



CEDAR LANE

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

WHERE **LOVE** WORKS

ANNUAL REPORT  
2019-2020



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## *Our Vision*

We are Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church, a community where love works. Together we

- explore the eternal,
- nurture community, and
- build a more just world.

Together, we dare to embody beloved community.

This is our vision statement, which was adopted unanimously by the Cedar Lane congregation in May 2016. It is a vision that guides us in all that we are becoming, through our experimentation with worship and exploring the eternal, seeking new ways to bring people together and nurture community, and focusing our social justice efforts and doing our part to build a more just world.

Beloved community is part of our Unitarian Universalist heritage. The term was first given prominence by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his Ware Lecture at the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in 1966, and later incorporated into his many speeches. In our vision statement, the expression “dare to embody beloved community” conveys that we are not there yet, but we are boldly committed to taking risks in actively pursuing it. We hope you will join us in this pursuit.

## *Contact Us*

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## *From the Ministers*

Dear Cedar Lane Members and Friends,

Thank you for your support, encouragement, helpful criticisms, and well wishes, but most of all for your commitment to Cedar Lane.

Our vital task in life as individuals and as a community is to spend our lifetimes intentionally and compassionately developing a shared ministry of width and depth. The Cedar Lane community endeavors to do this work well and we are doing it amidst a pandemic.



As our time staying physically apart extends into an unknown timeline, we want to take a moment to say thank you to all of you. As we've made the quick turn to all online ministry together, we have felt lucky to say that we have been kind to each other, extending grace wherever we can to acknowledge how hard this time is for each of us and how diligently your church staff and lay leaders are working to sustain and strengthen the beloved community that is Cedar Lane. This year we truly deepened our shared covenant as we worked to build resilience and strength.

In the US, as well as across the globe, this year has been challenging to many of our shared Unitarian Universalist principles and values. This backdrop is also the setting for a historic downward shift that continues in attendance and support of religious communities across denominations, as well as within Unitarian Universalism. Though we are seeing attendance go up as we navigate online services, overall membership, however, remains a downward trend, something we will need to explore as we plan to share our saving faith online through the upcoming year ahead.

Cedar Lane has continued to provide the spiritual grounding and caring sanctuary needed to face these challenges, and to be a spiritual laboratory where we do the work of transformation of ourselves, each other, and our world. Our Pastoral Care team has easily spent more than a thousand hours making visits and calls, sending cards, coordinating calls, meal deliveries, and grocery shopping. Ministry Team Leaders, Members, Friends, and the Alliance have also participated weekly in the work of helping us embody the beloved community by making calls, sending cards, and helping us all navigate this shift to being an online religious community. Our Staff, Audio-Visual Team, and Visual Arts Team and countless volunteers have learned new skills so that we could have online worship and move our programs online. This is what Community looks like.

This year, we deepened our faith as we continued to work with our Sanctuary guest. This necessary act of faith and faithful resistance has challenged us to learn more about what it means to co-create an environment of hospitality and be a living sanctuary. We have acted locally and nationally for immigrant rights and climate justice, in new ways. It has strengthened our partnerships with other religious congregations and community organizations. And we have been humbled by the strength, courage, faith, and spirit of our Sanctuary guest and her children.

Being a Unitarian Universalist further means that we minister to the various communities in which we participate: bringing the principled insights, moral imperatives, and justice concerns of our Unitarian Universalist faith to the local, regional, national, and global communities that will determine the

shape and substance of human life. This is the practical, everyday vision of religious life and religious community which we came to Cedar Lane to serve.

In the face of financial challenges, we have dug deeply to nurture generosity and hope. We have developed systems together to work together transparently, cohesively, and passionately. We have done our work well, by beginning in our own hearts, minds, and souls in meditation classes, worship, spiritual retreats, labyrinth walks, Soul Circles, and the Seeker Series. Ministry begins to self-build through everyday spiritual practices and then, from that core of personal strength, integrity, and well-being, to live a ministry of purposeful engagement with and care for other persons—both near and far.

As we connected within our community this year, we challenged, explored, nurtured, expanded, and acted on our beliefs in worship, affinity groups, book discussion groups, Social Justice film programs, and our Green Sanctuary. Our spiritual tradition's history of "Shared Ministry," has grounded us in our past while also pointing the way to a sustainable, just world built on a deep inner life and rich, deep connections to the larger community.

Everything we do in congregational life is done as a part of a team. The team at the center of our ministry is the staff, clergy, and lay leadership partnership we've built here. We are blessed to have a vibrant and healthy staff and lay leadership team. We are grateful to complete another year of ministry alongside all of them and all of you.

Yours in faith,

*Rev. Abhi Rev. Katie*

Rev. Abhi Janamanchi & Rev. Katie Romano Griffin

## Our Staff

**Rev. Abhi Janamanchi**, Senior Minister, 301-493-8300 x203

**Rev. Katie Romano Griffin**, Associate Minister, 301-493-8300 x204

**Jen Morley**, Executive Director, 301-493-8300 x209

**Tim Atkins**, Director of Lifespan Religious Education, 301-493-8300 x206

**Dr. Henry Sgrecci**, Music Director, 301-493-8300 x214

**Rev. Archene Turner**, Community Minister

**Dayna Edwards**, Intern Minister

**Olivia James**, Accounting & Office Manager, 301-493-8300 x310

**Ashley Del Sole**, Lifespan Religious Education Administrator, 301-493-8300 x207

**Clare Jacocks**, Administrative Coordinator,  
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**José Morant**, Facilities Manager, 301-493-8300 x211

**Tiffany Lewis**, Youth Coordinator, 301-493-8300 x219

**Dr. Jasmin Lee**, Accompanist, 301-493-8300 x214

**Carolyn Morrissey**, Volunteer Coordinator

**Jenny Crane**, Children's Choir Director

**Stephanie Williams**, Childcare Coordinator

**Rev. Dr. Kenneth Torquil MacLean**, Minister Emeritus





## *Board of Trustees*

As the new Board gathered together for the first time last summer, we were filled with excitement and optimism contemplating the shared journey that lay ahead. We spent a relaxed weekend getting to know one another and discussing some of the larger, more pressing concerns and probing questions that lay before us as a religious community. We challenged ourselves to apply some out of the box possibility thinking as we anticipated exploring these issues together with the congregation.

One of the Board's priorities this year has been communication. While that may seem an odd or even unnecessary focus since communication is an integral part of everything we do, we looked forward to facilitating more intentional conversations among the Board, the congregation, and staff in a variety of formats, some familiar, some new. This fall, the Board invited both the Social Justice and Environmental Justice Ministry Teams to Board meetings to speak to us about their work and aspirations. One fall evening, Rev. Ahbi, the Board, and other attendees settled into the library for a "Fireside Chat" to consider the question of how we will find fellowship and purpose in these troubling times—and this was in a pre-pandemic world.

At the November 3, 2019 Congregational Meeting, the Renovation Task Force co-chairs, Maryann Dillon and Mary Means, shared the architect's rendering of the possibilities for the renovation of our building space. The congregation voted overwhelmingly to give the task force the green light to move ahead with the plans, with the caveat that we only spend as much money as we are able to raise.

Of course, the monthly Board meetings are always open to congregants. But it was the Board-run Sunday service during furlough week, that extreme cost-saving measure, that provided one of the most unexpected and insightful exchanges, when the congregation broke into small groups to reflect on the current state of Cedar Lane. We've also reached out beyond Cedar Lane, meeting one wintery Saturday with the ministers and Board members from the River Road and Fairfax UU congregations to talk about leadership and explore ways we might work together.

We had anticipated more conversations with the congregation to explore possibilities and priorities for our religious community but, by the turn of the year, our focus turned out of necessity to our short-term and long-term budget issues, and our long-standing structural deficit. In collaboration with the staff, we came up with a tight 2020-2021 budget and began working on a multi-year plan to balance the budget. We also established a working group to address a big issue for churches everywhere: how to reverse declining membership.

