



FMUU ANNUAL MEETING REPORT 2021



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Minister's Note

What a year! It has been a true honor to serve as your minister during this time of both challenge and hope. The pandemic, along with the killing of George Floyd and too many other Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, created much pain for our FMUU community and for the larger human community. At the same time, the active spirit of solidarity and love within FMUU became a reminder of sustenance and hope.

As today's reports from various committees, councils, and teams attest, this was a powerful year in many ways. We grew in dedication, energy, and even numbers. It wasn't always easy meeting online, and yet our online services opened our community far beyond the Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo area. From Finland to Kulm, North Dakota, kindred spirits found us – and we found one another.

This year, we started Family Chapel together. We identified our core values. We initiated comprehensive sexuality education for youth – and adults. We marched in solidarity together. We grew our teams and committees. We reorganized our staffing to support long-term health and sustainability. We gathered mittens and winter wear to welcome New Americans to our communities. We planted gardens and shared the harvest. We tended the lawn and shoveled snow. We had a truly generous stewardship drive. We gave each other rides, phone calls, and other forms of care. We co-created meaningful services focused on our 7 (and 8) UU Principles, collective liberation, spiritual growth, and so much more. All in all, we volunteered thousands –and thousands – of hours to support this vibrant community.

Soon, we will fly a Trans flag and a Black Lives Matter flag on the side of our building. This summer and fall, the congregation will have many opportunities to identify and live into FMUU's deepest held values and most inspiring visions. Going forward, there will be much to give – and also much to receive.

Thank you, thank you, for all the support and kindness you have given me this year. I will truly miss you. I can hardly wait to witness what FMUU is yet to become, and I will keep you in my heart – as well as in my UU-style prayers.

With much gratitude,

Rev. Karen Van Fossan

Board Chair Report

I will be brief. This has been quite a year at the FMUU, it has been strange, but also triumphant. It has been the pandemic year, the Zoom year, it has been the first year since I have been around that we had a minister, and lost a minister, and are in action to get another one. We have done so much, as you will hear in the reports, and that is thanks to the community we have long built that sustains through downs and ups. We have redefined our staffing and added a wonderful new Church Administrator, Monika Browne-Ecker. We have had great services with a range of topics and subjects from socially activating to uplifting to enlightening to fun, some from our new Minister, some from guests, some from our members. Religious Education revived in the Zoom world; our Care Team not only carried on but went far beyond. Wisdom circles (aka small group ministry aka adult RE) happened on important subjects. And the furnace is working, the lights are on, the office files are in shape, the bankbook is in the black.

So, OK, I could go on, I am leaving a lot out, this is not meant to be comprehensive, we have the various reports, but I cannot leave out the thanks that I must represent from all of us, because when I say we did it, that is a lot of “us”.

Board and our outstanding Secretary-Treasurer Claudia English

Care Team and related volunteers

Family Chapel and other RE participants/volunteers (Taking Shape, PASE)

Worship Leaders

Tech Hosts

Program Committee

Suzanne Strache and other musicians

Search Committee

Social Justice Council

Place Committee

Nominating Committee – Larry Peterson, Ally Svoboda, and Jessica Jensen

Visioning Team

Staff – Jess, Laurie, Monika, Jon, Emma

All who have attended services -- ever.

All who have pledged or donated funds -- ever.

Everyone in the meeting

Bill Thomas, Board Chair

Treasurers Report for 2020-2021 Year for Annual Meeting-May 16, 2021

The Church's financial picture is solid. Our fiscal year is July 1, 2020-June 30,2021. We have managed to stay current on our bills and we have had no unexpected major expenses. Because of Covid we have not met in the Church building. This has caused our income to be less than previous years and our building expenses to be lower. A major part of our money comes from member pledges & visitor donations. The total pledges at the end of April are down by \$3,448 compared to the expected pledges for the year.

The Church purchased a new sound system & 2 new computers for a cost of \$12,224. About half of the cost for the sound system was raised by private donations.

We paid the UUA \$2,500 of the requested \$4,500. Our goal next year is to pay our fair share of the total requested.

The Building Mortgage was renewed, and the balance is \$66,760 (end of April). That is our only long-term debt.

The Investment Account balance is \$62,000. This includes \$55,000 raised for the Minister Fund & \$7,000 in the emergency fund.

This is the last year of the 3-year commitment of members to raise money for a part-time Minister. Projected total by end of 2021 is \$80,958.

