

DRE Annual Report: 2020-21

To the board,

This year has been so very many things, as we all know. I've been very grateful to be part of UUCSC and I've loved my job, even though it's been entirely virtual until this month. DL has been such a wonderful support and I'm so grateful to have had their help in transitioning to this job during such an unprecedented year. I would have been quite lost without them.

My year has been made up of creating the RE newsletter, hosting RE Zoom calls, helping with online worship and organizing the RE space, among other things.

I'm happy that the RE newsletter and my weekly video have been enjoyed by families, as well as other congregants this year. I've heard from many families that they are grateful for the consistency of the RE newsletter, and even though they don't click on everything in it, they are happy to have that to anchor them to our program and to remind them of our love. It feels good to get that feedback. I'd love to continue a much abbreviated version of this newsletter into the future, that tells families what we did in RE and some resources to take our themes further at home.

The RE Zoom calls have been great all year. We had a group of six families who joined regularly and a few more who came sporadically. We even had one family who regularly joined us from Finland! We created a lovely space together and it was such a joy to see their smiling faces and hear their sharings. We will have a Zoom party on June 20th to say goodbye and have some fun together on Zoom one more time.

One of my favorite parts of this job is collaborating with DL to create the flow of worship. It's been an unexpected joy to get to provide input on the homily and discuss elements of services. It's so sweet to be with the congregation on zoom, to find beautiful music, to listen to the homily and to offer little pieces of meditation or story. I'm so excited to be able to do this in person. And I absolutely loved the story gatherings we had. I would love to do these on a semi-regular basis and continue to add to our archive of stories.

I've taken part in several LREDA gatherings, including their fall conference, plus several conversations and a retreat with the Northeast LREDA group. I also took the Anti-racism Through Art workshop series that I wished would never end. I'm so excited to deepen my anti-racism learning and to be able to share this with the families here.

The RE space is getting more and more free of clutter and extra stuff. We plan to move the main classroom around, which will be a big project in June. We'll have a little crew of volunteers to help move furniture and materials. This will help us to have a bigger space to spread out in a circle together and allow for cozy corners and quiet spaces. Then the craft room will have a sink and be better set up for crafting.

We've also done a little gardening in the backyard. DL and I planted peas in the raised bed and the kids planted sunflower seeds along the walkway. I transplanted some of my extra herbs to the garden by the pollinator house and plan to plant more yummy smelling, interactive plants there for future explorations.

In loving community,
Lee Cowan