



"We kindle the light within and inspire courage to nurture the web of life and to create a just and compassionate world"



FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF OTTAWA ANNUAL REPORT 2019



Cover images:

Climate March, Confederation Park, Ottawa 2019

Pride Parade, Ottawa, August 2019



May this house
be truly a place of meeting:
meeting in warmth and joy and openness;
meeting in courage and love and trust.

May all who enter here
trust one another so surely
that they may share the deep fires
that burst into anger
as much as the sweet spring waters
that swell into laughter;
the slow erosion of wounded tears
as much as the soaring song.

May the rain fall lightly on this house
and the sun shine warmly
and the winds blow softly
and bless it as a place of
joy and peace.

-Excerpts from
*A Prayer of Dedication for a
Meetinghouse Blessing,*
By Rev. Eileen B Karpeles

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Administration

Message from the President, Board of Directors

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- Guy Belleperche, president@firstunitarianottawa.ca



2019 was a busy and productive year for FirstU. Our annual Stewardship Campaign fully met its fundraising goals. Time and Talent and the Fall Fair both provided excellent opportunities for fellowship and community building, and raised significant funds for the operation of the church. FirstU hosted three Music Concerts, a Fish Fry, a Chili Cook-Off, a Summer Picnic, and a Pizza and Games night, all of which provided enjoyable opportunities to gather in community and to showcase our campus and the wonderful people of FirstU.

We were also very active in living our UU principles in the community, including raising fund for the Multi-Faith Housing Initiative through the Tulipathon, and for the Ten Oaks Project, which offers a summer camp program for children and their families from the 2LGBTQ+ community. Many of us participated in the Ottawa Pride Parade, in August, and the Ottawa Climate Strike March, in late September. And in October, our Congregation chose “Confronting Climate Catastrophe: Transforming Fear to Empowerment” as our focus for the next four-years, to October 2023.

Our developmental minister, Reverend Patricia Guthmann-Haresch (Rev. Pat), completed her first full year with us, and together, we accomplished many of our year 1 developmental priorities and refined those for year 2. Of particular note was the work of the Embracing Diversity Steering Committee which, in its first full year, focused on developing and fostering a culture of openness and acceptance towards 2SLGBTQ+ families at FirstU; the work of the Right Relations Team which focused on developing a new relational covenant; the renaissance of the Communications and Outreach Committee; and the establishment of the Committee on Shared Ministry to help us monitor our progress on achieving our developmental and strategic goals in support of the mission of FirstU. And we even made some progress on bringing our budget back into balance.

Following on the success of the Spiritual Home Campaign, a FirstU Campus Future initiative was launched and raised almost \$75K in support of studies and plans to inform any future development of the campus. The Campus Planning Committee (CPC) invited representation from the Poverty Action and Environmental Action Working Groups, and through this expanded committee, FirstU continued our engagement with our Campus partners, the City of Ottawa, and the members of our Congregation, regarding our long term plans, with special focus on environmental impact and sustainability while maximizing social benefit. A major theme emerging from consultations was the need to articulate our FirstU vision for the future of the



Congregation, and use this to inform our long term plans. This will be a key priority and focus in 2020 and beyond.

Organizations like FirstU depend on thousands of hours of volunteer time and support. Our success, as a Congregation and as a force for social justice and social good, is wholly dependent on the time, talent and commitment of our volunteers. I want to thank you for your contributions over the year. I would also like to recognize our exceptional staff and their many contributions to FirstU. We are blessed to have a highly professional, highly competent, and very dedicated team. Finally, I would like to thank our Congregational leaders, including my fellow directors on the Board. I am humbled to work with these wonderful and dedicated people, and strive to live up to the example that they set. Our mission at FirstU is to kindle the light within and inspire courage to nurture the web of life and to create a just and compassionate world, and I see many lights burning bright, tremendous courage in action.