Our projected yearly income for 2021-2022 is \$80,326, (Pledges, Building use income, basket & gift donations). This will cover our expenses but leaves us short of paying 25% of the Ministers salary. Hopefully, the Church will grow & provide us with more income.

More financials information available on request. I hope our vision of hiring a part-time minister will move forward. We have accomplished a lot with the current years Minister, Karen Von Fossan, and hope we continue some of the programs she has initiated. We all look forward to being able to meet in Church again.

Respectfully,

Claudia English, Secretary/Treasurer

Membership Services Coordinator Report

Shared by Rev. Karen Van Fossan

We have done our best as a collaborative group of staff, board, and minister to address membership services this year without the presence of a Membership Services Coordinator!

While the redistribution of work is still in progress, we have assigned various Membership Services Coordinator roles to the Church Administrator, Board Secretary/Treasurer, and Minister. We hope further refinement of this redistribution is yet to come.

During each Sunday service this year, congregants have been invited to:

- sign up for the mailing list.
- connect with the Care Team as needed.
- participate in various projects, events, and committees.

In May of 2021, we held an interactive, virtual session entitled, Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about the UU But Were Afraid to Ask. The agenda for this session is on file, and the session can be repeated as needed in the coming year.

Several new folks found us online this year, and some have regularly joined us from as far away as Colorado, New Jersey, New Mexico, and locations in North Dakota outside the Fargo-West Fargo-Moorhead area.

Generally, potential new members this year have expressed an interest in officially joining when the congregation is meeting in person once again.

FMUU Visioning Team

Shared by Rev. Karen Van Fossan

The FMUU Visioning Team, which began convening in the fall of 2020, consists of Tim Peterson, Lisa Falk, Karen Van Fossan, and Ellen Chaffee as pro bono consultant.

Our purpose of the Team is to support the congregation to identify and live into our values and visions, now and into the future.

The Team, with support from the Board, has identified four priorities.

1. Spring of 2021:
Identify our core values, through a values survey process.
2. Summer and Fall of 2021:
Develop operational definitions of these core values through collaborative processes with the congregation.
3. Fall of 2021 and Spring of 2022:
Co-create a vision statement and values statement.
4. Spring of 2022 and beyond:
Begin to develop a 5-year plan/strategic plan, to include a covenant of right relationship.

Here is a timeline related to the first priority.

March 21:

Minister's sermon includes congregational invitation to visioning process.

Church administrator sends a series of invitations to the congregation to participate in the values survey.

Tim Peterson begins to receive and compile results.

April 7:

Program Committee invites congregation to meet about transition from online to in person, a meeting facilitated by Ellen Chaffee of the Visioning Team.

April 25:

The Sunday service, facilitated by Lisa Falk, draws on UUA visioning elements.

May 16:

The Team reveals the results of the values survey.

Please stay tuned for more opportunities to come! For instance, this August, the Program Committee, in consultation with the Visioning Team, is planning a monthly series focusing on our core values, how to define them, and opportunities to express them creatively.

Worship Coordinator's Annual Report 2020-2021

It was my privilege to serve as worship coordinator between 7/1/2020 to 2/28/2021, Laurie J Baker.

Program Breakdown (full year)

Unitarian Universalism	20
World Religions	7
Justice and Liberation	15
Personal Search	10

July 2020-February 2021 Attendance

Average	41
Median	41
Total	1471

Average cost per service (outside speakers)	\$65
Total spent on speakers	\$2,200

Accomplishments

- Set up and managed church services via Zoom from March 2020 through February 2021
- Oversaw the purchase and installation of a new audio system
- Made recommendations for a video system to complete the AV renovation
- Established a new wisdom circle (ongoing)/small group ministry, Ceremonies of the Great Mother

Stewardship Report

These results are for the campaign that was run from the end of March through April. As this was taking place during the time of Covid, the stewardship team delivered (with no face-to-face contact) gift bags containing the brochure with our budget information and request for financial support along with candy and fun things to remind people of why they love us!

We ran 6 testimonials from our fellow congregants which were an inspiration to many of us.

These were part of six consecutive Sunday services. Weekly reminders in our newsletters and in our services served to keep the pledges coming.

Our total pledged as of May 10th for the 2021-2022 fiscal year is \$75,526. We have pledges from 65 out of 75 individuals. This congregation is an amazingly generous community. The church thanks you all, the board thanks you all and the stewardship team thanks you all!

