



# First Universalist Church

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Annual Report

2020 – 2021

*“Nurture the Spirit, and Serve the Community”*

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## Annual Meeting Agenda June 6, 2021

- I. Establishing a Quorum
- II. Opening Words/Chalice Lighting
- III. Opening Remarks/Thank You
- IV. Approval of the 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes
- V. Proposed Budget for 2021-20
- VI. Nominations for Vacant Positions  
Board of Trustees: Bridget Watts (*3 year term*), Richard Reed (*3 year term, second*), Tess McFarland-Porter (*3 year term, second*)  
Board President: Tess McFarland -Porter (*1 year term*)  
Nominating Committee: Charlie Courtsal (*3 year term*), Janet Rothbeind (*2 year term*), Dwight Montague (*2 year term*)  
Committee on Ministry: Karen LoBracco, Marti Eggers
- VII. Congregational Social Justice Issue: Renewal of Racial Equity
- VIII. Social Plate Organizations
- IX. New Business
- X. Closing Words & Extinguishing the Chalice

## **The First Universalist Church of Rochester Covenant of Responsible Behavior**

First Universalist Church is dedicated to the free and responsible search for truth and meaning; the inherent worth and dignity of the individual; and justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. We hereby covenant to create an open and supportive community where we can meet and grow towards wholeness, inspire and challenge one another, share in the observance of special life events, and act according to our principles in the local and world communities—in short, where all can feel safe and welcomed.

*To do so, we make these promises:*

*To respect one another's beliefs,*

*To nurture an environment of direct and positive communication,*

*To build a caring community through understanding and learning,*

*To respect the safety and welfare of others,*

*To respect our sanctuary and church facilities.*

We assert these promises as fundamental rights and responsibilities of all persons attending the First Universalist Church. We accept this Covenant of Responsible Behavior as a guide. Its accompanying policy shall guide the response where responsible behavior is in question.

**First Universalist Church of Rochester  
Minutes of Annual Meeting**

**June 7, 2020**

This meeting was conducted on-line, via Zoom, due to gathering restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Voting was done on-line, using a Zoom feature that allows us to record the results of electronic balloting. People participating by telephone could vote by voice. Annual information packets were distributed to congregation members via email on May 27 so that they could have time to read all reports. Members were requested to submit any questions via email ahead of today's meeting. Information about the budget and nominations was presented on slides during the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 P.M. A quorum was established. The meeting began with opening words and the lighting of a chalice by Nancy Gaede. President Eric Van Dusen began the meeting with opening remarks, noting the challenges we have and will continue to face due to the pandemic. He thanked outgoing Board of Trustee members Kitty Forbush, Karen Ruganis, and Tim Mullins for their years of service.

People were having difficulties accessing the meeting online. It was decided to move the approval of the 2019 annual meeting minutes to the end of today's agenda to allow time to work through any technical issues being experienced.

Approval of the 2020-21 proposed budget was moved and seconded. Finance Chair Ann Rhody presented the budget, along with supporting remarks. Discussion occurred and questions were answered. A motion was made and seconded to end discussion and approved. A vote was taken on the main motion – approved. We thank the Finance Committee for all their efforts in putting the budget together under these uncertain conditions.

It was moved and seconded to approve the slate of candidates for open Board of Trustees vacancies. Joy Lecesse, chair of the Nominating Committee, formally presented the following slate for open Board of Trustees positions:

- Steve Munson (3 year term)
- Mary Jane (MJ) Curry (3 year term)
- Jillian Beaman (2 year term).

President Van Dusen opened the floor to discussion. It was moved, seconded, and approved to end discussion. A vote on the main motion was taken and approved. It

was moved and seconded to approve Eric Van Dusen as president of the Board of Trustees for a one-year term. There was no discussion. It was moved and seconded to close discussion: approved.

A vote was taken on the main motion: approved. It was moved and seconded to approve Ed Deller (2 year term), Bill Elwell (2 year term), Kathi Milch (2 year term) and Joy Lecesse (1 year term). A concern was raised about the legality of voting for Kathi Milch since her name was inadvertently left off the ballot. This was resolved by calling for a voice vote, which passed. It was moved, seconded, and approved to end discussion. The vote on the main motion was approved. It was moved and seconded to approve Michael Scott for the Committee on Ministry. Discussion occurred, including a clarification of the role of this committee. It was moved, seconded, and approved to end discussion. A vote on the main motion was taken- approved.

