

Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek – Annual Meeting 2020

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

June 7, 2020

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 Religious Exploration – Karen Rege
 - Book Group – Deanna Koepcke
 - Building & Grounds Maintenance – John Springer
 - Chalice Circles – Helen Springer
 - Children’s & Youth Religious Education – John Springer
 - Finance – Adam Kegley
 - Generosity Team – Melissa Bryson
 - Hospitality – Diane Hofer
 - Membership – Tracy Morgan
 - Music – Gordon Roth
 - Natural Lands Stewards – Jamie Kegerise
 - Pastoral Care – Brian Hanson
 - Social Justice – Chitra Vaidy
4. Budget Proposal, Discussion and Vote
5. Acknowledgment of **outgoing/continuing** Board Members and Nominating Committee
 - Outgoing Board of Trustees
 - Judy Pappenhagen, Anna Hull, Stephen Petersen, Melissa Bryson
 - Continuing Board members
 - Susan Klugerman, Lemaine Peo
 - Nominating Committee
 - David Bonner, Helen Springer, Ram Ray
6. Election of **incoming 2020-21** Board Members and Nominating Committee
 - Board of Trustees
 - John Springer, President; Vicky Tosh-Morelli, Joe Snader & Ann Draper – 2-year term
 - Brian Coleman, 1-year term
 - Nominating Committee
 - Judy Pappenhagen, Anna Hull, Stephen Petersen
7. Closing Words, Rev. Greg Pelley

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

Dear Beloved Mill Creek members and friends,

Can we find certainty in an uncertain world?

Every year brings challenges and grace. Unexpected opportunities for our church community and unexpected blessings. No one imagined last July that today our small community would be facing a world-wide public health and economic crisis. On March 12, we regrettably closed our building, suspended worship, all rentals, and all in person meetings and classes in response to the global COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic and the need to shelter in place, physically distant from everyone except those in our immediate households. The good news is that our community is not, after all, a building.

Let me take you back to last summer... What an amazing start to the year when the call came to step up for children and youth. Over 30 volunteers came forward in support of our religious exploration program (RE) and we eagerly headed into the fall with a full roster of volunteers to support our now half-time director of religious education, Rev. Terry Vodery. When Rev. Terry resigned later in the fall, we were grateful for John Springer's leadership in helping with the transition. Our volunteers stayed involved, though low attendance of children and youth raised concerns as the year progressed.

The departure of our director of religious education was challenging, but also an opportunity to understand the dynamics and needs of the current program and also to acknowledge conflicts some of which were years in the making, but unaddressed. We brought in a UUA consultant Rev. Paula Cole Jones to lead a "What Now, What's Next?" Workshop attended by over 30 members and friends. A follow-up session did not happen, in part, due to the pandemic and closing of the building. Rev. Greg's careful documentation of the "What Now, What's Next?" conversation is available on request. The RE year ended with a successful adoption and launch of a church-wide on-line curriculum called Soul Matters to be available to families, teachers, congregants and staff.

Membership is relatively steady at about 150 adult members and we are grateful to Tracy Morgan for shepherding our process of engaging new faces. Please know there is a role for everyone to help promote and share our community of seekers to those who will appreciate our beacon of hope in a troubled world.

Financially, we had a major bump in the road when we had to cancel our annual Service Auction due to the pandemic. Every year we count on this one-evening event to raise \$15,000 to \$20,000. The good news is this loss was balanced out by steady annual pledge donations and money we didn't spend on paid staff for the children's religious exploration program. Thanks to everyone's generosity, we project our June 30 end of fiscal year will show a small surplus despite cancellation of the Service Auction and loss of rental income after the building closed. I am also pleased to announce that we have raised \$10,000 needed to open an Endowment Fund through the UUA.

Stay tuned for more on that program shortly. We are doing well financially as we close this year but we face unprecedented uncertainty in the coming year.

Our faithful Social Justice Team has led the congregation to support the work of Family Promise to keep homeless families together, to collect books to help harried families at medical offices, to provide warm clothing for people in need in downtown Wilmington. We continued our annual "Souper Bowl" Sunday donation to the Food Bank of Delaware, school supplies to Eastside Charter, Thanksgiving food drive for the Kennett Food Pantry and YWCA Home-Life Center. The Share Our Plate program collected over \$6,400 for nearby charities.