Message from the Minister

-Rev. Patricia Guthmann Haresch



In last year's Annual Report, I quoted from a poem by Marge Piercy, *The Seven of Pentacles*. In part I shared, "connections are made slowly, and sometimes they grow underground."

With regard to our Developmental Goals for Year 2, I believe this held true. Rather than planting more and more seeds and spreading ourselves thin, we went deeper in some areas. Made sure that the Committee on Shared Ministry, Embracing Diversity Committee and "new edition" of the Leadership Council took root. We continued re-visioning the Religious Exploration program focusing on three peer groups, the wee ones, elementary age, and youth. Offering a Coming of Age and OWL programming for youth.

Offering a Coming of Age and OWL programming for youth.

The Committee on Shared Ministry (CoSM) identified four main "pathways" to help concentrate their efforts, assessments, and supports: Leadership; Volunteer; Membership; and Family. Pathways to the Board, committee, team, and working groups within our congregation and other volunteer opportunities. Becoming and growing within membership, and becoming engaged and supported as a family. As Welcome and Membership has been working on a number of improvements from the experience of entering the Sanctuary to the experience in the Fellowship Hall following Sunday Services and more, and the Religious Exploration program has been working on family engagement and support, the CoSM chose to prioritize the pathway to Leadership this year with the Leadership Council gatherings being a primary focus. Leadership and Volunteer Handbooks are also in development and the idea of a Wisdom pathway is part of the discussion now as well.

Much was planted and being nurtured and then who would know that a pandemic would be spreading throughout the world in 2020. Thank goodness our FirstU connections are deep and



leadership is strong at FirstU. We have been able to shift to a virtual setting. Our congregation is about more than a building at 30 Cleary. With our telephone tree, 30 are calling 300. Almost all of our in-person meetings and interest groups have shifted to Zoom teleconferencing. Our Staff is as busy as ever. We have two virtual Sunday forum series, one modeled after our Breakfast Forums and the other from the Environmental Action Working Group called Earth Speaks. Our Sunday Services are virtual and Religious Exploration lessons come in the eUU email newsletter. We have check-ins for elementary children and youth, and adults, including the choirs, and virtual Bridge and Trivia Night. It is exciting and daunting.

In my Spire article just before the pandemic landed in Ottawa, not knowing how true these words would soon ring, I wrote:

“The rhythm of our daily schedules and routines often lull us into thinking that equilibrium or stasis is formal. Yet, most of the time we are in transition... children grow. Our own bodies change. We move, change jobs. Accidents happen, disease. As one door or chapter is closing behind us, another opens before us. Every morning is an opportunity to begin a new day. Most of our lives we are on the threshold of some new beginning. Most of our lives we are in the in between.”

Most of our lives we are in the “in between,” but right now in 2020 we feel more profoundly “in between” than perhaps we have ever felt before. May we continue to plant seeds of growth, depth, compassion, and hope. Nurture our connections and resilience together. Again from Marge Piercy's poem, “. . . reach out, keep reaching out, keep bringing in... for every gardener knows that after the digging, after the planting, after the long season of tending and growth, the harvest comes.”



Religious Exploration

-Neo Yaxley, Director of Religious Exploration



We provide level-appropriate religious education to children to inspire a connection to self, to others and the environment. We provide opportunities for spiritual, emotional and intellectual growth, and a space where people with children feel welcomed and experience community.

2018 was a time for the following

- establishing spaces that met the needs of all congregants,
- community building, and
- providing meaningful hands-on curriculum.

This year our focus has been on families and providing UU curriculum to all the ages. We have been successful in providing UU programming, which is level appropriate and connects to our kids. The curricula used for the different levels was Celebrating Me and My World, Bibleodeon, The UU kid's book, Tapestry of Faith, Coning of Age and OWL.

The area which needs more consideration is community building within families.