What we never could have imagined was the appearance of the novel coronavirus and the changes it would cause worldwide, locally, and right here at Cedar Lane. Financially, it has meant a considerable drop in rental revenue, the cancelling of an important fundraiser, and more. We got some reprieve, when, through the perseverance of our Executive Director Jen Morley, the church secured a subsidy from the federal Payroll Protection Program. And while the circumstances caused by the coronavirus have exacerbated our financial situation, they are by no means the only reason we find ourselves in this predicament. Still, we had to go back and reconsider our proposed 2020-2021 budget and our multi-year plan for balanced budgets. This plan is a work in progress given the uncertainty of the still unfolding pandemic.



The pandemic is creating more than just financial uncertainty. It is changing the way we worship, convene meetings, hold events, and connect with each other. The path forward is uncharted, but we are off to an amazing start thanks to the imagination and fortitude of our staff, the AV team, music team, and other volunteers who have stepped forward to take us 100% online. In May, the Board held two Zoom conversations with the congregation to consider our way through and beyond this pandemic. The conversations were rich and affirming and the start of more to come as we move forward.

We remain optimistic and know that our strength—beyond sheer numbers—is in our community. Keeping it strong invites us to ask: how can we live into our vision of a multicultural and multigenerational community? How do we move beyond welcoming new visitors to ensuring that they want to stay? How do we create more social programming that strengthens the bonds between us? These are questions the Board will continue to ponder and we will explore together as a community.

The Board's journey has not always followed a direct path, and certainly no one could have foreseen the unexpected twists and turns caused by the novel coronavirus. There is much to consider as we move into the year ahead. We look forward to facilitating more intentional conversations among the Board, staff, and congregation. Staying connected is more important now than ever. And we are grateful to serve this beloved community and the values we share.

## Board of Trustees: Roster

Peggy Jackson, President (2017-20)  
 Tod Chernikoff, President-Elect (2018-21)  
 Joe Merenda, Treasurer (2018-20)  
 Anne Turner, Secretary (2018-20)  
 Jack Welch, Assistant Treasurer (2019-21)  
 Judy Rodgers, Assistant Secretary (2019-21)  
 Suzanne Pineau, At-large (2017-20)  
 Raj Rajendran, At-large (2017-20)  
 Joan Riggs, At-large (2018-21)  
 Rod Braña, At-large (2018-21)  
 Nate Hultman, At-large (2019-22)  
 Becky Lupes, At-large (2019-22)  
 Rich Madaleno, At-large (2019-22)



*As Trustees, we covenant to keep the best interests of the Congregation at heart and to carry out the trust placed in us as guardians of Cedar Lane's Vision/Mission and as stewards of its resources. We will exchange ideas thoughtfully, honestly, and respectfully as we seek to reach a position we can all support. We will hear all voices, commit to the decision of the group, communicate frequently with the Congregation, and be mindful that our example influences the community as a whole.*

You can find minutes from Board meetings, the Board Policy Manual, and other Board-related information on our website at [cedarlane.org/board-trustees](https://cedarlane.org/board-trustees). You can also [view the draft minutes](#) from our 2019 Annual Meeting.

To connect with the Board of Trustees, please email the Board President at [boardpresident@cedarlane.org](mailto:boardpresident@cedarlane.org).



## Board of Trustees: Committee & Task Force Reports

### Development and Fundraising Committee

*Sandy Dawsey and Cathy Knapper, Co-chairs*

We revived the committee after a year of it being dormant. Our chief task was to come up with a new fundraiser. We did, but it was scheduled for April and had to be abandoned because of the pandemic. We are undaunted and plan to re-launch it when we can. We're also excited about imagining new ways of raising much-needed money for our beloved community. We're a fun bunch with a serious purpose of creating fundraisers that generate excitement as well as money. Come be part of our committee and do good work in good company.

### Governance Committee

*Greg Falcigno, Chair*

The Governance Committee supports the Board of Trustees by providing ongoing advice and assistance on matters of governance. The committee helps the Board to understand and focus on its role under Governance by Policy and assists with governance documents. This fiscal year, the Governance Committee (1) presented seminars for the Board based on Governance and Ministry by Dan Hotchkiss; (2) advised the Board on several questions of policy around budget, endowment, congregational votes, and committee charters; (3) began working to make the Board Policy Manual more readable as well as aligned to Cedar Lane's other governance documents; and (4) increased our Zoom proficiency!

### Human Resources Committee

*Linda Gianessi and Judy Hautala, Co-chairs*

The HR Committee is conducting further analysis of the current compensation of Cedar Lane staff with UUA guidelines. Members assisted in hiring a Facilities Technician, conducting our search for a Music Program Coordinator, and drafting contract agreements for the Music Program Coordinator, Pianist/Organist, Children's Choir Director, and the 3 music lead singers. This spring, we also drafted new policies on sick, medical, and family leave consistent with the CARES Act (Families First Coronavirus Response Act.)

### Endowment Committee

*Jack Rodgers, Chair, and Michael Thoryn, Vice-Chair*

The committee manages the church's endowment funds, Blumenthal Fund, savings account, and the Capital Campaign Fund. For the endowment funds, the committee aims to invest prudently for long-term growth, primarily through low-cost indexed mutual funds. The committee has a target allocation of 50% domestic stocks, 20% foreign stocks, and 30% bonds and cash. Other funds are invested in more liquid assets, less in stocks and more in bonds and cash. All the funds have experienced losses during the last few months as the markets reacted to the global pandemic. The value of endowment funds fell by 18.5% during the first quarter of 2020. The most liquid fund, the Capital Campaign Fund, actually grew in value in the first quarter of 2020 because the fund was invested mostly in short-term bonds, and additional pledges were contributed to the fund. As of March 31, 2020, the combined endowment funds totaled \$2,132,815. The General Endowment held assets of \$1,619,454; the Memory Garden Fund held \$372,158. The annual payouts from the General Endowment and the Memory Garden Fund to the operating budget will be made on July 1, 2020.



### Financial Policy Committee

*Carol Bertaut, Chair*

The committee monitored and reported trends in pledges and membership and their implications for the budget, made recommendations to the Board on financial matters including sources of funding for the current fiscal year budgetary shortfall and the status of the endowment and other fund balances, and assisted in the development of the budget for coming fiscal year.

### Renovation Task Force

*Maryann Dillon and Mary Means, Co-Chairs*

At the last Annual Meeting, the Renovation Task Force (RTF) presented to the congregation a conceptual plan to renovate our building, including the sanctuary, social hall, lobby, and restrooms, and to make our building fully accessible. Since then, the RTF presented a preliminary budget to the Board, which was approved almost unanimously by the congregation at a special meeting on November 3, 2019. This resolution authorized the RTF to proceed with design development and implementation at a cost not to exceed \$5.3 million, or however much in pledges had been committed by the time of contracting for construction.

In addition to the \$5.3 million, our budget will include money for maintenance and special programming. Thus far, the Capital Campaign has received pledges and other anticipated contributions totaling about \$5.5 million. The RTF continues its work raising pledges, negotiating an architectural contract, and planning for new uses in the building post-renovation, with a focus on uses that might generate income. Once the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the RTF recommended to the Board that we pause our fundraising and design development activities, at least until fall 2020, when we hope to be in a more stable position to anticipate when pledges will be completed, new pledges secured, and new end uses better defined. We fully expect to resume design development after that and will develop a new schedule for an expected construction date.