Your pledges make our mission manifest - we truly are all in this together.

Lisa Falk

Stewardship Chair

Children and Youth Religious Education Report

Shared by Emma Hetland and Rev. Karen Van Fossan

Family Chapel

In the fall of 2020, we began a new, intergenerational, virtual program, Family Chapel, in order to address the needs of children, youth, and families during the time of COVID-19. This innovative program was the result of several meetings attended by a cross-section of the congregation and convened by Rev. Karen Van Fossan.

Since the fall, Family Chapel has been meeting the first and third Sunday of every month, with attendance ranging from 9 to 25 participants of many ages. Family Chapel is a collaborative project, involving shared leadership, planning, and engagement.

Change for Change through Family Chapel is working on narrowing down their specific cause to donate to – and engage in – through discussions among the FMUU Social Justice Council, the families, and all involved.

Our Whole Lives

In the spring of 2021, we held a six-week, virtual Taking Shape group, in which roughly a dozen youth participated. The group, facilitated by Katie Christensen and colleagues from Planned Parenthood, focused on comprehensive sexuality education based upon the UUA Our Whole Lives Curriculum.

In the spring, we also offered an evening workshop for parents, grandparents, and other adults, to accompany the Taking Shape program. The PASE (Parents Are Sexuality Educators) workshop was enthusiastically attended and received by the roughly one dozen participants.

Currently, Emma Hetland is working with Katie and others from Planned Parenthood to begin coordinating virtual meeting times for those who would be interested in ongoing PASE-related connections.

RE Coordination

In April of 2021, we hired Emma Hetland as Children and Youth Religious Education Coordinator, a position that had been vacant since the summer of 2020.

Emma is beginning to organize/clean/take inventory of materials in the Religious Education classrooms.

A collaborative meeting with those wanting to be involved in RE/youth programming was scheduled for May 13th.

Emma has had a phone conversation with Mary Worner, who is in charge of religious education at the Unitarian Church of Underwood to provide information to help with their programming planning as well as to provide mutual support in each other's programming during COVID-19.

FMUU Program Committee Annual Report

Committee members: Skip Wood, Michelle Steinwand, Carol Kapaun-Ratchenski, Jarrad Prasifka, Matthew Lindholm, Emma Hetland, Mary Leff. Also Attending: Karen Van Fossan, Minister, and Bill Thomas – Board Chair.

FY 2020-2021 was a year of rebuilding for Program Committee with several changes in leadership and the recruitment of six new members. Jarrad Prasifka, liaison to the Board, was the one constant in our membership.

Transition to online service impacted every component of worship. Program Committee provided consultation to the work of many dedicated individuals who did the heavy lifting of providing technical support, finding speakers, finding ways to deliver music and other liturgical elements in a way that kept us connected while continuing to reach out to the broader community. While we were not able to tally actual attendance, we do have records of the number of devices that signed in each Sunday. Averages by quarter for this fiscal year were 35 in Q1, 42 in Q2 and 50 in Q3.

With the hiring of a church administrator and the elimination of the worship coordinator position, the role of Program Committee was clarified to include three main areas of responsibility:

1. Provide oversight and accountability for delivery of UU programing (worship service, children's religious education, adult education, special program events) that is consistent with UU principles.
2. Provide programming advice, suggestions and support to the minister and direct support as requested for worship leading and selection of liturgical elements of the service.
3. Generate and solicit original program ideas and suggestions.

Highlights of this past year include:

- Hiring of Emma Hetland as Religious Education coordinator
- Co-hosting a discussion and brainstorming session with the congregation about returning to in-person services
- Supporting the work of leaders who initiated Wisdom Circles (Ceremonies of the Great Mother); youth/family education (OWL Program); intergenerational worship (Family Chapel)
- Submitting an operating budget request for FY 2021-2022 for \$8500.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Leff
Program Committee Chair

Social Justice Council (SJC)

Shared by Hilary Hafner

The Social Justice Council consists of 5-10 FMUU members who share a concern for social justice in our community. We meet on the First Thursday of each month via ZOOM at 5:30 PM. New members are always welcome.

Though the COVID Pandemic of 2020 posed some unique challenges and limitations for what the SJC was able to do in a COVID-safe manner, we were engaged in many meaningful efforts this year.

PROJECTS

Garden

- SJC members and other FMUU members took care of the garden and distributed produce to the community.