A Point of Order was raised: Is the process of getting names for various positions an open one? Discussion occurred. There was some feeling that open positions need to be “advertised” more in the spring so that people are aware of the vacancies in case they wish to be considered.

Becky Elwell presented the names of organizations being considered for our “Share our Plate” initiative. Sixteen group names were presented. Ten will be designated as recipients, with two plates being reserved for emerging needs during the church year. Members will be sent a Google survey link for voting via email this week. The results will be sent out via email. A question was raised as to how to submit a new group for consideration. This should be directed to our Faith in Action Council. There was no business from the floor.

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes from last year’s annual meeting. Discussion included noticing a few typos on names. It was moved and seconded to end discussion and approved. A vote was taken on the main motion and was approved.

Nancy Gaede provided closing words and extinguished the chalice.  
The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 P.M.

Respectfully recorded,  
Nancy Gaede, *Board Clerk*  
6/7/20

## **Board of Trustees 2020 - 2021**

The members of the Board of Trustees for the 2020-21 church year were: Eric VanDusen (President), Tess McFarland-Porter (Vice-President), Nancy Gaede (Clerk), Jillian Beaman, Mary Jane Curry, Richard Reed, Steve Munson, and Reverend Lane Campbell (Minister, ex-officio).

The Board meets the second Wednesday of each month. We held eleven regular meetings, three special meetings, a Leadership Assembly, and a Board Retreat. At each monthly Board meeting, we review the Finance and Minister's Report, and approve the previous month's minutes.

### **Highlights of our Board Activities this Year**

As the COVID pandemic continued, a great deal of the Board's work focused on how and when to reopen to in-person meetings and services safely. Deliberations were based on latest recommendations from federal, state, and county authorities. Additionally, input was sought from the congregation, through surveys and coffee hour conversations with Board members. At each stage, it was decided to continue with online services. Keeping things operating smoothly has placed additional burdens on staff and volunteers, and we want to acknowledge and thank them for their all their efforts.

Realizing that following Robert's Rules of Order can be restrictive, the Board developed Rules of Consensus, which we agreed to follow at each meeting. This allowed us greater flexibility and efficiency in decision-making, while, at the same time, abiding by our bylaws.

At each regular meeting, we reviewed finance reports. Despite challenges posed by being online, our Stewardship drive was successful. Our application for a PPP loan was approved. The results from the virtual auction results were strong. Our Finance, Stewardship, and Auction committees worked long and hard this year under difficult circumstances. The Board wishes to express its appreciation for their careful stewardship of our congregation. As we near the end of the year, we are in a financially stable position.

First Universalist proudly served as a triage center for the Black Lives Matter protests.

We held a Board Retreat in October. Our task was to figure out what was most important for us as we move forward. We took away three major points: to find

ways to help us all to stay connected, even as we stay isolated, to make certain to take time for reflection, rather than reacting as circumstances change, and to stay focused on our finances.

This year's Leadership Assembly had three components: a presentation on budget from our Finance Team, a video/discussion about trauma response, and a presentation from the COVID reopening subcommittee. The Board is planning to share the trauma video with the congregation. Planning-for reopening committees are being formed.

As we move forward, we know that communication will be critical. This has been a traumatic time, and it is not over yet. We will need to be patient with each other and to extend grace to one another as we move towards reopening.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Gaede, *Clerk*

## **President's Report 2020 - 2019**

What a year! Much of the board's attention this church year has been focused on COVID and trying to stay current with the health guidelines. We surveyed the congregation last summer to give us feedback on how members were feeling, to get thoughts on how members saw us moving forward and to get feedback on how we might improve our virtual services. The board contacted committees to learn from them how we could support their efforts to stay virtually connected. The board appreciates all those who took the time to complete the survey, and/or who met with us during after-church coffee hour sessions this spring to share concerns, thoughts, and insights.

