

FMUU ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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Board Chair Report 2021-22

In early May I was talking with an Episcopal priest. He told me about one of their smaller churches that had shut down – no online services, no nothing. Around the country, many smaller churches have gone that way. And are still dormant. Presumably at some point soon they will try to get going again.

That was not us. We have, without the kind of resources big churches can marshal, worked hard and been creative in going on line and then shifting to hybrid services – online and in-person. We can't be exact, since we sometimes did not record online numbers, but it looks like our average attendance is back up to 45-50 people a week. We love having our Church, with its eclectic, sometimes homespun, sometimes sophisticated services. Our members have been patient and positive as we struggle with it all. Because we value this place that gives us moral and spiritual sustenance.

If you look through the reports for this year, you will see how we have kept going. We have hung Social Justice banners. We have replaced two (2!) water heaters. With the help of a generous bequest from Thom and Audrey Richmond, we have paid off our mortgage (which sure helped when the water heaters quit). We are continuing our search for a half-time minister. Not to mention keeping up with coffee hour and snacks (without which any church would certainly wither away). We are mulling solar panels for the roof. We have had a range of services, some of which were no doubt appealing to some, while others were appealing to others. Our beloved pianist Suzanne went in for surgery, and we used recorded music she made for us.

Our Board needs acknowledgement and praise for working through issues and decisions on which we were certainly not in simple agreement. Joseph Demasi, Lisa Falk, Jarrad Prasifka, and Jessica Jensen have been constructive, cooperative and engaged. Claudia English deserves special credit for shouldering so much work and detail as our Secretary/Treasurer. They all deserve our appreciation. So do our paid staff – Monika Browne-Ecker, our Church Administrator, has been much appreciated for her efficient and competent service. Emma Hetland has been conscientious and engaged as our RE person. Laurie Baker and then Katie Christianson have kept Sundays going as Worship Coordinators.

Finally, the Board Chair is supposed to talk about finances. I have to say that to my surprise, with all the changes and challenges, we have done well overall. Certainly the Thom and Audrey Richmond bequest made a big difference, but so did the solid support from a range of our members. Thank you all for coming, Zooming, listening, singing, asking questions, giving money, putting peanut butter in celery and contributing to that collective energy that makes it all work.

Bill Thomas

Treasurer's Report 2021-22

The Church's financial picture is solid. Our fiscal year is July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022. We have managed to stay current on our bills and pay the full amount to the UUA to be an Honor Congregation.

Our major expenses were a \$8,000 roof repair. Church members donated \$6,000 to help pay for the roof repair. We also installed 2 new water heaters at \$3,811.

We began holding Worship Services in person again on July 1, 2021.

The Building Mortgage was paid off by a generous donation from Tom Richmond and a second donation from Tom Richmond Estate was used as a match fundraiser to pay off the remaining balance.

The Investment Account balance is \$76,248.41. This includes \$65,200 raised for the Minister Fund and \$6,936 in the building emergency fund. There is earned interest that will be divided between the 2 accounts at the end of June 2022.

Our current Minister Fund total is \$77,746.34. Projected to receive an additional \$2,000-\$3,000 to complete the Minister Fund started in 2019. (Reminder we paid former Minister of 1 year \$41,750. So grand total of money raised for the Minister Fund since 2019 is \$119,496.34.) This year we are on target to meet our expenses and put aside up to \$10,200 for the Minister Fund.

Our projected yearly income for 2022-2023 is \$99,100, (Pledges, Building Use Income, Basket & Gift donations, Restricted Donations). Our estimated expenses, including 50% of a part time Minister salary is \$98,039.

More financials are available on request. I hope our vision of hiring a part-time minister will move forward. We have accomplished a lot this current year, after the resignation of our part-time Minister, including a couple of members taking on the Worship Coordinator responsibilities.

Respectfully,
Claudia English, Secretary/Treasurer

Stewardship Committee Report 2021-22

Our Stewardship (fundraising) campaign report for this Church Year will be short, because the campaign is still in progress as the report is written. The nature of these campaigns have changed in recent years because so many of us have gone to automatic monthly deductions – sustaining memberships. We are still asking people, if they can, to increase their contributions. We also want to ask people who are new participants to start their contribution.

We ask people to tell us their plans for giving so we can plan for what the Church can do. By the end of May we hope to have a fairly good idea of what we will have to work with for the coming year. Jane van Hatten and Karl Nelson, this year, provided us with an extra incentive by offering to up their pledge an additional 10% if ten other households will also do (at least) that much.