Our long-standing programs including Chalice Circle Small Group Ministry, Book Group, and Pastoral Care and others continued to bring joy and comfort to our congregation as well as challenge our joy and comfort when necessary. The board was pleased to support our stellar music program by bringing on a part-time paid choral accompanist, Savannah Klumpp, to join us for Sunday worship and choir rehearsals.

This year, board initiatives were focused on a theme: Engaging our Communities. We started with an external community activity by hosting a table at the Newark Days Community Festival. In November, we offered a Coffee in the Park to the soccer spectators. We printed our name and website on the cup, but then offered free coffee in the spirit of a friendly neighbor without any expectations. Of course, conversations did ensue, some with gratitude and some with agendas.

In the spirit of engagement, we had our first mid-year all congregation meeting in January to update the congregation and make needed course corrections. Other activities that supported engagement was our Adult Religious Exploration program including classes and drop-in sessions. Our winter holiday gatherings including celebrating the Equinox and Solstice observations, Christmas Eve, and Blue Christmas for those facing grief or sadness at this time of year created space for both celebration and comfort. Rev. Greg offered a stellar sermon to our neighbors at the Newark interfaith Thanksgiving service.

This spring was a challenge to say the least as we all stayed home, in shock as our building was closed, and it was deemed unsafe to gather in person. I am tremendously proud and grateful to our staff and volunteers who worked hard to shift gears to the new reality and created ways to connect and even grow during this time. Rev. Greg with Kristen and Debby worked tirelessly to create a new way to do church. Our sense of community was bolstered by groups and individuals reaching out to call or video chat with their fellow congregants. Coming of Age, Shared Pulpit, Artist's Way, and Chalice Circle programs continued as virtual interaction through the online platform Zoom.

I do want to stop here to call out some folks for special recognition. This is always tricky among so many dedicated volunteers. None-the-less, I am very pleased to call out for the record:

- Melissa Bryson – for leading the Generosity Campaign and all-around cheerleading when we needed it most, including work for Newark Community Days and Coffee in the Park.
- Larry Dickerson – for pushing us to move from idea to action in community engagement
- Fran Gulino — for organizing our dinner celebrations, both food and games
- Anna Hull – for keeping the board honest about what we said we should do and always jumping in to help with events
- Roberta Headley -- for many years serving as the cornerstone to the Social Justice Team as secretary and coordinators of countless collections for the community, while being an active choir member and RE teacher
- Diane Hofer — for organizing our hospitality service for Sundays and everything else and keeping up our collective and individual spirits high and positive in uncertain times
- Jamie Kegerise, Amy White and others for—week after week attending to the needs our meadow and creating a natural lands stewardship program
- Susan Klugerman – for graciously stepping up to take over a Larry Dickerson’s term when Larry regrettably resigned in late January due to work related conflicts
- Bruce Koepcke – for crafting our approach to starting an Endowment und and Planned Giving program with foresight, patience and perseverance
- Tracy Morgan – for sharing her amazing professional wisdom about healthy churches as well as working in the trenches to lead and support our membership and visitor activities
- Jo Redbird — for creating and maintaining the art program and keeping the art room a warm and welcoming place for adults and children
- Lauri Rickard --- for her dedicated work behind the scenes as our volunteer bookkeeper. We could not do the work of the church without you
- Helen Springer—for intrepidly leading our Service Auction work team and our Chalice Circle program
- John Springer — for jumping in to organize and nurture our religious education program after Rev. Terry left, while being Treasurer AND chair of the building committee. Now it is OUR turn to support John as incoming president.
- Chitra Vaidy — for many years of inspiring service as chair of the Social Justice Team

I must not forget to mention that we said our final goodbyes to Jane Frelick, our church matriarch who at age 99 was always the best joke teller in the house. As her time with us drew to a close she was heard to remark that she was ready, but not eager, to go.

There is a proverb... The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago...the second-best time is now. And we DID plant trees this year in our beloved meadow. The seeds and flowers of friendship were nurtured as well. Mill Creek is blessed with many members and friends who right now are caring for each other and our beloved community without the anchor of Sunday worship together.

We are STILL a community that invites you to awaken to love. We are still all ministers (though not in the same room) with our treasured Rev. Greg intrepidly leading the way. That much is certain.

May we gather again together in fellowship soon.

With gratitude and love,
Judy Pappenhagen

Letter from Lead Minister, Rev. Gregory S. Pelley

Dear friends,

Our Mission Has Not Changed

Much has changed for our church in these recent months. How we “do” church has necessarily shifted. We had been gathering together to worship, sing, learn, eat, and be present — physically — to and for one another much the way religious community has been doing for hundreds of years. And then suddenly, that mode of being a community stopped.