I am grateful to the congregation for their kindness and willingness to lend a hand. We struggled as we did last year with finding volunteers to work directly with our children. The good news is that we have congregants who are dedicated to the program and lend a hand in their way, which benefits our program. People are continually sharing supplies with us. We have had multiple people help with our children library, OWL, Bibleodeon, reading, and organizing. I have come to understand that people give when they can, and in different ways.



Unfortunately the cessation of the RE Team caused some uncertainty.

Moving forward, I hope to understand at a deeper level the needs of new and past families.

Our goals for the future include

- community building- Building strong relationships through trust, communication, collaboration and feedback,
- creating a feeling of home and belonging for children and parents,
- raising up our children and youth to feel they have a UU identity,
- defining core values for our program and creating SMART goals to obtain goals in collaboration with congregants,
- creating a volunteer position of greeter specifically for families, and
- growing our Religious Exploration Planning Circle

With a passionate core of committed families, myself and childcare leaders, we can become even stronger with the continued support, community building efforts, and collaboration of the congregation.



Music Program

-Deirdre Kellerman, Director of Music



The music program exists to provide music for our weekly services, as well as create and facilitate small group ministry for congregants and community members. Many, if not all choir members say that music is a primary form of their spiritual practice.

During the 2019 year, the music program was made up of our three regular choirs, as well as our Summer Choir and Christmas Choir. On top of weekly services, we gave our annual Winter and Spring Concerts. Our Spring Concert also highlighted visual artists from within the congregation. Our program continues to thrive, though I do see a decline in Chalice Choir (our primary group) in terms of commitment level.

The music program remains a celebrated aspect of our congregation and I'm grateful for the continued support from our staff, board and congregation. My one concern is the use of our Worship Hall on Sunday mornings, before the service.

2020 is proving to be a strange year! Due to COVID-19, our Spring Concert has already been cancelled and I do not believe that we will be rehearsing in person until 2021. I am trying to find creative and engaging ways to keep the music program alive and well over technology. I'm excited about the ways the music program might reach out to children and families during this time, as well as people who don't normally sing with the choirs.



Operations, Finance and Facility Management

-Jen Brennan, Operations Manager, Michelle Jackson, Finance Manager, and Lori Clarke, Facility Manager

As administrators and caretakers of church operations and space, we strive to carry out our daily work with a high degree of care and consideration, while taking into account the seventh principle when procuring, providing and consuming resources for the entire building and campus.

Often the first point of contact with newcomers to the church, be they potential new members or clients to whom we cater, it is our responsibility to accurately represent the mission of the congregation in how we carry out our work.

We are grateful for the opportunity to foster fellowship and be of service to both our congregational and public communities. We appreciate that our successes add, in small ways, to the care of the congregation.

We strive to keep abreast of changing requirements such as Canada Revenue Agency requirements and Accessibility Standards.

As the latest congregational focus is the Environment, we will continue to determine ways of reducing our footprint in the office and throughout the church.



Filling sand bags, Constance Bay, Mar 2019



Avery, one of our sound technicians ready for duty.



Our custodian Moe, taking care of the grounds.



Archives and Adult Library

-Brian Cowan



Archives

The mandate of the records-archives volunteer has at least three aspects: find documents (if we have them) without undue difficulty; help safeguard the retention of documents we are legally required to keep; help retain data that preserves the main outline our congregational history.

Steady progress was made in organizing and cataloging our congregational data. The cataloging is done via both electronic and hardcopy means. Several of our church computers contain the electronic catalogs in the form of Excel searchable workbooks. There is also a backup on flash drives. The data in question relates to our administrative and financial offices, our religious exploration office, our basement archives and our 'In Memoriam' information. The work, albeit very interesting, is also quite slow, and I believe it would be a mistake to try to rush it.

Due to the shelving replacement in 2019 there were some months of moderate disruption vis-à-vis the library. As well, the year witnessed a considerable effort being made to streamline the library by way of culling operations. Against this recent rather active background, I would be content, during 2020, to see the library simply operating on an even keel free of any major changes. To guard against uncontrolled growth some moderate culling continues in 2020.