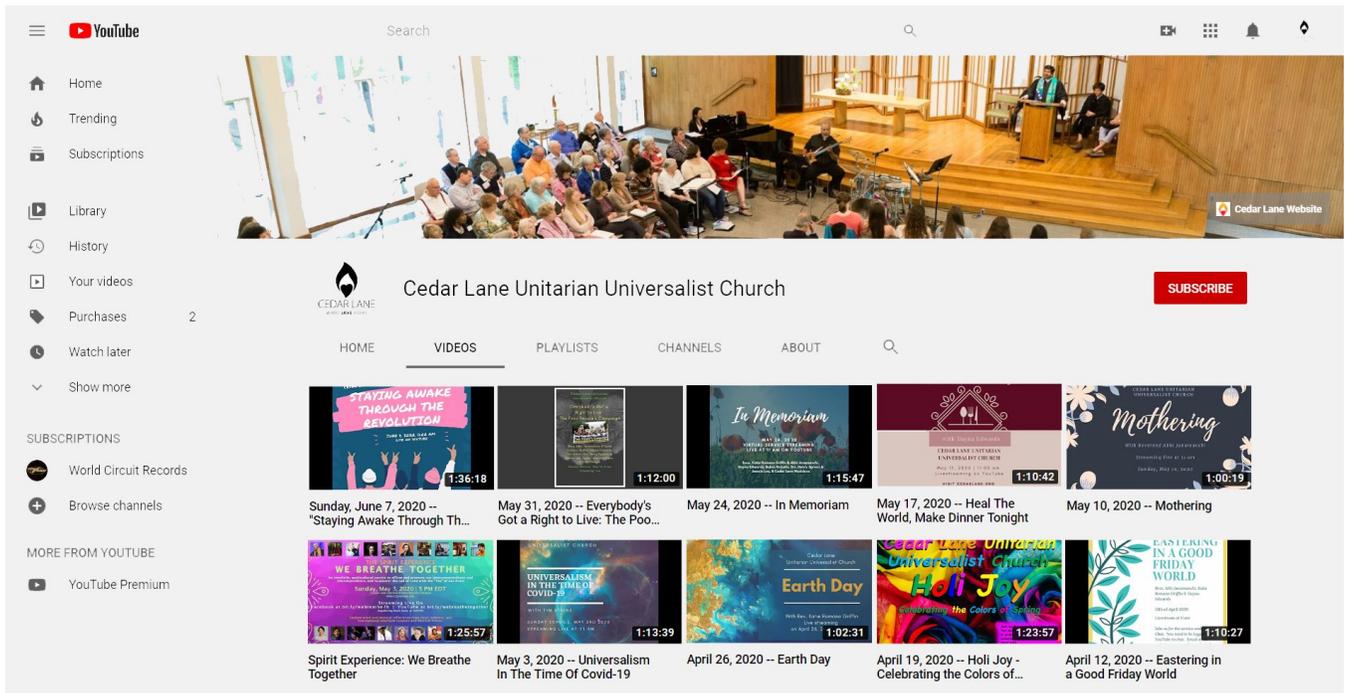


# EXPLORE THE ETERNAL

## Worship

Sunday morning worship services remain the hub of community life at Cedar Lane, especially during the pandemic. The worship life of Cedar Lane is rich, moving, meaningful, and inspiring. We continue to bind the services together thematically and use the monthly themes to deepen and inform the Sharing Circles. One of the principal advantages to organizing our programming around themes is the possibility to delve more deeply into the themes introduced each month, and to provide a common thread that can be woven through our worship, our Sharing Circles, and even through many of our ministry team meetings. Our themes this year have included **Expectation, Belonging, Attention, Awe, Integrity, Resilience, Wisdom, Liberation, Thresholds, and Compassion.**

Of course, our worship brought with it the rapid adaptations that came with COVID-19 and our transfer to online-only worship. For that, I am deeply grateful for the creativity and dedication of our staff, especially the **Worship Team** of Rev. Katie, Tim Atkins, Dr. Henry Sgrecci, and Dayna Edwards, the **AV Team** of Mike Morse, Don Woodruff, Barb Thompson, Tod Chernikoff, and Michael McCrickard, and the **Visual Arts Team** of Don Woodruff, Debbie Trent, Sandy Dawsey, and Rebecca Nachtrieb. Those leaders continue to produce, edit, and project-manage myriad aspects of the Sunday service every single week.



Dr. Henry Sgrecci and Dr. Jasmin Lee, with Jenny Crane, our children's choir director, our section leaders Jenny Lynn Moyer, Rachel Moore, and Kevin Miller, choir members, and Cedar Lane musicians jumped right into the creative and soulful work of recording and curating musical pieces for each week's service.



## EXPLORE THE ETERNAL

Sunday morning online worship attendance has been trending higher since March in comparison to in-person worship earlier in the year. Increases in Sunday worship attendance are being reported by several larger UU churches, and, like Cedar Lane, they also report strong positive energy.

This year we have been blessed by a wide variety of excellent preachers. In addition to regular services led by our ministers, our intern minister, **Dayna Edwards**, was a strong and inspiring presence in the pulpit, as was our Director of Lifespan Religious Education, **Tim Atkins**, and our Minister Emeritus **Rev. Ken MacLean**. We also heard from special guests **Rev. Dr. Kristen Harper** from UU Barnstable, MA, **Rev. David Miller** from UU Fairfax, **Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd** from River Road UU, **Rev. Vail Weller** from UUA Stewardship & Development, and **Rev. Roger Jones** from UU Sacramento, CA.

The **Worship Associates** played a more involved role this year by often taking up the invitation to offer their own reflections as an integral part of the service. I am grateful to **Fran Pflieger**, **babzz Ricketts**, **Stephanie Williams**, **Jared Wilson**, **Jessica Sawyer**, **Natalia Dunn**, **Lesley Vossen**, and outgoing worship associates, **Wangari Kamau**, **Val Carter**, **Michael Thoryn**, and **Kami Sankar Boyle** for sharing their spiritual gifts with the congregation. **[Should these be alphabetical by last name? Should babzz be capitalized?]**

**The Spirit Experience**, a multicultural, interfaith worship experience that began in October 2016 continued to be offered as part of Sunday worship and as weekend events this year. This year the Spirit Experiences celebrated **Latinx Heritage**, **Diwali**, **Dr. Martin Luther King Day**, **Holi**, and a special interfaith service **We Breathe Together**, held during the pandemic. The Spirit Experience was funded in large part by a \$5000 challenge grant from the UU Funding Panel, a \$2000 grant from Cedar Lane, and generous love offerings. Abhi worked on the Spirit Experience with the help and support of Rev. Katie Romano Griffin, Dayna Edwards, Rev. Kasey Kaseman, and Fred Johnson, and with assistance from Cedar Lane members who have volunteered their time to plan and participate in all the programs.



We continue to work to find the right balance between the comfort of consistent liturgy and established worship culture and the cultural exploration and engagement which are required of us if we are to become a more inclusive multicultural, multi-generational religious community.



## EXPLORE THE ETERNAL

### *Religious Education and Family Ministry*

*Tim Atkins, Director of Lifespan Religious Education*

Pre-lockdown, our Religious Education and Family Ministry programs were growing at Cedar Lane! For the first time in about a decade, we showed year-to-year growth in the number of registrations of children and youth. I really think a large reason for this increase was our focus on community building and taking a mentorship approach in the classroom on Sunday mornings. Our teachers this year were focused on building relationships and “making it personal” with our children and youth. I could not be prouder of our teachers—they really spent the time getting to know their children and families, and we saw how much this mattered when we had to switch to online programming.

As part of our focus on families, we began the year with an Ice Cream Social to welcome families back to the Religious Education year and to welcome new families who hadn't joined us before, which serves as a great “soft landing” for folks who are considering joining us for RE and want to learn more before jumping in. The following week, we hosted a Family Picnic at Wheaton Regional Park. We grilled out and people brought sides and desserts to share. It was a great time to reconnect with each other and get excited about the year to come! In October, we hosted the 3rd Annual Trunk-or-Treat, which was well received by our families, especially those with younger children. The parking lot was home to cars and trunks decorated for trick-or-treating and the Chapel was a spooky dance hall. In November, we hosted an RE Visioning Retreat, where folks could come together to help define their vision for our RE program and how that vision could be enacted through our curriculum at each age and stage. We decided to give our RE teachers a little boost and reminder of our appreciation in December, with a Cookies and Cocoa party in between services. Of course, no year would be complete without our annual Holiday Craft Day! This year, under new leadership, we re-visited some of our favorite traditions, like the picnic sing-along and visit from Santa, while also introducing some new things, such as online registration as well as some new crafts. In February, we hosted our 3rd Annual Family Valentine's party, where we shared snacks, made crafts, played games, and danced it out! Several of our planned activities, such as the Easter Egg Hunt and Teacher Recognition and Appreciation weren't able to happen due to the closure in early March.