The generosity of our members to the Church has been inspiring. Work on this committee has been done by Claudia English, Bill Thomas, Lisa Falk, and staff work by Monika Browne-Ecker.

Half-time Ministerial Search Committee Report 2021-22

The search committee received its charge on September 15, 2019. This report covers the period from July 2021 to present:

July 2021

July – October 2021 Little was done

October 2021 Received a revised charge from the Board. November – December 2021 Began advertising locally.

January to Present 2022

January 2022 Received interest from a UU minister that we had turned down back in 2020 and once again after reviewing his application dismissed him.

February 2022 Received interest from another UU minister. Before we could interview this individual, we were informed that the person had already accepted another position.

March 2022 Receive an application from a non UU minister. After reviewing the application, we decided to interview this individual.

April 2022 Received another application from a non UU minister. After reviewing this applicant, we decided not to move forward with this applicant.

April 2022 Interviewed the first non UU minister. After the interview the committee decided to put some specific UU material together for this candidate and then to have another conversation with the individual. The applicant agreed to this process. In fact, the applicant expressed admiration for our due diligence.

May 2022 Received two more applications from UU ministers. We are already preparing to interview one of these applicants and are reviewing the other applicant's package.

May 2022 Materials have been developed and will be sent soon. Tim Peterson

Program Committee and Worship Coordinator Report 2021-22

It has been a challenging and interesting year for the Program Committee. The process of moving from online into hybrid services has been an ongoing effort. After Rev. Van Fossan left (as our part time minister), we have worked with Worship Coordinators Laurie Baker and then Katie Christenson, as well as Church Administrator Monika Browne-Ecker to develop and present our Sunday services. Laurie Baker's employment in the Worship Coordinator's capacity ended in February 2021. When she resigned, the program calendar was filled for several additional months. Laurie then served as a volunteer for several months. During her tenure as Worship Coordinator, the Program Committee did seek to make use of a thematic approach though it's uncertain if that has been a useful or successful approach to programming. Laurie also reported that the committee made a brief and unsuccessful attempt to gather surveys from attendees. During the months when Laurie volunteered as program chair, Mary Leff and Michelle Steinwand provided a lot of support and insight, as did Skip Wood and Bill Thomas.

Adding Seth Tuders as our Tech Host helped the hybrid arrangement to work. We have hopes in the coming months to add discussion and learning groups in addition to our Sunday services.

Services have included those by our own members, other spiritual leaders, professors, and various people who are informed and insightful on various topics.

Working on the Program Committee this year were:

Mary Leff, Jarrad Prasifka, Lisa Falk, Bill Thomas, Skip Wood, Laurie Baker, Katie Christensen, Emma Hetland, and Michelle Steinwand.

Perhaps a good way to highlight the work is to look at this list:

Sundays	Speaker	Title
7/4/21	Larry Peterson	Susan B. Anthony
7/11/21	Tracey Wilkie	This I Believe
7/18/21	Emma Hetland	This I Believe
7/25/21	Skip Wood	This I Believe
8/1/21	Matthew Lindholm	FMUU Values Series: Community
8/8/21	Michelle Lelwica - Concordia Religion Department	FMUU Values Series: Compassion
8/15/21	Jessica Jensen	FMUU Values Series: Belonging (Social Justice Committee flag raising after the service)
8/22/21	Patti Prasifka	FMUU Values Series: Spirituality

8/29/21	Congregation-led with intro by Tim Peterson and Lisa Falk	Singalong - Emma Hetland to speak on UUA General Assembly (short summary report)
9/5/21	Carolyn Monzingo	<i>Putting the Labor Back in Labor Day</i> (a Worship Web sermon)
9/12/21	Jarrad Prasifka	<i>A Brief History of FMUU</i>
9/19/21	Cody Schuler	<i>What's Homecoming without a Home? The State of Homelessness in FM</i>
9/26/21	Ann Blankenship	Pilgrimage
10/3/21	Mary Struck/Ron Gaul +1	Harvest of Learning: Islam and the Quran
10/10/21	Lisa Falk	Bearing Witness
10/17/21	Congregation	Telling Our Stories about Homecoming or Harvest
10/24/21	Jack Wood	Growing Together Community Gardens: Many Hands Make Light Work with Jack Wood
10/31/21	Jennifer Moldenhauer	Nature Being Human: Remembering Our Connection to a Living World.
11/7/21	Inadril Sen Gupta	Vedanta - a philosophical foundation of Hinduism
11/14/21	Linda Johansen	Through the Lens of the Enneagram: A Spiritual Path
11/21/21	Randi Kay Olson	Self-Care as a Healing Ritual
11/28/21	Skip Wood	What Makes For Human Goodness