Adult Library

The library aims to emphasize our UU history and values. It follows, that one of our important goals is to help provide in depth perspectives on our UU spiritual, religious, philosophical and ethical approaches to life.

For some months during 2019 our library was not in operation due to the collapse of one of the bookshelves. New and safer shelving was purchased and installed in our recently repainted Lounge, and this has created a pleasant and secure library environment. The shelving renovation downtime was used to review our library stock, and this led to the culling of books and other items deemed to be out of date and/or no longer in sync with the library's purpose.

Due to the fairly significant culling of books in 2019, the library now, in my estimation, presents itself as more compact and focused. A phenomenon that has attracted my attention is that borrowing seems to be down somewhat compared to former years, and one reason for this may be that so much information, formerly sought in books, is now readily available on line.



Committees of the Board

Audit Committee

-Paula Theetge, chair

Our mandate is to assist the Board of Directors in its fiduciary responsibility. The Audit Committee provides oversight of the integrity of financial information and reporting, and internal control risk.

In 2019 we met to formally receive and review the Independent Auditor's Report of our FirstU 2018 financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2018. Proposed edits to the document, but indicated no concerns or questions relating to the general contents of the report, or the financial statements themselves. Following email discussion with the audit firm, received, reviewed and approved an updated version of the report, and recommended acceptance and approval of the report to the Board of Directors.

The Committee had intended to issue an RFP to multiple firms, including our current audit firm, to confirm best value for FirstU – this is recommended every 5-7 years. Unfortunately, we were unable to complete this work, and at the 2019 FCM, the Congregation approved re-appointment of the auditors and a delay in RFP process to 2021.

It has been very difficult to recruit and retain members for this Committee. A recommendation to merge the Audit Committee functions into the Finance Committee, similar to what has been done at Unitarian House, was sent to the Board for their review and ultimate decision and direction.

If approved by the Board, the Audit Committee will be disbanded, and the functions merged into the Finance Committee. In addition to the regular annual work of reviewing, revising and ultimately recommending the audit report to the Board for approval, a major item of work will be initiating an RFP process in 2021.

Campus Planning Committee

-Terry Kimmel, chair

Our mandate springs from the Governance Manual; Assist the Board by helping to provide watchful and careful monitoring of, review/propose policies for, and facilitate communication related to site planning and long-term use of the campus. AGM motion: To develop the campus lands, in a phased manner, in order to unlock the value of this exceptional property for the benefit of the Congregation and the community. “



We began the process of developing a site plan by involving consultant (Fotenn), congregation and greater community. Committee added PAWG and EAWG members to support overall objectives. Created opportunities for input from the congregation on plans and interests (fora, special meetings, workshops.) CPC generated two preliminary site plan options for consideration. CPC now meeting with various parties for further input and interest (affordable housing groups, environmental experts, architects, developers, the City. Working with the Board on a visioning process; what should our campus look like over the next 50 years? We recognize that this is a very complex undertaking.

Campus development is a very challenging topic and everyone has an opinion on how we should, or shouldn't develop the campus. Recognizing the sensitivities with our UH population is important. Making sure that we understand the differences between a site plan (provided to the city about what we are able to do on the campus) and our own plan (what we will do at the appropriate time) is critical. Our visioning exercise will be critical to determining what we do.

Our strategy will be to consult, consult, and consult: with the congregation, with developers, with planners, with our external community and with consultants.

We will work towards filing a site plan with the city (there is still a way to go here). We want to understand the financial implications of developments. We need to come to an agreement with UH on any future development by them on our campus.

Committee on Shared Ministry (CoSM)

-Mary Ella Keblusek and Eva Berringer

The mandate of the CoSM is to coordinate FirstU's various ministries to ensure they are effective and are meeting the needs of the congregation. The CoSM does this by monitoring congregational life, coordinating the work of ministry team, undertaking periodic assessments of programs and supporting congregational leadership development.