Post-lockdown, we were among the first UU congregations nationwide to offer a robust schedule of online programming, including Story Times, Movie Nights, Morning Coffee Hours, Sing-a-Longs, Craft Time, Family Yoga, and weekly Family Chapels. We've learned a lot about what works and doesn't, and made a transition to having more “on demand” programming. Our Family Chapels continue to be popular, especially since moving them back to Sunday mornings. Most of our religious education classes continued to have regular class check-ins on Zoom, which provided an important and meaningful connection for our children (and teachers)! Our amazing team of volunteers and religious education staff was able to be quick and flexible in meeting the challenge of moving to an all online environment.

With Adult Religious Education, we've focused on having programs that help connect people. We launched “Lunch Time Power Hour”, which has events every weekday starting at noon. Mondays are based on music, Tuesdays on shared readings, Wednesday the weekly meditation from the ministers, Thursday a story time for elders, and Friday a spiritual practices series. We also launched a well-received online Fiber Arts Team. We moved most of our Soul Circles online, and most of our other adult programs (like Science and Religion) have successfully transitioned to an online format.



## EXPLORE THE ETERNAL

### Music Ministry

Dr. Henry Sgrecci, Music Director

Cedar Lane's tradition of a vibrant music program continued through the 2019-20 church year, beginning with youth singers joining the Adult Choir to sing the Swahili song *Wana Baraka*, during September's Ingathering & Water Communion of blessings and well being. New faces appeared in all our ensembles, to include both Ring Out Bells and Bell Canto. Jenny Crane mustered the forces of the Children's Choir and Dr. Sgrecci led the Youth Choir, with Susan Easterly accompanying both groups and the Chapel services.



The Cedar Lane Choir enjoyed several distinguished moments. The ensemble sang with the Rockville UUC Choir in October and reciprocated by hosting them at Cedar Lane the following Sunday. The focal anthem was Rob Redei's *See Me*, which addresses mental illness. The Choir also embraced Sandy Shaw's dream of an anthem to honor immigrants who are being unjustly treated. During our Nov. 3 Service of Remembrance the Choir and guest instrumentalists honored the lives of those whom we have lost with portions of Clif Hardin's *Requiem*. The musicians then turned their attention to the world premiere of *Sanctuary: An Anthem to Love*, with text written by Sandy Shaw and set to music by local composer Charlie Barnett. It was indeed a special moment for Sandy, whose vision of the work began during his trip to the Arizona border several years ago. On Christmas Eve the Children's Choir sang songs from "A Charlie Brown Christmas", the Youth Choir sang *Put a Little Love in Your Heart* and the Adult Choir returned to J.S. Bach's "Cantata 142," *A Child Is Born*, with accompaniment by guest instrumentalists and Dr. Jasmin Lee at the organ.

The highlight of the church year for our Music Ministry was the January 25 Benefit Concert for AIM in which the Choir was joined by the Cedar Lane Chamber Winds. The Choir sang movements from Aaron Copland's *Old American Songs* accompanied by the winds, and several of their favorite anthems accompanied by pianist Shuai Wang. The evening's centerpiece was the appearance of Dr. Jasmin Lee at the piano to perform George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the original jazz band accompaniment. Jasmin was "on" that evening and the band was kicking. The audience showed their standing-room appreciation by donating a record amount for a benefit concert, just under \$8,000!

The Concert Committee lined up a great series, and we heard fine performances from The Capitol Focus Jazz Band, lutenist, Ronn McFarlane, and the radiant Robin Faye Massie and her viola. And our ensembles supported worship services through the beginning of March. Once the pandemic hit, the remainder of our plans for the year were scuttled. We hope to reschedule the remaining concerts whenever appropriate. Early in the pandemic, the Cedar Lane and UUC Silver Spring ministers and musicians collaborated on a live stream service. Since then, our live stream worship service music has been a combination of recorded hymns, congregational YouTube songs from past services, and the work of Dr. Jasmin Lee and the Cedar Lane Vocal Quartet: Jenny Lynn Moyer, Rachel



## EXPLORE THE ETERNAL

Moore, Kevin Miller, and Dr. Henry Sgrecci. These five musicians, using cutting-edge technology, have been able to pour forth the music: soothing, relevant, lively, and inspiring. Special thanks to Jenny Crane, daughter Elsie Towne, several youth singers, plus Chris Mauro, Liz Brinker, Steve Jones, and Jane Moore, who have enabled us to present musical diversity within our worship services. We're especially grateful to Jenny Lynn Moyer, who hosted the Monday noon Music Hour, and to Children's Choir Director, Jenny Crane, who hosted the Thursday Family Music hour, as they lent support to the RE community and family outreach during the early weeks of the church's shut-down .

A big thank you to the Music Ministry Team and its chair, Susan Modak, who helped steer us through the year. Due to social distancing restrictions, we've become very creative with our Auction event, compiling a concert video featuring Cedar Lane's musicians that we will show our guests on the designated date, along with personally delivered pastries made by a member of the Team. With challenges come creativity!

On a personal note, one could never have imagined retiring from Cedar Lane without seeing and being in communion with our singers, staff, and congregation for the last three months of my tenure. Thank you for the honor, thank you for attending services and concerts, thank you for listening to our music, and thank you to the many musicians who said "yes" when I came calling. I am grateful for, and will always treasure, the eleven years spent guiding this marvelous music ministry and its beloved singing congregation. Take care, keep making the music, and stay safe!





## EXPLORE THE ETERNAL

### *From the Intern Minister*

Dayna Edwards, Intern

Serving as the Intern Minister for Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church has been both a pleasure and an honor. I have had opportunities to lead and assist with worship, provide pastoral care, participate in social justice, and engage in spiritual practices.

I have learned an immense amount from the experienced worship team at Cedar Lane. While I had experience leading worship at other congregations, leading worship for a large congregation was a skill I gained this year. The service that I loved leading the most, was the poetry service on the Sunday after Christmas. That service was participatory, engaging, and multi-generational. An unexpected bonus, has been the opportunity to lead worship online, due to the pandemic. These are skills that will be vital in a twenty-first century ministry.

Working with the pastoral care team has also been an excellent opportunity for growth. The pastoral visitors have some great systems to keep everyone in the congregation connected, and I have loved seeing these systems get even better and become even more important as we are physically distant from each other. I have worked with the pastoral care team to provide an advance directives training. I have also provided a pastoral presence to our Senior High OWL class.

Engaging in social justice work at Cedar Lane has also been an excellent learning experience. With the help and encouragement of the senior minister, I was selected to be a Student Organizing Fellow for the Poor People's Campaign. Additionally, I have learned extensively from the entire congregation as you all engage in providing physical sanctuary for Doña Rosa.

I am lucky to have another year to engage as your intern. I look forward to learning more and deepening our relationships.



### *Search Team for Acting Director of Music Ministry*

The search team, formed in March, has developed a process for continuing to provide high quality music programming at Cedar Lane with the retirement of our beloved Dr. Henry Sgrecci. Due to public health guidelines for COVID-19, we paused the search for an Acting Director and are seeking a Music Program Coordinator for the months of July and August. Our fall staffing plan is in flux at this time, since we do not know when in-person services and choir rehearsals will resume, but we hope to continue the search later in the fall.

Members - Linda Gianessi, Team Lead, Leslie Backus, Kathie Bryant, Nate Hultman, Peter Mather, Susan Modak, and Rev. Abhi Janamanchi.



# NURTURE COMMUNITY

## *Our Campus*

*Jen Morley, Executive Director*

The 2019 - 2020 church year ushered in a number of changes for Cedar Lane's campus and the people who work to keep our buildings and grounds safe and inviting. José Morant was promoted to Building and Grounds Manager, shifting smoothly into his new role. He takes great pride in maintaining the interior and exterior of the building. We also hired two people to work alongside him: Facilities Technician Rufo Nasol and Custodian Roxana Avalos.