Pride

- Pride in the Park – Although not hosted in person, the church was represented in the online
- Virtual Pride In the Park directory of supportive business and community members.

Standing on the Side of Love

- Our banner was displayed on the church building in June in support of the Black Lives Matter and protests occurring in the spring for social justice.

Flags

- Transgender and Black Lives Matter Flags- SJC raised funds to buy two flags to display on the side of the church in support of the Transgender and BLM communities. These flags will be displayed by the end of spring.

Churches United

- Unfortunately, the SJC was unable to participate in serving meals to the Churches United Community as the shelter was under pandemic restrictions and serving meals was not a COVID-safe activity during this period.

Emergency Sanctuary

- Members of the SJC supported the Emergency Sanctuary status of the church this past year as it aligns with our community goals. Though emergency sanctuary did not end up being needed around the national election or certification of electoral

college votes, members of the larger community have expressed their gratitude to FMUU, via Rev. Van Fossan, for making the sanctuary available as a safe space.

Water Protector Movement

- Several letter writing campaigns were held and promoted to support Political Prisoners from the Water Protector Movement.

Donation Drive for Hats and Mittens

- Many full to bursting bags of hats, mittens, and winter gear were donated to the African Immigrant and Minority Support (AIMS) group to help new community members prepare for our cold winters.

Children's Religious Education Joint Project

- The SJC and CRE are working on an intergenerational project to promote the social justice interest of our young congregants. Details to follow!

Environmental Justice

- Trees will be planted with the FM-River Keepers to conserve eroding soils and mitigate climate change.

Donations

- Churches United Donation of \$150
- Great Plains Food Bank Donation of \$50
- Produce from our gardens was periodically donated to the community.

In addition, individual members are involved in a wide variety of causes/projects related to social justice.

Annual Report of the FMUU Care Team

July 2020 – June 2021

During this church year, the FMUU Care Team continued to provide caring support to members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fargo Moorhead.

At the suggestion of Rev. Karen Van Fossan, the core Care Team has been small in order to protect confidentiality of those we serve. However, we reach out to other members to expand our circle of caring for help with specific needs. During this year, leadership of the care team passed from Jessica Jensen to Claudette Peterson. We acknowledge and are grateful for the work that Jessica did with the Care Team. The team currently consists of Claudette Peterson, Meg Luther Lindholm, Mary Struck, and Rev. Karen Van Fossan.

Throughout the year of pandemic distancing, members of the Care Team reached out to members in several ways. Early in 2021 we attempted to check in with each person/family in the church directory by phone or email. We sent get well cards and sympathy cards to individuals who were ill or experienced loss. We sent Christmas cards and homemade Valentines made by our youth to members that are alone during the pandemic. We provided rides to medical appointments as well as meals to families affected by illness or death.

At the suggestion of Rev. Van Fossan, we developed a covenant for the Care Team that is included in this report:

Covenant for Care Team (Adopted May 4, 2021)

As members of the FMUU Care Team, we agree to:

- Serve in the spirit of the first and seventh UU principles: To affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person in the context of the larger web of which we are a part.
- Be fully present and prepared – spiritually, emotionally, physically, and intellectually.
- Listen with compassion and attention.
- Maintain overall confidentiality for the people we care for, while sharing with the minister information they need in order to serve our people.
- Support each other to live by our shared principles.
- Approach conflict (or potential conflict) as a way to grow, learn, and connect. (Practice “Ouch” and “Oops.”)
- Sustain a presence of caring in our UU community.
- Practice cultural competency to the best of our ability.
- Set expectations and boundaries that improve quality of life for ourselves and those we care for. Be prepared to ask for help, say no, or make time for yourself.

Moving forward, we hope to continue to expand our circle of caring to members of our FMUU family.

Submitted by Claudette Peterson

Place Committee Report

Shared by Carolyn Monzingo with additional notes from Staff

The place Committee was nearly inactive during the 2020/2021 fiscal year due to the pandemic although activities started to resume with the advent of Spring 2021. Snow removal was arranged; however, volunteers were used for both minor snow removal and lawn mowing.

The building underwent the annual fire extinguisher and furnace inspections. Toilet paper dispensers were replaced in the main hallway.

We continue to enjoy the wonderful care of our indoor premises and gardens by Jon Tiedeman and other volunteers.

This committee is looking for a new chair as of August 2021.



Pictured: Jon Tiedeman caring for church trees. Photos by Claudia English

Thank you!