Everything changed.

But our mission did not change.

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

Our mission is a statement of who we are together, and to what we aspire. Being that invitational community has more or less looked the same for thirty-one years. We gather on a Sunday to worship and to learn, and sometimes to eat together. We create spaces for small groups to connect, for artists to create music, for land stewards to nurture the earth.

Even as we switched modes of worship to online video, small group ministries to Zoom, Religious Exploration to email, we continue the mission.

Even as the Unitarian Universalist Association has advised us to consider that it will be some time before we can gather in worship together, we continue the mission. We continue to be that invitational community. We continue to work, to imagine, to create those moments of awakening for ourselves and others.

It has not been easy. I feel, and I know you all feel like we have lost so much. But into that loss and change, we have an incredible opportunity to reimagine what church can be like when we cannot follow 17th-century models of community.

We will have failed as a religious community — indeed, we will have failed in our mission — if, when this pandemic is ‘over’ we merely return to the familiar modes of doing church, the old comfortable ways of being the church. The world has shifted, the wants, needs, and desires of people have changed. Our collective understanding of our interconnectedness, what it means to be a free people, what it means to offer compassion and love have all been exposed. (Remember that ‘apocalypse’ does not mean ‘the end of the world’ but ‘an unveiling, an uncovering, a revealing.’)

And I’m not just writing here about a viral pandemic. The eruption of protest from the murder of George Floyd and all the other black and brown human beings whose lives have been so callously taken, is the latest revelation that the ways we have been as a country, and perhaps even as a Unitarian Universalist religious community, have continually fallen short of bringing justice and beloved community into the world. Fallen short of being the invitation for everyone to awaken to the love that permeates this world.

So, despite our longing for the way we were, and that longing is true and real, we would be foolish to ignore what has been so achingly revealed. And so we are now challenged to not fall into foolish comfort, but toward wise and courageous love.

To rise to that challenge, the wise begin by questioning everything.

What are we learning? What are we learning about ourselves and how we have been living in this world? What are we learning about our church, about who and what it is for? What are we learning about the things we presumed to be permanent and non-negotiable, but are discovering are neither?

What idols have we been clinging to that no longer serve their purpose?

In what ways have we sought this religious community as consumers, as people asking to be served? How might we shift from living the question, “How I am being served?” to “*How might I serve?*”

How might we focus our mission outward, to move from figuring out how to *keep* people, to how to *reach people*?

In a time when we are pulling inward, conserving our resources, protecting ourselves from an uncertain future, how might we *love wastefully*?

Friends, I do not think for a moment that these are easy questions to answer. Every answer I can come up with today seems inadequate to the possibilities we are called to in this time. In many ways, I feel unprepared for the work ahead, and perhaps living into this transformation feels daunting to you as well.

Here’s what I do know, what I can be most certain of in this moment: We are what is possible. Our vision of a beloved community — one grounded not in power and oppression, not grounded in “winners and losers,” but one grounded in peace, in justice, in hope, in community, and in love — is shared by more people than we know. Shared by people we have not yet met. People who are living in this apocalypse and yearning for not old religious bromides or a “new normal;” who are longing not for the religious communities of our forefathers and foremothers, but a transformed world.

I don’t pretend to know precisely what that looks like. I don’t know what the affect of our transformed church will be six months from now, a year from now, ten years from now. That transformation will take all of us, all our creativity, our tolerance for lots of failure, our resilience, our commitment, our work to imagine and reimagine again and again as we reach out to serve. As we proclaim our invitation. As we help others to awaken to love.

This, then, is my invitation to you. (And I do mean **you**.) This is your church, your religious community. It is our shared ministry. When I declare that you are all ministers it is not intended as an aspiration or even an inspiration. I know that within each of you lives a preacher of hope, a pastor of compassion, and a prophet of justice, I want you to know that for yourself. I want the minister you are to meet up with the minister I am and together build a church we have yet to imagine.

Mill Creek is the possibility of so much more than gathering on a Sunday morning for worship and coffee. To live into this possibility is to take a leap of faith beyond what you think you can do, what you think you have time for. It is to actively seek out ways to serve the mission of this church. Join a team. Create a new team. Join a chalice circle. Teach us something you know. Learn something new. Share a sermon with a friend. Invite. Lead. I look forward to partnering with each of you to move this congregation forward with creativity, energy, and loving kindness.