Over the course of the past year, the team:

- Worked with an outside contractor to strip and wax most of the floors in the building. It's a huge undertaking, but it extends the life of our floors—as well as makes them look great.
- Rebuilt the pathway lights leading to the upper parking lot, leading to more illumination at night time. Similarly, they installed solar lights along the path to the Culver Street lot.
- Re-striped the parking lot. You can see the lines! Some of the spaces are still weird shapes.
- Cleaned up after another flood, this time from a hose connected to the dishwasher. In addition to removing the water on a Sunday morning in time for services to carry on as normal, they rebuilt the wall between the pantry and the kitchen; painted two rooms downstairs; and helped coordinate the work of various contractors.

## *Facilities Team*

The Facilities Team meets on an informal basis 3-4 times per year. We address concerns that the congregation has regarding the building. As an example, it was noted that new yellow striping was needed on the curbs at the main entrance. Check out the new stripes! Another area of concern has been the HVAC control panel and trying to regulate it.

Interested in joining us? Please contact Nancy Bliss [by email](#)! New members are always welcome.

Members - Nancy Bliss, Team Lead, Ernie Carlson, Betty May Cleary, Maryann Dillon, Peter Lowenthal, Carrie Meyer, Jen Morley, José Morant, and Jack Rodgers.

## *Grounds Ministry Team*

The Grounds Ministry Team meets on once per month, sponsors two workdays per year for church members, and provides ad hoc work throughout the year. We plan for design and plantings on the church grounds and help manage issues such as tree replacement.

If you're interested in joining us, please let us know! New members are always welcome.

Members - Joan Riggs, Team Leader, Christiane Cox, Linda Gianessi, José Morant, Jim Trospen, and John Woodward.



## NURTURE COMMUNITY

### *Pastoral Care Visitors Ministry*

The Pastoral Care Visitors is a ministry that meets members of the congregation where they are during times of change and transition, whether that is collectively or individually. This takes the shape of either being a listening presence or connecting them to resources in the Cedar Lane community or the community at large. The team is present to be with those who need assistance in the different journeys of life.

Pastoral Care have support groups dealing with caregiver stress and mental health issues. This year, we had two forums planned for the congregation: "Dealing with Anxiety and Depression" and "Dealing with Grief". Due to the pandemic, both had to be postponed. "Dealing with Grief" will be held as a Zoom forum in June. For this year up through May 19, there have been 955 face-to-face contact hours and 589 telephone contact hours made by the Pastoral Care team. This data does not capture the contacts made by members of the congregation who have identified a need and reached out. Even though our membership is eleven, in reality the team is larger because of the way the congregation has been present for each other.

Pastoral Visitors are present in the Cedar Lane community at many different levels. Each Sunday, there is a Pastoral Visitor available during and after services for members to reach out. The team also covers the Pastoral Visitor phones for any calls coming into the church. These calls often are quickly resolved by referring them on or connecting them to one of the ministers, but on occasion, the call becomes a moment to be present and to listen. Throughout the year, the Pastoral Visitors team has ongoing relationships with members. Because of the pandemic, our ability to visit in the homes is on hold, but the connections continue through phone contacts. In some cases, our team's members have worked closely with our members in making difficult life decisions and joined with them during the last stage of life. We deeply grieve those we lose and are with each other in sharing the losses. Pastoral Care reached out to others in the congregation to assist in making connections with members, checking in on them. We have created a shopper's program to assist those members who must remain home in getting needed meals, groceries, and prescriptions.

Members - Betsy Binckes, Team Leader, Bob Harrison, Kathleen Holmay, JoAnn Jersey, Anne Meyer, Tim Pearson, Helen Pechacek, Fran Pflieger, Latha Pothuri, Phil Smith, Janeil Stewart, and Rev. Katie Romano Griffin.

#### **Memorials**

With Lyn Peters and Vicky Strella serving as our Volunteer Memorial Service Coordinators, we held more than 20 memorial services in the past year, including members and non-members. We celebrated the lives of:

Coralie Adler	Gahan Briethaput	Dorothy Britt
Charlotte Canha	Edward Cornish	Mary Fine
John Giovanelli	Ron Gregory	David Hanrahan
Harris Leonard	Dave McQuaid	Liam Miles
Tillman Neuner	Connie Nissley	Michael Noonan
Sally Ann Roy	Stephani Sese	Joan Shannon
Bob Sheldon	Roma Suri	Terry Tretter
	John Wing	



## NURTURE COMMUNITY

Due to the coronavirus and the subsequent church closing, 10 services previously scheduled for March through June could not take place and may be rescheduled. We will then celebrate the lives of:

Beryl Cherney  
Millie Mader  
Marysol Scott

Frances Dearman  
Steven Murphy  
Jodie Smith

Lura May Dillow  
Violet Rutledge  
Marion Torchia

### *Membership Engagement Ministry Team*

*Dianne Yaunches, Team Leader*

The Membership Engagement Ministry Team comprises seven members, with the acting staff membership coordinator participating. We meet monthly and participate in Sunday activities described below. Our team practices active hospitality, as we welcome visitors and help members engage in the church community.

This past year, we replaced the Cedar Lane 101 and Saturday Retreats with an ongoing series of classes/sessions titled Faith Forward. This was adapted from a program initiated by the Dallas UU Church. The Series had two parts: Roots and Seekers and began in fall 2019. Before the pandemic, the Seekers met Sunday before the service at the church. Members of the Membership Engagement Ministry Team facilitated the sessions, while the topics were presented by team leaders from the various church teams (Pastoral Care, Social Justice, etc). The Roots program, which delved into UU history, was put on hold because of low attendance. But the Seekers Series, which had been well-received, was rejuvenated in virtual Zoom sessions after the church moved to streaming services. The format and participants remain the same as those before the pandemic. Ideally, we'd like individuals who seek membership to attend as many Seekers sessions as possible, so they have a clearer understanding of our denomination and the expectations of membership.

The Membership Team also staffs the Greeters Table on Sunday mornings, and the Greeters became part of the Hospitality/Usher team during the service by helping pass the collection plate, seating visitors, and collecting hymnals. They do not participate in counting or depositing the collection. After the service, we speak with and answer visitors' questions and take their comments.

Membership participated in two Engagement Fairs, run by Carolyn Morrissey, aiming to gain visibility for our activities and to increase the number of members.

With the advent of virtual or streaming-only church services, engaging visitors had become challenging. A visitor's Zoom Room was accessed by only one person in four weeks, so visitors are now directed to the Zoom coffee hour held after the service. There, a member of the AV team breaks the larger group into small discussion sections.

Membership is now at 672, and we expect challenges with increasing these numbers as the virus continues to impact visitation and communication with the church. But we continue to engage visitors with our Seekers sessions and to welcome as we can in our Zoom rooms.



