

President's Annual Report June 12, 2022

UUCSC has had a roller coaster of a year!!! We were in a very challenging position in July 2021—we had been in Covid lockdown for 16 months and had been unable to meet in our sanctuary; Covid was continuing to disrupt our lives; we were without a minister or an office administrator; and much work needed to be done to reopen our building for use. Perhaps worst of all there was a sense of unease after the abrupt departure of our minister of five years. There was much sadness and confusion, some anger and a sense of uncertainty.

We picnicked our way through the summer as volunteers were busy cleaning and doing repairs on our building and the board was meeting frequently to craft protocols for returning to the sanctuary; to appoint a team to hire an administrator; to understand and start the process for hiring a new minister; to explore ways to keep the congregation connected and to try to really listen to what all of our members had to say. We met for the first time in the sanctuary since the start of the Pandemic on September 12, 2021. By December 6 we were back on Zoom. With varying degrees of success, we have tried our best to connect with those in the congregation who could not attend in person—it is an ongoing conversation.

It would take too long to fully recap all that has occurred since July but look at where we are today! Rev. Denis Paul joined us at the beginning of December and his energy, experience, playfulness, wisdom and compassion have done much to reinvigorate and bring the congregation together. We are meeting in-person AND online and spiritual reflections have been a tremendous hit. We have a wonderful, professional, dedicated and resourceful staff—DRE Lee Cowan, MD Mike Galib, Congregational Administrator Sara Kaplow and Financial Administrator Sue Rogala. Members have stepped up to volunteer their time in ways big and small as we continue to navigate the ongoing Pandemic.

I can't thank everyone enough for all the work that has been done. I have had an ***absolutely incredible board*** to share the decisions with, to do the tasks required, to teach me all I didn't know about the congregation and board work. From finance to floor cleaning, I am simply bowled over by what people do for this congregation and for each other and the wider world. If ever someone needs a reason to be part of a church, religious or spiritual community (choose the word or supply one you are comfortable with) I hold UUCSC up as a model. As we came together in good times and sad this year, I often had goosebumps. *This is why* this community of supportive, sometimes argumentative, always searching and learning, always sharing and caring individuals does the hard work to keep UUCSC going. *This is why!* *"Love is the spirit of this congregation and service is its prayer."*

I believe UUCSC is in very good shape, but it is fragile—we need to continue to talk with each other and truly listen. We need more fundraising. We need new people to step up to volunteer. We need to move beyond just reacting to crises and look at the bigger picture. I am excited to do this joyful work and I hope you are too.

With joy and gratitude for each and every one of you,

Elizabeth Donovan
President