Blessings and love,

Greg.

2020 BOARD NOMINEES



Brian Coleman

Brian was born in the north-west of England to parents who were nominally Anglican. He sang in the local church choir until the approach of his voice breaking and the lure of the boy scouts became too great. His academic education focused on the physical sciences, obtaining a BSc in chemistry at a UK university. He moved to the US for graduate school where he met his wife, Seetha. The bulk of his professional career was spent working for Royal Dutch Shell, first in Amsterdam, followed by the UK, Belgium, Texas and finally Delaware. Along the way he transitioned from being a chemist interested in the interactions of molecules, to a change agent interested in the interactions of human beings. Since retiring from Shell, Brian and Seetha have been involved with a number of start-up companies, both for-profit and not-for-profit. Brian and Seetha have been members of Mill Creek since 2015, when Reverend Greg's "Listening to Our Lives" convinced Brian that the Church was more than just Sunday services. (Seetha was already convinced!) Brian is somewhat active with the Building & Grounds team, having learnt how to move the meadows and replace incandescent bulbs with LED ones in the outside lighting around the church building. He has even had the occasion once or twice to use his facilitation skills learned at Shell to help in the development of Mill Creek.



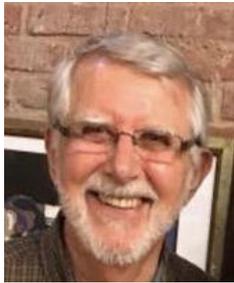
Ann Draper

I am pleased for the opportunity to serve on the Mill Creek Board of Directors. My husband Roy and I came to our first Solstice Service at Mill Creek in December, 2017. I was pleased to find an interesting community of people here to become acquainted with. It's been a wonderful place to share ideas, values and common concerns. We officially joined the congregation in Spring, 2018. I am a native New Yorker but the Newark area has been my home since 1977; raising two sons in the Newark community. I was blessed to have a 35-year career at the University of Delaware and also blessed to have retired from there in 2018. Now I can devote my days to my garden, my quilting studio, to yoga classes and to sharing time with family and friends. I look forward to an exchange of ideas on the Board to help UUSMC grow its presence in our community.



Joe Snader

Joe was raised a Protestant in Ellicott City, Maryland. As a student at the University of Delaware, he began to study world religions and was advised by a professor to check out Unitarian Universalism. At Delaware he met his future wife, Fran Gulino. Their two daughters, Chloe and Victoria, enjoyed their years in UU religious education, Roots and Shoots, Coming of Age, and OWL. Joe has been involved with UU congregations during the past fifteen years, most notably as a teacher of Coming of Age and OWL.



John Springer - President

John 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 has been a member of Mill Creek since 2016. He is currently Treasurer, Acting RE committee Chair, and member of the Board of Trustees, Natural Lands Stewards, and Men's Chalice circle. He was Chair of Building & Grounds for the last 2 years. Additionally, since retiring in 1999, he has served as an officer on 7 non-profit boards and as a member of 2 other boards in various states.

Vicky Tosh-Morelli



Vicky has been a member of Mill Creek since 2004. She has previously served on the Board of Trustees (2016-2017), Welcoming Congregation, Membership Committee, and currently maintains the Mill Creek website and Facebook accounts. Vicky has over 14 years' experience in the non-profit sector in health promotion, cultural competency, program development and evaluation, marketing and communications. For more than 20 years, she has done public speaking and training on LGBT issues to diverse audiences including healthcare, business, higher education and law enforcement. Vicky currently works for the University of Delaware, College of Engineering as a Digital Communications Specialist. She is married to the Music Director Kristen Tosh-Morelli and they have a son, Joey.

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS



Susan Klugerman

Susan has been a member of Mill Creek since 2006. She has served on the Board of Trustees, the Nominating Committee and was Chair of the Service Auction for several years running. She retired from the University of California San Francisco Medical center, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, where she was the head of Public Food Service and Catering. She was also a chef/instructor at the California Culinary Academy and started her own cooking school for children and adults, Kitchenworks. In addition to cooking, she is passionate about travel, art, film and literature. She moved to Delaware to join her family, the Mortensons; Steve, Betsy, Chloe, Louis and Josh who are also members of Mill Creek.