In April, the board formed a COVID Subcommittee to make recommendations on how we should begin planning for a phased reopening. Based on those recommendations, which we have shared with the congregation, a Reopening Working Group has been formed and is now meeting. There is still much work to do, but it feels like we are moving into a more hopeful phase with the pandemic.

In October, the board held a retreat that Rev. Renee facilitated. In April, the board organized a Leadership Retreat. Thanks to all who attended. Our church relies on our many committees, and the volunteers who participate in them, to keep the work of both our operations and mission moving forward. It is because of your commitment and dedication to our community that we have collectively been able to find ways to adapt and learn so we can continue to "do church" during COVID.

For a year that saw us quarantined and socially distanced, it seemed in some ways that we were more socially engaged. Thanks FIRE members for doing an incredible job organizing the BLM medical triage effort. You were amazing! And thanks to the Building Committee for managing many projects, including repaving the driveway, managing the construction of the wind barrier in the Clara Barton Lounge, and the RE/Music Room upgrades.

I also want to acknowledge the flexibility, creativity, and talent of our staff, who have continually gone above and beyond this past year. Thank you, Rev. Lane, Rev. Michelle, Emma, and Brock for the many thoughtful hours that you work on our behalf. We are grateful for you.

What a year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eric Van Dusen, *President*

## **Minister's Report 2020 - 2021**

In the past year, our church has had an entirely virtual journey. We have spent one year as a worshipping community on-line, without seeing one another in our church building in-person. Here is some of what I have learned about this community in our time spent virtually this past year:

- We still deeply care about one another, and we will show up, even if we are showing up for worship over Zoom.
- Our church is not defined by its building, but rather by the people who are a part of First Universalist.
- There are people who are an important part of this church community who have never stepped inside its walls.
- This has been a time to dig deep into spiritual practice and practices that sustain us for the hard times.

Here's some of what we have done together over the course of the past year:

- Memorial services over Zoom and outdoors.
- Hosted a medic triage site for the uprisings following the murder of Daniel Prude in partnership with Rochester Street Medics.
- Created a new mid-week meditation program that meets Wednesday mornings and provides embodied spiritual sustenance over Zoom.
- Held physically distant water communion, flower communion, and Christmas Eve, all with time to connect masked in the church parking lot.
- Shared a Park and Pie event with whoopie pies to celebrate a successful Stewardship campaign.
- Celebrated 175 years of gathering as First Universalist Church.

Dear ones, we have made it through this year, and we are stronger for it. I imagine a world where folks are going to need connection with one another and with spirit in the days to come as we keep healing from all we have endured and as we are able to come back together in our building. I deeply look forward to that day ahead with all of you.

In Faith and Courage,  
Rev. Lane Campbell

## Communications Committee 2020 - 2021

Committee members: Emma Barry, Dolores DaLomba, Marcy Klein, Connie Valk, Lisa Gwinner (*Chair*)

The main purpose of this committee is to facilitate communications within the church community, as well as to share church activities with the community outside the church. We support the Office Administrator in the publication of the weekly "*This Week at First Universalist*" email and monthly "*Our Outlook*" newsletter, and in maintaining the church website (uuroc.org).

Highlights of the past year include:

- At the Board of Trustees request we revised the church's 2013 Communications Policy to bring it in line with current practices and add sections on video communication policies.
- Supported the church's Black Lives Matter activities by creating a Facebook group (*Black Lives Matter at First Universalist*) where up-to-date information can be found, shared, and discussed.
- Worked to better communicate the church's social justice activities through Social Justice Spotlight features in the "*This Week*" email, updating information on the website to be easier to find and more up to date, helping to streamline how social justice events are accessed (via Zoom) by attendees.
- Placing an advertisement in City Newspaper for the Solstice and Christmas Eve services.