# NURTURE COMMUNITY

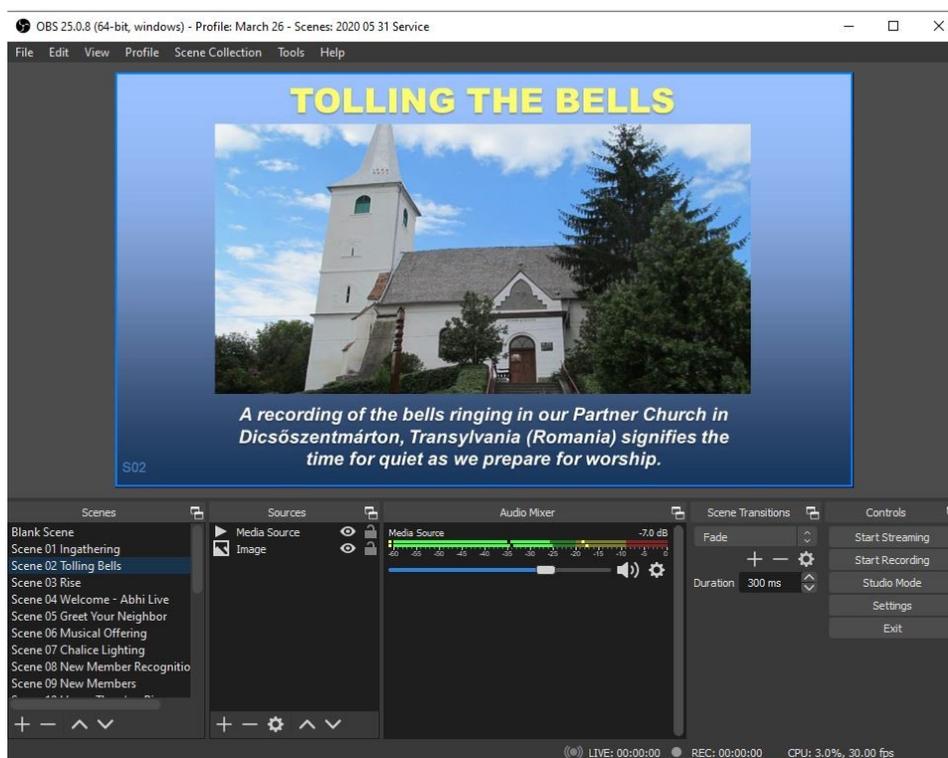
## AV Team

Michael Morse, Team Leader

It's hard to believe that March 8 was the last "normal" Sunday for the AV team. On March 15, four members of the AV team huddled together in the sound booth while the ministers, Henry, and Jasmin staged a Sunday service with no other church members present. Our only role was to live stream the service. The next day, Governor Hogan implemented wide-ranging social distancing measures, and since then the AV Team and the ministers have live streamed the services without any two people being in the same room. On March 22, we held our first virtual service, in conjunction with and using technology we learned from Silver Spring.

Since then, the AV Team has been operating with a completely new skill set and a new set of procedures. Where we once were fairly passive followers of the ministers' lead on services, we now play an active part in planning and producing the service. We have learned new technology (Open Broadcaster Software and Zoom), plus video and audio editing software. Where our time commitment was previously restricted to Sunday morning, we now meet with the ministers to plan the service, take much of the day Friday producing it, and on Saturday, we have a full rehearsal. We have worked closely with the VA team. The slides that were a useful adjunct to the Sunday service are now an integral part of the streaming display.

It's been our privilege to provide continuity for the Cedar Lane community in these stressful times by assisting in the presentation of amazing Sunday services and moving memorial services.





## NURTURE COMMUNITY

### *The Alliance*

The Alliance seeks to promote companionship, mutual support, and opportunities to participate in charitable and community programs that uphold Unitarian Universalist principles.

Formed in 1953, the Alliance membership presently consists of 74 paying members.

Members - Officers for 2019-20 included: President, Louise Stomierowski; Vice President, Bob Harrison; Corresponding Secretary, Jean Schaible; Recording Secretary, Dottie Mara; Treasurer, Don Woodruff. In addition, there are 13 active committee chairs who comprise the Board.

### **Highlights from the Year**

Monthly potluck luncheons are normally held in the sanctuary on the second Thursday of each month, from September to June, with an hour-long speaker or program, attracting approximately 55 attendees per month. This schedule was interrupted by the pandemic from March-June 2020, causing cancellation of the final four gatherings with plans to resume when safety permits.

The Alliance assists in the Memorial Receptions for church members.

The Alliance sponsors a Book Club on the first Friday of each month. Normally meeting in the library, the group has met electronically by Zoom, from April-June 2020, during the church building closure.

The Alliance Bridge Group meets daytime on Tuesdays. Normally meeting mid-day in the church, they have switched to an electronic venue during the church closure from March-June 2020.

The Book Corner sells used books and the Jewelry Committee sells donated jewelry following Sunday services. This program has been temporarily suspended, March-June 2020, due to the church building closure.

Under our Social Justice chair, our two-year collection of used/clean plastic medicine bottles for donation to Matthew 25 (for distribution to third world countries) was completed in January 2020.

The Alliance continues its financial/small gift/letter-writing relationship with a foster child (Rockevious) through Save the Children, from donations collected at the monthly luncheons.

The Alliance sends cards throughout the year to members celebrating birthdays 90 or more years, as well as to those with significant illnesses, losses, and thank yous. In December 2019, members personally visited or mailed holiday cards to 27 church members who were home- or facility-bound.

The Alliance publishes a monthly electronic newsletter and a yearly print Membership Directory (January 2020).

The Alliance contributes financially to Cedar Lane: \$3000 per year to the church; \$400 to the Minister's Discretionary Fund; \$500 and jewelry donation to the Cedar Lane Auction.

## NURTURE COMMUNITY

Additional charitable donations are made as income permits, with Board approval, including \$200 to The Interfaith Works Women's Shelter and \$250 toward activities for Rosa's children; end-of-year donations are being determined at this time.

The Alliance Board meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month from August-May; policies are in accordance with written bylaws.





## NURTURE COMMUNITY

### *Right Relations Education Ministry Team*

*Debbie Trent and Marilyn Emery, Team Leaders*

What we understand our task to be is promoting our **Covenant of Right Relations** across the entire church community and in all our interactions. The Right Relations Education Team's efforts to uphold our promise to compassionately understand each other—even when we don't agree—includes facilitating access to educational resources and explaining what practices help keep us in right relations. We hope to continue to inspire all Lifespan Education participants and others in our community to keep our right relations covenant in mind as we engage in all programming and activities.

Among the materials are two blog posts that in the last three years intended to launch an ongoing, wide- and long-ranging conversation about how to enact our most recent covenant. The first blog **introduces** the covenant, tracing its origins and purpose. The second **delves** further into how UUs understand right relations. We welcome and need your comments and suggestions at [rightrelations@cedarlane.org](mailto:rightrelations@cedarlane.org).

We have completed two Tapestry sessions on June 16 and 23, 2019: "Opening the Door to Right Relations." Though sparsely attended, right relations gained some visibility and additional practice on the education piece. The participants represented several age groups and genders. We had very honest conversations about gender and unconscious racial bias, as well as about how to raise children who can handle uncomfortable conversations. We discussed how we enter into and stay in right relations, especially in situations and conversations that are difficult and outside our racial and gender comfort zones.

We have continued to promote right relations at every opportunity. For example, at the January 2020 Alliance meeting, the speaker was Chris Smith, director of the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County. To continue heightening right relations visibility, we posted a copy of the covenant in the lounge and on the lower level. We hope to elevate these efforts in partnership with one or more other ministry teams. Any team or team member is welcome to request a meeting with the Right Relations Education Team'. We may conduct periodic surveys to monitor the congregation's progress toward being in right relations.



## BUILD A MORE JUST WORLD

### *Affiliated Community Minister*

Rev. Archene Turner

In my capacity as an unpaid community minister affiliated with Cedar Lane, my focus is on social justice and anti-racism issues, encouraging our members to engage with the world beyond our campus. This has been an exceptionally challenging year, with consequences that will continue to impact our congregation, the communities around us, and our country at large for years to come. In 2020, two pandemics have converged, as the COVID-19 virus has revealed the not-so-hidden, long present pandemic of severe racial disparities. Food insecurity has always been around us, but the magnitude of need has increased exponentially during the shutdown. With other faith leaders, I've been working with Mid-County Unity Ministries (MUM) to respond. Cedar Lane members are helping acquire, transport, and distribute healthy food to growing lines of adults and children. We are seeing firsthand the disproportionate impact the pandemic is having on people of color.



These times are particularly challenging for ministers and religious professionals of color who are serving in UU congregations. I am facilitating networks of connection and care for my colleagues of color throughout our denomination.

All of us are called to witness the pain caused by these two pandemics, and to become personally engaged in healing this broken country.

### *Sanctuary for Rosa at Cedar Lane*

Our beloved guest, Rosa Gutierrez Lopez has been in Sanctuary at Cedar Lane since December 10, 2018. Her three school-aged children joined her June 15, 2019. The family remains united in Sanctuary to this day. They attend school locally in Montgomery County Public Schools, use the YMCA for camps and swimming, participate in church life socially and through the religious education program, and have developed friendships with church members and beyond.