Lemaine Peo

Lemaine began attending Mill Creek 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 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 Chapter. 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. She also volunteers as a crisis line listener.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE



Stephen Petersen



Anna Hull



Judy Pappenhagen

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Adult Religious Exploration

Submitted by Karen Rege

Adult Religious Exploration offered a variety of workshops and events this year. Rev. Greg offered his Listening to Our Lives, Shared Pulpit, and Finding Our Stories workshops. In October, we explored the Language of LGBTQ with a special event after service led by Mr. Kurt Doan from Havre de Grace, MD. Over 30 people attended this event.

Drop-in sessions prior to service on Sunday mornings have increased in attendance. In the fall we delved into the “What We Choose” curriculum on ethics. In the spring, we developed our own “Coffee Shop Theology” (coffee and tea included!) led by various lay people that explored each of the seven principles in depth for both meaning and how it applies to our lives. This series was cut short due to the unexpected closure.

Finally, Yolanda Chetwynd and Karen Rege led a group exploring Julia Cameron’s *The Artist’s Way*. This group was able to continue online for the full 12 weeks and continues to meet monthly. Chalice Circles also met regularly until the unexpected closure.

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. Previous selections include *Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy*, by Anne Lamott; *Crimes Against a Book Club*, by Kathy Cooperman; *The Time Traveler’s Wife*, by Audrey Niffenegger; *My Dear Hamilton*, by Stephanie Dray & Laura Kamoie; and *Being Mortal*, by Atul Gawande.

Building & Grounds Maintenance

Submitted by John Springer

Accomplishments to date over the past year include: had the building’s stucco inspected; replaced thermostats with smart, energy efficient, remotely programmable units; caulked the exterior windows, had repair done on heating and air conditioning units; started replacing outside soffit lights with long lasting LED units; cleaned up the outside storage shed and area; replaced burnt out interior lights and fixtures; and other tasks as requested or required.

The monthly Building and Grounds Chore day was continued with the Natural Lands Stewards. It will hopefully continue this calendar year on the first Saturday of the month from 9:00 till 12:00

as soon as it is safe and people can attend. For now, all members living in Delaware are welcome to help with our gardens, meadow, and forest on Wednesdays.

Many thanks to all who helped over the last year and David Bonner and Charlie Brooks for taking over the helm.

Chalice Circles

Submitted by Helen Springer

Mill Creek's Chalice Circle program began in 2005 and continues to thrive due to our Circle facilitators, coordinators, and members who provide a comfortable environment for sharing stories, experiences, and ideas. The Circles are especially supportive of our efforts to get to know each other better on a deeper level and develop a rich spirituality through the great gifts of mutual support and friendship.

Currently, 52 Mill Creek members and friends belong to six Circles. During the COVID-19 crisis, because we cannot meet in person, each Circle stays in regular touch through Zoom, emails, texting, or other electronic meeting systems.

Prior to COVID-19, Circles provided Sunday coffee hour snacks, supported Family Promise through food donations, and were involved in other activities as part of our commitment to serve Mill Creek and the wider community.

Further information about our Chalice Circle Program is available by contacting Helen Springer at helen_springer@msn.com or cell 484 999-4582.

Children's & Youth Religious Education

Submitted by John Springer

The Religious Education Program went through significant changes during the year. The DRE position was reduced to half time. The Volunteer needs were met by over 42 members signing up as teachers and other support positions. An RE Committee was formed which was included the team leaders for Chalice Children, Roots and Shoots, and Youth. When the DRE quit, this team was able to continue the program. Mid-year, it was decided that the program should start using Soul Matters. Soul Matters provides lesson plans and other services for over 200 other UU congregations. This conversion was successful and will greatly simplify planning in the future.

The Coming of Age Class started this calendar year with lessons on Sundays, and has been continued via Zoom.

There were 22 children who participated in the RE program, with about 200 contact hours in a shortened year due to COVID-19. Weekly lessons, developed by the teachers using Soul Matters were emailed to the parents from mid-March through May.

Planning for next year has started and will depend on the expressed needs of the parents.

Thanks to our team leaders: Anna & Chris Hull, Jamie Kegerise, and Lemaine Peo.

Finance

Submitted by Adam Kegley

For the church fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, the Finance Committee believes we will end the year with a small surplus of about \$4,300, assuming outstanding pledge commitments will be met.

This is occurring despite not holding our annual Church Service Auction (loss of \$18,000 of income), and the loss of Rental Income of \$8,400 - due to closing the church since March; and, combined together, Pledge Income, Contributions, and Plate Cash expected to come in at \$5,100 under budget.