12/5/21	Mary Struck	Hope, Despair, and the Don't Know Mind: A Buddhist Perspective
12/12/21	Tim Peterson	Do you have the Will? Do you know the Way?
12/19/21	Emma Hetland and Laurie Baker	An Intergenerational Holiday Celebration
12/26/21	Bill Thomas	Mary Oliver: Prophet of the 7th Principle
1/2/22	David Hartson, davidjhartson@gmail.com	What a Psychologist Thinks of Mindfulness
1/9/22	David Meyers, davidbentonmyers@yahoo.com	Lifting Up the Feminine in Judaism
1/16/22	Carolyn Monzingo	Bending Towards Justice: One More Step; UUA Sermon by Paul Beedle
1/23/22	Congregation	Telling Our Stories--My Search for Identity
1/30/22	Joe DiMasi	5th Sunday Read and Sing

2/6/22	John Bagu, johnbagu7@gmail.com	(Renewable Energy)
2/13/22		Telling Our Stories "The experience that changed my life"
2/20/22	Carolyn Monzingo	Famous UUs
2/27/22	Ashley Thornberg	Ashley before Yoga was hard ... especially for others!
3/6/22	Barb Graber	At Risk and Homeless Youth in FM
3/13/22	Larry Zahradka	TBD
3/20/22	Joe DeMasi	Serendipity -- a personal story
3/27/22	Heather Keeler	Boarding Schools and Spiritual Reconciliation
4/3/22	Jack Weinstein	You keep using the that word, Capitalism? I don't think it means what you think it means
4/10/22	Jessica Jensen	What is our "ism"?
4/17/22	Tibby Reas Hinderlie	Reproductive Justice
4/24/22	Swami Sarvapriyananda	Universal Acceptance: The Vedanta Way
5/1/22	Mark Froemke	International Workers Day
5/8/22	Stacy Nicholson	My Journey Through Kidney Disease and Transplant
5/15/22	Tim Peterson	Gospel According to Erik
5/22/22	Dobervich, Gretchen	HIV/AIDS Social Justice
5/29/22	Jensen, Jessica	To give and to receive
6/5/22	Hudson, Jody	Ableism [contact info: jhudson@creativecare.org]
6/12/22	Frederick Edwards	Juneteenth (tentative!)
6/19/22	Latitia Hellerud	World Refugee Day
6/26/22		Summer Poetry or Flower Communion (tentative!)

Community/People Committee Report 2021-22

This committee went into abeyance during the pandemic. It has been slowly coming back to life. So far, we have done the work to facilitate a couple of potlucks. In the future, we hope to work toward other things that help us build our own community. This may include a church bazaar.

Involved in the re-animating committee are: Mary Struck, Larry Peterson, Diane Krogh, and Ruth Morton.

Place Committee Report 2021-22

Old buildings are always in need of attention and ours is no exception. The roof shingles were repaired last summer, the many squirrel holes were sealed, the north and south sides of the building had tuck point repaired, the west steps were cleaned, and the west tree was partially trimmed. In addition, the top of the chimney was seriously beginning to crumble and so it was removed and capped. Gail Wischmann and Carolyn Monzingo painted the two east side entry doors. Both water heaters were replaced in April.

Ruth Morton has replaced some of the fabric aesthetics in the Sanctuary with more to come.

Carolyn has added a few fabric aesthetics as well.

Many volunteers assisted in raking the lawn both spring and fall. Mary Struck tends our indoor plants. Ruth was in charge of flower selection and planting along with the help of volunteers. Thank you to all of you who volunteered to do snow removal and lawn mowing. Without all the willing hands to help with these various projects, our building would not look as nice as it does. Thank you, one and all.

Carolyn Monzingo

Children's Religious Education Report 2021-22

Family Chapel was discontinued until further notice on June 6, 2021. The reasoning given for this was there being less of a demand seen and the consistent families attending indicating that they would be attending in person church and RE when we returned on June 13, 2021.

In person RE returned on June 13, 2021. The lesson structure was laid-back for the summer, with emphasis on reacquainting the kids with each other and the church space.

The RE children chose to donate their Change for Change funds raised through Family Chapel to two causes: Cat's Cradle Shelter in Fargo, and Youthworks in Fargo- to help care for both human and non-human animals.