Rosa's Sanctuary is supported by hundreds of members of the Congregation Action Network and community. Prior to the COVID-19 stay-at-home order, the family had the nearly round-the-clock presence of volunteers who helped Rosa tend to her personal needs and those of her children, as well as to provide security and resources to the family. We have made modifications to ensure the family's safety, security, and well-being while trying to provide outlets for the children. Currently, contact with the family is mostly outdoors and with safety precautions in place. Meals are delivered from restaurants twice a week, grocery delivery is contactless, kids walk with outdoor companions (and now their mother as well\*), overnights are minimized. The children are thriving, despite the challenges of remote learning. Some remote tutorial assistance is still in place for school support.



## BUILD A MORE JUST WORLD

### **\*Rosa's Significant News!**

On May 15, 2020, Doña Rosa filed by mail for a Stay of Removal, a new opportunity due to the pandemic. Previously, only in-person filings were accepted at the Baltimore ICE Field Office. Elected officials were contacted by Rosa's advocacy crew, and she made personal appeals to them; some of them contacted ICE. They were heard and Rosa's Stay was approved for 60 days, beginning May 28. The hope is that after 60 days, the Stay will be extended for one year. She is now able to move about the community between Maryland, DC, and Northern Virginia, with exceptions available to travel further away. She can work. She must check in with ICE, and she is monitored. For the near term, the family has chosen to stay at Cedar Lane until a transition plan seems viable, particularly if the virus threat lifts and the Stay is extended for one year. On Monday, June 8, 11 AM, Rosa hosted a celebratory Zoom call for her hundreds of supporters. Let us rejoice!

*Family United: Maria (12), Rosa, John (nearly 8), Juan Pablo (10), in May 2020*



In the future, our focus remains supportive with an eye toward the re-opening of her asylum case with the now extremely backed-up Immigration Court. In the meantime, we pray that the lifting of movement restrictions may allow this now united family to move freely in the world. Rosa remains committed to justice seeking for other immigrants in Sanctuary around the country, to fundraising for the Congregation Action Network Emergency COVID-19 fund, and for the rights of those who struggle. We follow her lead as she plans her future.



## BUILD A MORE JUST WORLD

### *Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ) Ministry Team*

Our mission is to mobilize and amplify the voice of Unitarian Universalists as we seek to change the world through acts of love and justice at the national level. UUSJ is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization of volunteers. It is supported by UU congregations and individuals in accomplishing its mission.

Members - Cedar Lane UUC has a representative on the UUSJ Board, currently John Gubbings (to be succeeded by Tanner Wray on July 1). Approximately 108 members of Cedar Lane are on UUSJ mailing lists, mostly as members and/or volunteers.

#### Highlights from the Year

##### **January 12 Kick-off to Mobilize for "UU the Vote" in 2020!**

Calling Unitarian Universalists to join forces with those organizing our communities and nation to #VoteLove and #DefeatHate. Let's help get out the vote this year! The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and partners, including UUSJ are joining to "UU the Vote" in 2020. This national campaign will support UU congregations and organizations in activating thousands of UUs to mobilize voters. UUSJ has created a complete [Mobilizing the Vote 2020 Guide](#) to help congregations and congregants get active with the upcoming elections.

##### **UUs to Congress: "Do the Right Thing – Pass Tax Incentives to Go Green"**

UUSJ's Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps volunteers visited 57 House and Senate offices in December 2019, participated in 22 meetings (15 scheduled appointments and 7 drop-in meetings) with Congressional staff, and delivered 240 letters from UUs urging extending and expanding tax incentives for businesses and consumers to cut greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change. A few of the provisions were included in the final appropriations bill, but the issue is expected to resurface again in the spring.



UUSJ volunteers met with staff of Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA) during Advocacy Day, December 2019.

##### **Testimonial Writers – "We Thank You! We Love You!"**

Deepest appreciation to those who opened their hearts and minds to share reflections on "Why UUSJ?" as part of our end-of-year fundraising. Supporters asked for more on why what we do matters and how it reflects our UU values. Seven writers answered resoundingly. If you missed any, the [testimonials are here](#). You can also find previous [commentaries here](#). If you want to share your own thoughts, contact: [info@uusj.org](mailto:info@uusj.org).



## BUILD A MORE JUST WORLD

### **Side with Love**

Everette Thompson, Campaign Manager for UUA Side with Love, and UUSJ's Lavona Grow discussed 2020 priorities for advocacy and "UU the Vote" at the "Forward Together" annual gathering of the UU Justice Ministry of North Carolina, at the Eno River UU Fellowship in Durham, in mid-November. He delivered the keynote address, "Leading and Moving Through the Power of Love" to UUs from across the state.

### **Advocacy for Climate Stewardship and Clean Energy Economy!**

At October's Advocacy Day, 21 members of UUSJ's Advocacy Corps (AC), had conversations with House staff around passing comprehensive legislation to avert a climate crisis and achieve a 100% clean energy economy no later than 2050. Two bills were the focus: the Climate Stewardship Act of 2019, H.R.4269, introduced September 10 ([read the full text here](#), companion bill in the Senate - Sen. Booker D-NJ); and the [100% Clean Economy Act](#). House staff comments included: "keep the pressure on," and "continue to have visits to get more people to co-sign," and "individual citizens and volunteer groups like UUSJ and other faith organizations are very important players in the legislative process, as they have credibility." The AC visited 52 House of Representative offices, delivered 161 personal letters, and had 20 face-to-face meetings with key offices in a mix of scheduled and drop-in visits.



UUs from UUC Arlington, Virginia, visit Rep. Wittman

### **We Got Jazzed at the Social Justice Awards Gala**

Nearly 120 UUs got jazzed about social justice—the theme of the biennial Gala—on October 6. The UU Church of Arlington, Virginia, hosted the Gala to celebrate the many ways area UUs advance social justice. The ten awardees shared their reflections, and we spent the evening with new and old friends, enjoying live jazz music and refreshments. [Learn more about the awardees here.](#)

### **UUs Mobilize for Economic and Climate Justice!**

Levi Draheim, twelve years old, explained to conference participants why he is a plaintiff in a climate lawsuit and is suing the state of Florida for the right to a livable climate. Julian Brave Noisecat, at right, spoke as director of the Green New Deal Strategy for Data for Progress on indigenizing the Green New Deal and environmental justice.





## BUILD A MORE JUST WORLD

During the week of the Youth Climate Strike, more than 145 UUs from 15 states gathered at the **Advancing Economic and Climate Justice as a Moral Issue: Building a Movement for A Green New Deal** conference, held September 15-17, in Washington, DC. Participants heard a broad spectrum of speakers including frontline, indigenous, faith community speakers, Hill staff, and a video greeting and call to action from our UU President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray. We discussed how UU values call us to action, learned about federal legislation and the Green New Deal resolution, made plans for future networking, and learned how to advocate and influence policy-makers.

On day three of the conference, more than 40 participants visited Senate offices to convey their voices and values and delivered more than 920 personal letters from UUs across the country urging swift and effective action. See details below.

Read the blog post "[Reports from an action-packed week in DC](#)" by Aly Tharp, UU Ministry for Earth, with video clips from the conference. There will be a resource page and post-conference webinars to help us mobilize for action. See photos of conference activities [here](#) and [here](#).

### **"Wake up and smell the roses..." take action now to avert a climate emergency!**



Conference participants got an exclusive morning briefing in the Russell Senate Office Building's Gold Room before going to their scheduled meetings with Senate staff.



Conference participants delivered letters to Senator Warren (MA) on the climate crisis.

UUSJ's Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps members accompanied participants in the **Advancing Economic and Climate Justice as a Moral Issue: Building a Movement for A Green New Deal Conference**. Ten teams made a total of 56 visits to Senate offices and two key committees. Visits included more than 26 face-to-face meetings with Senate staff, delivering more than 920 letters from the Write Here! Write Now! letter-writing campaign, from UUs in 35 congregations across the country on the urgency to take action to address the climate crisis and transition to a clean energy economy. Read about our "asks" in our [WHWN handout](#).

Many letters reflected writers' anxieties about the climate crisis and their personal stories of how it is affecting them. Many demanded action, often making clear their views that, as one UU wrote, "The time for denial is over, the time for action is now." One added, "Wake up and smell the roses while you still can."