On the expense side, Sunday Services and Committee expenses are running about \$6,200 under budget (primarily due to the church being closed and no snow removal expenses); \$3,500 in Minister Professional Expenses were not used; Denomination Dues overpayment had a credit of \$3,200, and the unfilled DRE position resulted in a \$22,900 savings in planned payroll expenses.

While we will end the fiscal year in the black, the pandemic has created some unknowns going forward. As such, the 2020-2021 balanced budget assumes some of our members may need to reduce their pledge commitment to the church, therefore anticipated pledge Income has been reduced by about 10%. All other Committee, Sunday Services, Payroll, and Building expenses remain mostly flat. (Please see the attached budget for full details).

At the beginning of the calendar year, the Board was considering hiring a quarter-time Religious Education Coordinator. With the building closed, the Board has postponed this action. When we are assured it is safe to start RE classes in the building, the Board will review the budget to determine the feasibility of taking this action.

As in the past, the church continues to maintain a cash reserve of 3-4 months of total expenses – to address bumps in the road. That being said, the Finance Committee will continue to work closely with the Board each month to track income and expenses – and to recommend adjustments as needed.

Based on guidance from the UUA, our church applied for and received a loan of \$25,088 from the Federal Paycheck Protection Program. These loans are made to businesses and non-profits, like UUSMC, who have lost income or revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and where the funds are used to cover certain payroll and other expenses incurred over an 8-week period. At the end

of the 8-week period, an Application for Forgiveness must be submitted in a timely fashion. The Small Business Administration has 60 days to process the request. Our Finance Team is working through the nuances of this program to ensure we stay in compliance with a forgivable loan. Updates on this loan will be provided as the details are worked out.

Click here to view the Proposed Budget: https://www.uusmc.org/wp-content/uploads/Proposed-Budget_2020-2021-.pdf

Generosity Team

Submitted by Melissa Bryson

The Generosity Team put together an ambitious pledge campaign for 2020 with a goal of \$200,000 in pledges and 100 pledge units (households). The campaign was kicked off with the now annual Chili Cook-off on October 19. When the dust settled at the end of the campaign, we had recorded **89** pledges for a total of **\$181,288!** This campaign is just one representation of how much we love and care for Mill Creek, and the connections we make both with others and ourselves through this community we have built together. We continue to use the pledging levels 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: Melissa Bryson, Fran Gulino, David Bonner, Fran Loeffelholz,
Judy Pappenhagen, Ram Ray, and Stephen Selph

Hospitality

Submitted by Diane Hofer

Up until early March the Hospitality Teams had gone about our weekly activities of providing Sunday morning greeting services and offered a nice post service coffee and snack hour after the Service.

The five hospitality teams were generously supported by the Chalice Circles who provided the snacks for the hospitality hour.

In addition, we provided support for several memorial services during the year.

Since the beginning of the pandemic sequester, I have been providing a weekly email covering a variety of fun and interesting topics as a way to keep some sort of connection with the congregation members and provide some stress relieving distractions to help the congregation weather the sequester.

Membership

Submitted by Tracy Morgan

The Membership Committee continued focus on welcoming people after the service and visitor follow-up. We have established procedures, phone and email scripts, and a measurement system.

- We had 24 visitors fill out the Gold Card from June 2019 through our shutdown in late March versus a goal of 2/week. This is a decrease of almost 50% from the same time period the year before.
- Debby Damiani followed up with everyone by letter and newsletter, when contact information was provided.
- We continued the process of lay person follow-up by phone and email that was established the previous year.
- 75% of visitors who provided a phone number received a follow-up call from a lay volunteer. 84% of visitors who provided an email received a follow-up email from a lay volunteer.
- The average time for the lay volunteer follow-up was 15 days versus a goal of 7. These follow-up statistics were essentially the same as for the previous year.

I've been pleased to serve as the Membership Chair for the past two years and am seeking a new Chair to takeover this position as we re-open.

Music Committee

Submitted by Gordon Roth

Background

The committee members are Kristen Tosh-Morelli, Heather Doty (chair), Gordon Roth, Brian Hanson, Pam Allenstein, and Rudy Nyhoff, with Rev. Greg and 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 Sunday services in church, Blue Christmas, Christmas Eve, and at every service last Summer. Virtual Sunday Worship has included a Music Playlist curated by Kristen.