We are currently working to place framed & letterpress-printed copies of the acknowledgement of the Native peoples who originally occupied the land where the church is situated in prominent places around the church.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Gwinner, *Chair*

**Finance Committee  
2020 - 2021**

*Please note: detailed financial information about fiscal year 2020-2021 will be found in the annual treasurer's report in October 2021.*

Finance Committee: Ann Rhody (*Chair*), Dick Shroyer (*Treasurer*), Bill Jones (*Collector*), Karl Abbott (*Assistant Treasurer*), Beth Ares (*Payroll & Benefits Coordinator*), Katherine Flynn, Paula Marchese, Brian Mumey, Richard Reed, Dave VanArsdale, Rev. Lane Campbell (*ex-officio*)

Highlights of the Year:

- We met a number of times over Zoom, and had a portfolio review with our investment manager, Bob Reeves, of Geovest Advisors.
- We applied for and received loan forgiveness for the \$15,000 PPP loan we received in April 2020.
- We continued to pay all staff!
- We planned and executed a successful “*Auction Amnesty*” event in place of our traditional Service Auction. We requested donations and then had a Zoom celebration with entertainment, trivia, prizes, and fun. The donations totaled more than the expected Auction income in the budget! The event was headed by Kathy Flynn and Paula Marchese with help from Ann Rhody.
- Our Stewardship Campaign, “*Forward Through the Ages*,” was chaired by Jim and Kathi Milch and Brian Mumey. It was decided to have the campaign tie in with the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our congregation. The co-chairs and the Stewardship team worked hard and presented creative ways to stress the importance of supporting the church financially. As of this writing, we had 98 pledges and a total of \$214,600. We expect a few more pledges to come in. A very successful campaign!

Our job as the Finance committee continues to be made easier due to the extraordinary generosity and responsiveness of the congregation. For this, and for support in all its forms, we are deeply grateful.

Thanks to our generous congregation and hard-working finance team!

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann F. Rhody, *Finance Committee Chair*

**House Committee  
2020 - 2021**

Team Members: Ed Deller (*chairperson*), Tom Ruganis, Sarah Singal, Moritz Wagner, Michael Scott, Karen Dau, Marcy Kline and Shirley Bond.

Even though the church was shut down for this entire church year the House committee accomplished significant projects while also tending to the routine maintenance of the building and grounds.

Major projects included:

- Replacement of the roof over the minister's office
- Repaving of the parking lot
- Installation of a wind barrier in the Clara Barton lounge
- Repair of a stained-glass window in the volunteer office
- Painting the volunteer office and window trim on the south side ground floor
- Sanctuary thermostat was upgraded for remote access
- LED lighting was installed in the volunteer office
- A project to remodel the RE/Music office on the second floor was started.  
This will create a more accessible children's worship space.

Thank you to the committee members for supporting these activities through the year: Tom Ruganis, Sarah Singal, Moritz Wagner, Michael Scott, Karen Dau, Marcy Klein and Shirley Bond.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ed Deller, *Chair*

## **Rental Report 2020 - 2021**

### **Parking:**

Due to COVID, there has been a lack of regular parking rentals, as is to be expected. Luckily, we have had a parking rental for several months from a local construction company working on a project in the old Xerox building across the street. Unfortunately for them, but luckily for us, the truck they were using were too large to fit in the parking spaces at the parking garages close by. They are renting six spaces from us for \$50 per space monthly from October 2020 to June 2021. They may continue to rent from us depending on the project. I also passed along hopes that they would pass on my contact info to other folks looking to park who might be facing the same size problem they are!

We had a regular stream of renters before the COVID-19 crisis and are hopeful that when we can safely reopen and hire a new sexton, that will be a viable source of income again.

### **Long-Term Rentals:**

- Rochester Model Railroad Club

We are also beginning to receive contacts from folks interested in holding events at our space next year, and I am hopeful that we will be able to accommodate them.

