

President's Annual Report June 11, 2023

UUCSC made great strides forward this year. We had our first full year with our Minister, Rev. Denis Paul, and also with our Congregational Administrator, Sara Kaplow. Both have proved to be invaluable members of our staff and our congregational life. We hope they will be with us for many years to come.

Our committees became fully functioning (though understaffed). Many of the new initiatives introduced by Rev. Denis have proved very popular—Beverages and Banter; the expanded use of Worship Associates; the monthly displays of worship theme-related artwork in the sanctuary; and the quarterly congregational dinners. Rev. Denis has worked extremely well with DRE Lee Cowan and MD Mike Galib and they truly serve us as a Ministry Team. We are very fortunate!

There was no doubt that we were ready to meet in person and to fully interact with each other again after two years of Covid—we missed each other! But the year was not without its challenges. Covid 19 kept us on our toes and meeting the needs of ALL our congregants continued to prove difficult. The Board engaged the congregation and made thoughtful decisions based on all the available information. And the congregation rewarded us with patience and kindness.

During the summer we picnicked (or tried to—I think it rained every Monday night), we met for hikes, beach dates and kayak paddles and we met for services, every Sunday but one.

We began the church year with a congregational meeting in September to start the process of looking at who we really want to be. What matters to us most is our loving community, our connection to and acceptance of each other, and our spiritual growth. We will continue to look at how we can reach out and connect to our broader community and to invite them in. We participated in community events—parades, protests, discussions and more. We held our Holiday Fair, open to the whole community, for the first time since the pandemic began. We made new tee-shirts. We figured out our live-streaming problems. (I can't say enough about our minister who is a "one-armed paper-hanger" when it comes to managing the Zoom worship services and making it look so easy!) We had our first new member ceremony in three years. We held book groups and had deep discussions about racial justice. And there is so much more!

Sad challenges included the loss of several of our beloved long-time members: former member Rick Medeiros, along with John Glasheen and Essjay Foulkrod, a seventh generation UU --all three with accomplishments too numerous to mention here.

We are a busy place but there is so much more to do. It has become undeniably clear that we cannot maintain our current methods of operation and remain fiscally prudent. Despite us all giving to the best of our abilities we are entering the new year with a deficit budget. This is not a surprise; we have been spared facing this reality by good fortune and particular circumstances the past few years. So, what do we do? That is a question for us all to answer together. It is scary but it is indicative of what is happening to all churches and many institutions—the world is changing, and we need to change with it. This question will likely be a big part of our work in the next few years.

As I finish up my two-year term as the President of the Board of UUCSC I am confident that we will find a way forward. And I intend to be here to participate in the discussion and decisions and the work. I am proud to have served as President and I want to thank each of you for trusting me and supporting me

and each other as we made our way through some very difficult times. I knew when I accepted this position that it would be an opportunity to learn and it far exceeded my expectations in that regard. I learned not only about the operation of our congregation, but I learned new lessons in getting along with people and how to accept them where they are and how *everyone* has things to teach us. I learned so much from Rev. Denis and from each and every one of you. Thank you all for your hard work, your loving spirits and your commitment to making the world a better place.

With joy and gratitude and optimism for the future of UUCSC.

Elizabeth Donovan
President

May 25, 2023