Facilities

Staffing the sound system with volunteers for Sunday services will continue to be a challenge. We have a small team of dedicated volunteers, but we are always looking for new people to join the group. Tending the sound system is a great way to help out while still attending church services.

Natural Lands Stewards

Submitted by Jamie Kegerise and Amy White

The Natural Lands Stewards continue to work together to care for our healthy and beautiful meadows, our growing *Woods for the Wild*, our memorial garden of trees, and our entrance gardens -- all to keep our church grounds looking great and inviting (to both people and wildlife!).

Last September we held an autumnal equinox celebration in the meadow, with church members gathering for a picnic, campfire, and sunset watch – all while surrounded by the beauty of the wildflowers.

Last fall we planted 6 large nursery trees (5 Eastern Redbuds and 1 Black Gum) and transplanted native saplings (tuliptree, sassafras, pawpaw, hackberry, red cedar, and spicebush) in the eastern portion of our property between the parking lots and Polly Drummond Hill Road. This is the *Woods for the Wild* – an area of trees, winding paths, and potentially a future picnic grove.

In late winter we again rented a bushhog and mowed the entire property, a critical annual action to keep undesirable woody plants from overtaking our meadows and woodlands.

This spring we have been working weekly (while maintaining social-distancing!) with a recent focus on transforming the Polly Drummond Hill Road hedgerow from a tangle of non-native, invasive shrubs to an extension of our woodlands, complete with a variety of native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers that will be attractive to native wildlife.

Throughout the year we continue to enjoy and maintain the now *very large*, mature trees that were planted by forward-thinking members of this congregation when our church building was constructed in 2003. Not only were trees planted in and around the parking lots and building, but numerous trees were planted to the east of our parking lots and connector driveway. These native trees form the foundation of our Woods for the Wild. These large trees include various native species of oak, maple, ash, elm, persimmon, and holly. Add to these the many pre-existing walnut, cherry, hemlock, and sassafras trees and we have the basis for a woodland oasis.

We also enjoy watching deer, groundhogs, rabbits, raccoons, meadow voles, and numerous birds, butterflies, bees, and other insect pollinators as they find food and shelter in our wild areas.

We invite members and friends to join us any Wednesday evening as well as the first Saturday morning of each month. Gardeners and nature lovers also work on their own at other times convenient for them.

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, and word of mouth. During the Coronavirus pandemic, we are especially alert for issues arriving from isolation and loneliness.

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 Chitra Vaidy and Lauri Rickard

The Social Justice Committee works during the year on various projects to support those in need in our nearby communities and tries to help bring attention to social justice issues. We'd love to have more members become involved in some of our ongoing projects:

Family Promise: Our congregation supported Family Promise of Northern New Castle C and their work to keep homeless families together by organizing the preparation and serving of two dinners during two different weeks at the hosting St. Marks Methodist Church. We are typically scheduled for three weeks but the May date was canceled due to COVID-19. A special collection was taken during our Christmas Eve Service and funds were used to purchase breakfast and lunch items for the families during our weeks and an additional \$700 was donated directly to Family Promise.

Children Book Collection: Children's books are collected throughout the year and donated to medical offices in Wilmington.

Share Our Warmth: During the cold winter months we collect and purchase clothing items such as gloves, mittens, scarves, socks and hats to give to the homeless in downtown Wilmington that are being served lunch by Premier Charities. During the December distribution a need for warm blankets/comforters was evident, so a special collection was taken and another distribution was made later in the winter. With the remaining amount of money sale items were purchased to keep for next year's campaign.

"Souper" Bowl Sunday: Homemade soup is prepared by members and sold on the first Sunday in February (Super Bowl Sunday). The proceeds of \$345 were donated to the Food Bank of Delaware.

Share Our School Supplies: Approximately thirty school backpacks containing a list of suggested school supplies were sold to members for \$10 in late summer. The returned filled packs were then taken to Eastside Charter School at the beginning of the school year.

Share Our Bounty: Non-perishable food is collected in November with half going 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 nearby charities selected by the SJ Committee. To date this year a total of \$6,404.12 was collected and distributed to: Meeting Ground, Inc. (MD), Unitarian Universalist of Delaware Advocacy Network (UUDAN), Wings for Success (PA) Planned Parenthood (DE), and PFLAG of Northern DE.

UUDAN Support: In January we worked with UUDAN to host speakers at Mill Creek to discuss support of the Death with Dignity Act.