## BUILD A MORE JUST WORLD

### **Support for Sanctuary Activists**

The National Sanctuary Collective (NSC) returned to DC during September, to hold a press conference on Capitol Hill. See our [Twitter feed](#) for coverage. The NSC continues its search for champions willing to take the issues seriously and challenge ICE's draconian fines on vulnerable immigrants in physical sanctuary. We learned of this strategic need during their previous visit in July. See a [synopsis of the July visit](#) and UUSJ's related [statement on the issue](#) of fines. The UUSJ Immigration Task Group helped house the activists and provided advocacy meeting training materials.

### **UUSJ Participates in Faith-Based Consultation on Climate Emergency**

UUs participated in the "Climate Emergency: Faith-Based Organizations Raising Ambition—Leaving No One Behind" consultation in NYC, in conjunction with the UN General Assembly sessions on climate change. From left: Lavona Grow, UUSJ; Helen Rose, Earth Day Network; Salote Soqo, UU Service Committee; Aly Tharp, UU Ministry for Earth; Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, President and CEO of UU Service Committee, and Rev. Susannah Tuttle, North Carolina Interfaith Power and Light.

### **UUSJ Defends Asylum Seekers and Migrants, Opposes the Border Wall**

During August 2019, we joined an amicus brief (friend of the court) filing challenging attempts to divert funds to build a border wall. We were part of 75 religious organizations from around the country who signed on to the brief in this round, the most on any of these border wall cases, and in the shortest turnaround time. See our ["Statement of Identity and Interest"](#) (also on our website). Read the [full brief here](#).

### **Support for Texas Delegation visiting Capitol Hill on Sanctuary Issues**

During July 2019, Peggy Morton of both First UU Church of Austin and Austin Sanctuary Network, returned to DC, with a group of activists—Santuاريو Colectivo/New Sanctuary Collective—for meetings on Capitol Hill. They spoke on the imposition by ICE of draconian fines on vulnerable immigrants who are in the process of seeking asylum and the overall pattern of threatening, harassing, and bullying undocumented immigrants. The UUSJ immigration team helped house them, organize an exchange with Cedar Lane's Sanctuary recipient, Rosa Gutierrez Lopez, suggested targets and joined for many of their meetings. See our [statement on the issue](#).



UUs support the NSC press conference: Pablo DeJesus, UUSJ, Adrienne York-Minor, Davies UUC MD, and Peggy Morton, First UUC Austin, TX, 9/25/19





# BUILD A MORE JUST WORLD

## *Environmental Justice Ministry*

United by our shared mission as stewards of the environment and builders of a more just and nurturing world, we, the members of the Cedar Lane Environmental Justice Ministry, affirm and promote mutual trust, unity, and support of each other. We commit to embody the Unitarian Universalist principles in our actions and processes as a team.

Our goals for the year, mainly from the August retreat were:

1. Broaden our outreach.
2. Educate more people in the congregation.
3. Continue to expand and be guided by the Ecosystems Study Group.
4. Select state legislative action items for advocacy.
5. Select local Montgomery County action items for advocacy. For example., Green New Deal on local (MC), state, and federal levels.
6. Select federal level items for advocacy.

Added:

7. More youth, especially those at Cedar Lane.
8. More profound actions, e.g., civil disobedience. While not all are ready for that, we need to support those who are.
9. Increase focus on the root causes of climate change and environmental issues, e.g., our current "infinite" population growth and consumption paradigm.

Members: Nanci Wilkinson, Team Lead, Catherine Cruveillier, Eveyln Gettys, Chris Graham, John Grubbings, Molly Hauck, Kathleen Holmay, Jim Laurenson, Lee McNair, Barb Warman, and Karen Williams.

### Highlights from the Year

- Established Spirituality in Nature Group (SING)  
Chris Graham, Molly Hauck
- Expanded Ecostudy Group (Jim Laurenson) with Zoom presentation by Jim at MCFACS on Enroads climate model, March 17, 2020, and other groups
- Refined and refurbished composting activities (Chris Graham)
- Continued Rock Creek Cleanup
- Advocacy and Outreach:
  - ◇ October 6 Applied for and received UUSJ Award for Environmental Social Justice
  - ◇ October 13 Hands Across the Potomac (fight against the Potomac Pipeline)
  - ◇ September 20, 23, and 27 Rallied for Climate with Shut Down DC and Ext Reb
  - ◇ October 19 and February 20 Reverse Global Warming Drawdown Seminars
  - ◇ Extinction Rebellion Speakers (Russell Gray) September 13 and by Zoom on March 27, 2020





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- ◇ EJM table at Climate Town Hall at Veterans Plaza September 14, 2019
- ◇ EJM participated in Jane Fonda Climate Rallies. Two people—Chris Graham & Nanci Wilkinson—were arrested.
- Auction Item from EJM: Who's Afraid of Vegan Dinner (Karen Williams).
  - ◇ Approximately 20 people signed up for March 29 but dinner had to be postponed.
  - ◇ EJM shared vegan recipes until we can share a physical meal.
- Advocacy:
  - ◇ Advocated for Medical Aid for the Dying in Annapolis (Evelyn Gettys/Nanci Wilkinson), a UULM objective.
  - ◇ Write Here/Right Now table with information and congregation letter writing several times throughout the year (John Gubbins/Lee McNair).
  - ◇ Federal, state and local lobbying—too much to elaborate with many letters to Capitol Hill, plus numerous in-person visits to Montgomery County Council, Montgomery County school board on behalf the students advocating for climate science education, three excused absences, and other issues; additionally EJM members made a number of visits to committee meetings and to members of the Maryland State Legislature to advocate for environmental bills. We also attended and supported many rallies and actions sponsored by the many environmental and faith based climate change groups with whom we partner.
  - ◇ Other Advocacy-Many petitions/letters signed for EJM as part of Cedar Lane UU Church.
- Award – EJM received the [2019 UUSJ Environment/Climate Justice Award](#), October 6

### *Denominational Affairs*

General Assembly's final credentials report acknowledged that, like the previous year, there was less than usual interest in the 2019 General Assembly in Spokane across the denomination (perhaps because of location and/or lack of a hotly contested election).

Dino Drudi, Carol Edwards, John Grubbings, Mike Harris (off-site delegate), J Terrell Hoffeld, Cathy Knapper, Mary Means, Gwen Warman, and Alan White represented Cedar Lane at the 2019 General Assembly. Rev. Abhi Janamanchi and Rev. Katie Romano Griffin were also present to represent Cedar Lane at General Assembly. Rev. Katie served off-site as a delegate and Co-Lead of the GA Chaplains.

Due to the health crisis, General Assembly 2020 will be held remotely.

Denominational Affairs continues to advocate for Cedar Lane resuming its historic practice of being a fair-share UUA congregation.



## *Generosity Ministry Team*

*Mary Means, Co-Team Lead*

The annual campaign for financial pledges to support the church's operating budget got off to a good start in mid-February.

The campaign is run by the Generosity Team, which this year was particularly creative in producing short videos (thanks to Cathy Grubman and a number of Cedar Laners who shared their personal affirmations) sent to all members via eBlasts. Several members hosted lively dinner parties. Three weeks later, the coronavirus pandemic shutdowns began. The planned congregational pasta supper and celebration brunch had to be cancelled. That said, as of the end of April, 220 members and friends had pledged \$642,000 towards our \$900,000 campaign goal. The Generosity Team is resuming the pledge drive in early June in hopes that every family, every member will be able to make a pledge, and that those who are able will consider increasing our pledges to help make up for the loss of rental and special event revenues. Despite the unprecedented disruption of "church" as we have known it, you have seen how your Cedar Lane community has been there for us all, starting mere days after the shutdown order. Your financial support is what will keep us going through these extraordinary times.

Members: Mary Means and Marilyn Emery, Co-Team Leads, Karen Durland, Peter Fenn, Cathy and Stew Grubman, Jen Morley, Vicky Strella, Barb Tomar, Helen Worth, Dianne Yaunches, and Rev. Abhi Janamanchi.