Respectfully submitted,  
Emma Barry  
*Office Manager*

## **Lifespan Faith Development: Children and Adult 2020 - 2021**

### **Our Children's Programming:**

- This year of the pandemic has been a particularly challenging year for our Children and Families! We have aimed to support and engage with our families mindful of the various struggles in each of their lives.
- Last May the Caring Committee sent cards and gift cards to all our moms.
- Last June, while delivering Flower Communion flowers, Revs. Lane and Re. Michelle delivered Summer Activity bags to our families.
- We reached out to our families and youth to participate in the Christmas Eve service in the virtual choir, acting in the story/play "O Zoom All Ye Faithful," choosing their roles in our No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant, and including fun and meaningful gifts in the children's Christmas Eve gift bags.
- Families have been invited to share videos of their children engaging with the monthly worship theme.
- Rev. Michelle has shared resources with families for supporting and talking to their children about some of the more challenging topics of this past year including the coronavirus, racial justice, lock-down stress, and self-care.
- We are working towards remodeling the RE/Music office space into the new Children's Worship and accessible meeting space which will be called the Gratitude Room.
- We look forward to working with our families to find ways to gather and connect that feel safe for them moving into the new church year.

### **Our Adult Programming:**

- Four **Small Group Ministry** groups have been active this year, and some will continue over the summer meeting in person.
- The Sunday morning **Drop-In Discussion Group** moved to meeting on Zoom on Tuesday evenings with a wide variety of presenters and topics, including regular presentations by FIRE, Rev. Michelle Yates, and Rev. Lane Campbell
- **Midweek Meditation** has continued Wednesdays this past church year.
- This year **two 8-week Grief Groups** (winter and spring) were facilitated by Theo Munson, Rev. Lane, and Rev. Michelle to support our grieving members.
- **Thank you**, facilitators, coordinators, committees, and committed attendees!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Michelle Yates, *Minister of Lifespan Faith Development*

## **Caring Committee 2020 - 2021**

Members: Eileen Fernandez, Katherine Flynn, Cathie Grisley, Kathi Milch, Heather Menzies Jones, Paula Marchese (*Chair*), Patricia Deane (*Secretary*)

Our mission aims to provide short-term help to members and friends of the First Universalist Church through caring, comforting and visitation. We do our best within the limits of our resources to see that those who are experiencing a period of grief, sorrow, illness, joy, or need due to life's transitions are attended to by someone from the church.

Since March of 2020, lockdown has forestalled in-person memorials and curtailed visits to nursing homes. Our regular holiday flowers have been cut back.

However, the Committee, and the church members continue to send cards of encouragement and sympathy and assist as we are able.

This year challenged us to stay connected through text, emails, Zoom, phone calls, and at times, visits, rides, and meal delivery.

All Caring Committee activities are made possible by our Caring Congregation; we could not serve our loving community without the support of the many members who step forward to meet the given need.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paula Marchese, *Chair*

## **Social Justice Plate Committee 2020 - 2021**

Members: Joy Leccese, Jean Ott, Becky Elwell, and Connie Valk.

The congregation voted on a list of organizations submitted to and vetted by the Faith In Action Council (FIAC) with the assistance of Rev. Lane. Our congregation is a generous one, which is revealed through, not only by our Stewardship pledges, but through direct contributions to a few of the many organizations that serve the community.

The organizations that were selected for the year were:

- June 2020 – Person Centered Housing Options - \$315
- July 2020 – Black Community Focus Fund - \$501
- Aug. 2020 – UUA Disaster Relief Fund - \$140

### Church year 2020-2021 (Sept. '20 – Aug. '21)

- Sept. 2020 – Community Food Cupboard: \$365
- Oct. 2020 – REACH Advocacy: \$716
- Nov. 2020 – Black Community Focus Fund: \$570
- Dec. 2020 – Staff Bonuses
- Jan. 2021 – Rural & Migrant Ministry: \$710
- Feb. 2021 – Baden Street Settlement: \$295
- Mar. 2021 – New York UU Justice Advocacy via 4<sup>th</sup> Universalist
- Apr. 2021 – Family Promise of Greater Rochester/RAIHN: \$335
- May 2021 – Teen Empowerment: TBD
- Jun. 2021 – Coffee Connection: TBD

Respectfully submitted,  
Connie Valk

**Nominating Committee  
2020 - 2021**

Committee members:

Joy Leccese (*Co-Chair*), Ed Deller (*Co-Chair*), Rachel Irato, Bill Elwell, and Kathi Milch

We met frequently this Spring to select candidates for leadership positions. These individuals will be voted on at the annual meeting on June 6, 2021.