After the grand reopening on September 12, 2021, RE returned to its school year with structured lessons the following week, September 19, 2021.

Emma sends out communication by email each week to RE families with the goal of making sure that parents are included in programming, as well as providing resources for families at home who may not be ready to return in person.

On December 19, 2021 RE participated in an intergenerational service about the many different winter holidays.

In RE this school year, the children were introduced to many different topics of UUism, world religions, social justice, and caring for themselves and the community.

RE has engaged in two series this school year: The 7 UU Children's Principles series beginning in November 2021 to January 2022 and an LGBTQIA+ series throughout April and May 2022. A Question Box Service, with the goal of providing a space for the kids' spiritual and personal questions will occur on May 15, 2022.

Since returning in person, we have seen a return of consistent families attending RE and utilizing the nursery. We have also welcomed many FMUU families and new families to the church who have attended RE and the nursery. Participants of RE have ranged each week from about 1-8 children. On a typical Sunday, Emma and an adult volunteer lead the RE lesson and Rose VanNelson leads childcare in the nursery.

Emma Hetland

Tech Task Force Report 2021-22

Participants were Laurie Baker, Bill Thomas, Seth Tuders and Skip Wood. We had three overlapping issues: the sound system; developing and maintaining hybrid in person/on-line services; and replacing the projector/portable screen visual system.

The sound system was newly installed at the beginning of the pandemic, so its problems did not become apparent until after the normal time allowed to exchange equipment. In addition, the company our installer bought it from went out of business. The system suffered from continual dropout of sound. That is, the mics would pick up part of a sentence but drop the rest. This was disconcerting for anyone listening, but especially hard on people listening on Zoom, or people with reduced hearing. We have discovered that a different type of mic seems to solve the problem, and our installer is willing to trade them out. But now they are far back-ordered. Eventually, we will have a more functional system. We currently have an interim system that works fairly well.

Making the transition to hybrid services had us dealing with many complex issues. Audio from our sound system was feeding into Zoom with poor quality, the internet connection for the laptop used to feed Zoom was weak, presenting appropriate video was a challenge (on-line viewers would sometimes see long shots of an empty pulpit while hearing off-screen voices, and so on. We were greatly helped when Seth Tuders agreed to become the regular Tech Host. It helped when we made a hardwired connection to the internet. It also helped when we acquired a new laptop. And experience is a wonderful teacher. We feel the services can still use improvement, but are much more steady and we have a regular contingent of online participants.

For the visual system, we had considerable discussion. These involved the issues of how the system would affect the look of the church, ease of operation, and sight lines and viewing prospects. There are also issues of availability of components. We considered 1) two screens at each side on articulated arms so they could be folded back; 2) a projector mounted on the ceiling with a drop down screen; and 3) one large screen on a cart-mount that could be rolled into various positions. After much discussion the Board recently decided to go with option 1. This was in part because Seth volunteered to put the project together and do the installation.

All of these areas will continue to present problems in the coming year. We will do our best to handle them and we hope the attendance, both in person and online, will become smoother and better.

Bill Thomas

Social Justice Report 2021-22

From May 2021-May 2022 the Social Justice Council focused on vulnerable communities and climate justice in the FM-Community We supported the LGBTQIA and Black Communities through our purchase and display of flags and other activities. We addressed economic justice through our food, winter gear, and diaper donations, and have begun to assess climate justice through our investigation of solar panels.

We rely on donations from “Change for Change” to fund our projects and are deeply grateful to all who donate and help support our projects. As a small council, we identify existing social justice causes/campaigns in the community and amplify their impact through our participation as a congregation.

Purchased Black Lives Matter and Transgender Flags

- These were installed on the Chimney

Planted/Harvested Produce in Raised Gardens

- Members tended to the gardens throughout the spring and summer
- All produce was donated to Dorothy Day

Pride Rocks

- Purchased supplies for rock painting and hold rock painting sessions every 3rd Sunday
- Rocks were handed out at Pride in the Park 2021

Pride 2021

- Hosted a table at Pride with Volunteers
- MUUSJA also Volunteered

Hat/Mitten Drive

- Collected/Donated Winter Gear to the Giving Tree at the Main Fargo Library

Solar Panel Evaluation

- Hosted an informational meeting with John Bagu
- Approval from board to evaluate our roof
- Ongoing

Diaper Drive

- Collect diapers in May/June for Mother's/Father's Day
- Donate to Frasier Hilary Hafner