new members.

In this past year, 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.

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.

## **Finance**

Submitted by Adam Kegley

The Finance Committee met monthly during the 2018-2019 fiscal year reviewing the financial results of Mill Creek against budget. The Committee provided regular communication to the Board regarding actual financial results versus the budget. On a quarterly basis, the committee provided updated financial forecasts to the Board projecting the anticipated amount of operating reserve use for 2018-2019 fiscal year. Big thanks to John Springer, Lauri Rickard, Adam Kegley, David Bonner, Judy Pappenhagen, and Greg Pelley for all of their work this year! The Finance Committee is always looking for a new member or two to join us. We meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7pm at Mill Creek.

## **Generosity Team**

The Generosity Team put together a highly ambitious and highly successful pledge campaign for 2019. The campaign was kicked off with the Bring It! Chili Cook-off (II) on October 20. The team had ambitious goals: \$216,000 in pledges and 100 pledge units (households). When the dust settled at the end of the campaign, we had recorded **99** pledges for a total of **\$195,146!** This represents the highest pledging we have ever recorded, both in number of pledges and in amount. Also this year, we successfully introduced pledging levels named based on some of our core values: **Hope, Community, Justice, Peace, and Love.** The giving levels have given us a values-based way of acknowledging from where our contributions arrive.

We are grateful for every contributor to this church, your generosity of spirit as shown through your gifts of time, talent, and financial support are what makes real the mission of Mill Creek.

Generosity Team: Fran Gulino, David Bonner, Melissa Bryson, Fran Loeffelholz,  
Judy Pappenhagen, Ram Ray, and Stephen Selph

## **Hospitality**

Submitted by Diane Hofer

Advance reminder of Hospitality Service Email is being sent out two-weeks in advance of the service date to the team that is scheduled, as well as, a reminder to the Chalice Circle Snack Leaders who will be providing food for that week.

A follow up reminder Email is being sent out on the Tuesday before the service date to the team members that are scheduled to serve on the coming Sunday, as well, as the Chalice Circle Snack Leader so they can make final arrangements for the food.

We continue to recruit new Hospitality Team Members with varying degrees of success

Reorganized and cleaned up the church kitchen

Added an amplifier and speaker to the kitchen so that team members preparing for the post service snack or potluck lunch can hear what is going on in the sanctuary during the service.

Planned and Coordinated the Food and Beverage offerings for the Annual Service Auction. We were blessed to have a great team effort that provided an excellent experience for the Service auction participants.

Provided Hospitality support for other church functions as requested.

## **Membership**

Submitted by Tracy Morgan

This past year the Membership Committee set a vision to use national best practices for church growth based on an “Invite, Welcome, Connect” model then track the results. We also moved to a virtual committee rather than group meetings with people having tasks and roles that they can do without attending meetings. Because the most important time to welcome new people is the ten minutes after worship service, we set a goal of ten people who intentionally seek out new people or people standing alone after worship to engage them in conversation. We have seven people in this role so far. Thank you to Steve Selph, David Bonner, Jamie Kegerise, Roberta Headley, Eileen Selph, Bob Broesler and Fran Loeffelholz for making this part of your ongoing ministry. Thank you also to the Board for adding this to your ongoing ministry as you are able. And thank you to Diane Hofer for encouraging and supporting the formal Greeters on the Hospitality Committee as they also engage people as part of their role. The Membership Committee also focused on following up by letter, phone call and email to every person who visits the church and fills out the gold card insert. This follow-up puts them on our newsletter mailing list, checks to see if they have questions about our church, provides contact information and invites them to attend again. Debby Damiani and I are currently doing these tasks. We also prioritized education this year with a rotating set of four topics to learn about Mill Creek church, being a UU and its history, steps to membership and how to talk to someone you don’t know well yet. We had three new member ceremonies during the year, and the church is growing in both membership numbers and average Sunday attendance.

Next year we will continue to implement and solidify the “Invite, Welcome, Connect” approach and begin reporting the metric numbers to the Board. Please contact Tracy Morgan ([tmorgan@north-star-strategies.com](mailto:tmorgan@north-star-strategies.com)) if you would like to participate in this ministry.

## **Music Committee**

Submitted by Heather Doty

**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 via video conferencing. 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, Blue Christmas, Christmas Eve, and at every summer service. This year's Big Music Sunday featured UU musician and composer Jim Scott. (Next year we plan to return to a recital format.)

**Kaleidoscope Concert Series Fund** We closed out our Kaleidoscope Concert Series account this spring by making one-time donations to two arts organizations in the Wilmington area chosen by the Music Committee: \$1,000 to the Choir School of Delaware and \$880 to the Delaware Institute for the Arts in Education (DIAE).

**Facilities** Staffing the sound system with volunteers on Sundays continues to be a challenge. We have a small team of dedicated volunteers, but we are always looking for new people to join the group, especially over the summer. It is easy to learn how to use the sound system; training and written instructions are available. Generally, the responsibilities include muting and un-muting microphones with the touch of a button and adjusting the volume. Tending the sound system is a great way to help out while still attending services.

## **Natural Lands Stewards**

Submitted by Jamie Kegerise

Last fall we planted or transplanted about 25 trees in the corner of our property behind the parking lot next to the road. These all native species include oaks, maples, evergreens, tulip trees, a magnolia and a number of "volunteer" Sassafras trees. This past March we mowed the meadow, and we have since worked to remove and reduce invasive plants. On Easter/Earth Day, our RE kids planted over 50 native flowering meadow plants, and they distributed a number of "seed bombs" and individual seeds including Milkweed, Coneflowers and Black-Eyed Susan's. We invite members and friends to join us any Wednesday evening and the first Saturday of each month (9:00 AM to noon). We work together to maintain a healthy and beautiful meadow and woodland environment, and to keep our church grounds looking great and inviting.

## **Pastoral Care**

Submitted by Brian Hanson

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.

The team meets once or twice a year to check on the effectiveness of pastoral care delivery, and to plan for future needs or trends, for example, possible minister's sabbatical in future years.

## **Social Justice**

Submitted by Roberta Headley

**Family Promise:** Committee helps with Family Promise by hosting and fixing two dinners, breakfast and lunch items during the three different weeks each year that St. Marks' Church hosts, Tuesday and Thursday.

**Book Collection:** We collect and donate children's books to medical offices in Wilmington throughout the year.

**Share Our Warmth:** During the cold winter months we collect and distribute clothing items such as gloves, mittens, scarves, socks and hats to the homeless in downtown Wilmington.

**Souper Bowl Sunday:** We sell homemade soup on the first Sunday in February (Super Bowl Sunday). All proceeds go to the Food Bank of Delaware.

**Share Our School Supplies:** We sell school book bags for \$10 in the summer, and provide suggestions for school items to pack inside. The filled school bags go to Eastside Charter School at the beginning of the school year.

**Share Our Bounty:** We collect non-perishable food in November, and half goes to the Kennett (PA) Food Bank, and half to the YWCA Homelife (Wilmington, DE) which houses homeless women and children.

**Share our Plate:** Half of our undesignated plate offering is donated to charities. This past year we donated for two months to Unitarian Universalist of Delaware Advocacy Network (UUDAN), PFLAG, Planned Parenthood, and Meeting Ground (Maryland), and one month to each: Kingswood Community Center, Limen House, Delaware Theater outreach programs, and Arts Holding Hands and Hearts (Pennsylvania). This coming year starting in September we are donating for two months to: UUDAN, Planned Parenthood, PFLAG, Wings for Success, Sunday Breakfast Mission and Delaware Technical & Community College Food Pantry for needy students.