In response to questions from the congregation at last year's meeting about how candidates are selected, we used more publicity (announcements, Outlook articles, and even a video) to communicate what positions are open and invite people to volunteer.

We had several people respond, and we have a full slate much earlier as a result. We will keep up our commitment to more transparency and communication!  
For more info: [nomcom@uuroc.org](mailto:nomcom@uuroc.org).

Respectfully submitted,  
Joy Leccese & Ed Deller, *Co-Chairs*

## **Worship Committee 2020 - 2021**

The Worship Committee meets regularly with Rev. Lane Campbell to discuss matters related to our worship services.

We work with Rev. Lane & Rev. Michelle to develop themes for worship, plan for guest speakers, and handle practical matters such as buying worship supplies and paying honoraria.

The committee also has a role in selection of the Worship Associate team. This past year, with the sudden switch to on-line worship, it has been more important than ever to experiment, see how things go, and adjust as needed. For example, we brainstormed with Rev. Lane to develop ideas for celebrating Christmas Eve remotely.

As we approach a new church year, our focus is on the transition from completely remote worship towards a hybrid of in-person and remote.

Members of the Worship Committee for the 2020-2021 year have been Janet Clarke-Hazlett, Julie Kleinhans, Tom Williams, and Bridget Watts (*chair*). The coordinator of the Worship Associates (currently Patti Goodwin) is a member ex officio.

Submitted by Bridget Watts, *Chair*

**Family Promise of Greater Rochester (FPGROC)**  
Formerly RAIHN (Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network)  
**2020 - 2021**

**Name Change:** This past year was a period of significant change for RAIHN. The name of the organization was officially changed to Family Promise of Greater Rochester (FPGROC).

**COVID Changes:** The pandemic intensified housing needs for low-income families but due to COVID-19 restrictions congregations could not provide temporary housing as we normally would. Instead, families were housed in a hotel or in apartments. Along with our support congregations, St. Mary's and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, First Universalist provided food and about \$1600 in food gift cards in lieu of housing. Additionally, First Universalist led a matching grant fundraiser that garnered more than \$6000 to support temporary shelter in hotels during the pandemic.

**Gratitude:** We thank the 50-plus volunteers for their ongoing support of RAIHN. Most especially we acknowledge the wonderful leadership Marti Eggers provided to RAIHN for so many years. Marti has stepped down from the RAIHN coordinator role for First Universalist. Chris and Ed will serve as co-coordinators going forward.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ed Deller & Chris DeGolyer, *Co-coordinators for FPGROC at First Universalist*

**Committee on Ministry**  
**2020 – 2021**

Committee Members: Rachael Baldanza, Sarah Singal, Micheal Scott, Rev. Lane Campbell (*ex-officio*) and Bridget Watts, Chair

The Committee on Ministry meets regularly with our settled minister, Rev. Lane Campbell, to discuss and appraise the overall ministry and health of the church. At times, we meet with leaders of specific areas of ministry to get their input.

The COM advises and consults with the Minister and lay leaders but does not set policy. This year, the challenge of connection during the pandemic (how does our community stay connected to church and to one another when we are physically isolated?) has been a common theme of our discussions.

COM members for the 2020-2021 church year were Rachael Baldanza, Michael Scott, Sarah Singal, and myself. I thank them for their time and commitment this past year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bridget Watts, *Chair*

**Music Committee  
2020 - 2021**

Chairperson: Howard Spindler

Committee Members: Jillian Beaman, Lisa Gwinner, Dolores DaLomba, Theo Munson, Lew Ward-Baker, Kitty Forbush (*Board Liaison*), Brock Tjosvold (*ex officio*).

The past year has seen a hiatus for the Music Committee. Our last meeting was 15 months ago, in February of 2020. As of this writing, we are just beginning to plan for a recommencement meeting this spring.

With our beloved music director, Brock Tjosvold, at the helm, music has flourished in our virtual worship services during the pandemic. With technical assistance from Brian Mumey, Brock directed the choir in two virtual anthems (in the summer and at Christmastime). Brock also initiated occasional social meetings for the choir. Stalwart volunteers from the congregation helped with worship music, including many from this committee. It does not hurt to reiterate that we at First Universalist are musically blessed!

The Baldwin grand piano and the Hope-Jones organ have been maintained and played regularly throughout the season. Charlie Courtsal in particular has become a dedicated steward of our organ!

Respectfully submitted,  
Howard Spindler, *Chair*

## **Personnel Committee 2020 - 2021**

In late February, early March of 2020, the Personnel Committee, along with Minister Lane Campbell and House Committee Chairs, began interviewing candidates for the open custodian position. No suitable candidates were found and the process was halted due to the COVID-19 quarantine and the uncertainty of when any selected candidate could start work.

The Personnel Committee, in conjunction with the Finance Committee and the Board, decided to continue paying our two childcare staff members in full (2 hours per week each), although their services were not needed,

Other matters included:

- In recognition for the special skills and extra work performed by our working staff members due to transitioning to virtual (Zoom) Sunday services and meetings, bonuses were recommended, approved, and paid out.
- Provided input to Finance regarding applying for a forgivable loan under the PPP (Payroll Protection Program) to continue paying employees during COVID-related business downturns.
- Confirming that Peter House will again serve as summer minister with Rev. Lane Campbell.
- Commented on and supported recommendations regarding increasing weekly hours for our Office Administrator, staff pay increases (other than for the Minister which the Board will handle), and an increase in expenses for the Minister of Lifespan Development.

We will soon be revisiting the need to hire a custodian as discussions begin regarding reopening the building.

The Personnel Committee would like to add additional members. Meetings are infrequent other than during the hiring process and some of our business can be carried out via email. Please contact the Chair if interested.

Respectfully submitted  
Beth Ares, *Chair*

**Faith In Action Council (FIAC)**  
**2020 - 2021**

Members: Becky Elwell, Joy Leccese, Jean Ott and Connie Valk.

The Faith in Action Council (FIAC) continues to provide administrative and communication functions for the church regarding all of its Social Justice Ministries.

The Congregational Project that was voted on in 2018 continues to be focused on addressing systemic racism. To that end, the original Project Team has continued to evolve and expand its activities in the Rochester community. It is now referred to as the FIRE Team: First Universalist Initiative for Racial Equity. We continue in our congregational collaboration with SPARC (Spiritus Christi's program) in projects in the 14605 zip code. The congregation will vote at the annual meeting on renewing our commitment to the Congregational Project of addressing systemic racism.

FIRE Team Leaders: Elizabeth Osta and Theo Munson

Social Justice Circles - "SJC"s, listed here, were primarily "on hold" during this pandemic year, but several of them modified their efforts and are still functioning.

- Animal Ministry focuses on the sentience of nonhuman animals, and in a variety of ways, strives to educate our congregation about the "vegan ethic", for the animals, our health, and our planet. Leader: Lois Baum
- Crafting Blankets for our Homeless Neighbors gifted blankets for protesters treated by medics in our Clara Barton Lounge. Leader: Lisa Gwinner
- EcoJustice continues to focus on personal and scalable actions to decrease greenhouse gases, and combat climate change. Leader: Sarah Singal
- Harvesting Justice organized a car caravan through the orchards of the Sodus area thanking farmworkers and bringing attention to their needs. Leader: Connie Valk
- Homeless Heartbeats focuses on chronic homelessness, and in several ways strives to educate our congregation about this overall issue, and how we individually and collectively can help established organizations locally. Leader: Lois Baum

SJ Plate Offerings Total

Sept. 2020-April 2021: \$2,991 total collected and distributed.

Some Social Justice Circles have had to change course due to COVID-19:

- Meals for the Homeless has disbanded in that meals are no longer served at shelters. Leader: Carole Hoffman.
- RocActs: This SJ Circle has disbanded in that there has been less support: this organization is going through a transition period. Leader: Shirley Bond
- School # 7 SJC, which matched children to volunteers, is “on pause” until volunteers again are welcomed into the school. Leader: Bill Elwell

For more information contact

- FIAC: [FIAC@uuroc.org](mailto:FIAC@uuroc.org)
- FIRE TEAM: [FIRE@uuroc.org](mailto:FIRE@uuroc.org)

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joy Leccese