The CoSM held its first meeting in June 2019. Early meetings focused on understanding the CoSM's mandate, gathering resources and examining how the CoSM can support our Developmental Ministry priorities. A key vehicle for coordinating the congregation's ministries is the Leadership Council, which brings together leaders of all committees, teams and working groups. The CoSM plans to use the Council to deepen connections among leaders, strengthen leadership development and share ideas for strengthening our ministries. The fall 2019 meeting of the Council focused on opportunities to increase our multigenerational engagement. The CoSM has also been considering how it can recruit, support and develop our FirstU leaders.

The CoSM faced a number of changes in membership and would like to thank Doug MacDonald, Stephanie Woodend and Barry Read for their contributions and to welcome Sharen Bowen and Colleen Glass as members. At present, we have a small but dedicated team. The recruitment



of additional Committee members will be important for the CoSM to effectively carry out its mandate.

In keeping with our 2020 Developmental Ministry Priorities, a key focus of the CoSM going forward will be developing our leadership pathways and strengthening support for our leaders. This will include looking at how we can better support recruitment and mentoring of leaders as well as tools, resources, and training to strengthen our leadership team. The CoSM will also be looking at how it can move forward on other areas of its mandate and improve coordination between, and support for, our various ministries.

Communications and Outreach Committee

-Larry Jones and Carl Sonnen

The mandate of the Communications and Outreach Team includes

- developing and implementing internal, coordinated communications plans and processes,
- developing and implementing outreach communications strategies, plans and actions, and
- continuously monitoring the effectiveness of these activities to determine any changes and additions to the overall strategies and make improvements as required.

In early November 2019, the C&O Committee was re-constituted with new volunteers. At the inaugural C&O meeting, the previous C&O Chair, Chris Hughes, the previous Board President, Terry Kimmel, and with Larry Jones (Stewardship rep), provided an overview and historical perspective of the previous C&O Committee activities, progress and challenges.

Most of our accomplishments to date have been or will be completed in 2020. These will be reported on in the next Annual Report. In the short time we met as a team in 2019, we

- acquired a dedicated team of some eight core C&O committee members, based on prior committee's work,
- established a C&O structure and functions diagram to help define, explain, organize and implement the C&O mandate,
- established a set of tasks to accomplish, each task with both agreed upon and assigned priority and Impact, and
- created a committee document repository.

Our future Goals have been and will need to be extensively revised as a consequence of the pandemic. Our objectives include

- developing a completed C&O policy document,
- defining what and how to market, then begin marketing our unique community to the public at large, through free and/or low-cost advertising,



- recruiting more committee members – in collaboration with stewardship helping to define how best to engage new volunteers, and
- making internal communications clear, consistent, openly transparent and accessible.

Embracing Diversity Committee (EDC)

-Jane Lindsay, Chair and Justine De Jaegher



EDC assists the First Unitarian Congregation to be an intentionally welcoming and inclusive community, both within the Congregation itself and in its engagement with the broader community. We design and oversee the implementation of an annual plan of educational, advocacy, outreach, and community-building activities, and recommend policy/procedural/structural changes in Congregation operations.

Terms of reference were established February 2019 (new committee). We drafted an ambitious work plan with initiatives categorized under general, “2SLGBTQ”, “Accessibility”, “Multi-Age”, “Indigenous Relations” etc.

Completed activities include:

- chair participation in UUA welcoming congregation renewal webinar
- meetings with queer and trans congregants and family members
- Pride: service, film, and parade (good sized delegation)
- breakfast forum and fundraiser with Ten Oaks Project
- developed and presented workshop on ally ship, unconscious bias, and language (“Beyond Tolerance”), among others.

More work is to be done on accessibility issues, greater liaison with other groups, review of existing congregation/workplace materials, and creation of new diversity awareness/promotion materials.

Some of the things that contributed to our success in 2019 were support from board and congregants for the new “Beyond Tolerance” workshop (excellent attendance at associated breakfast forum),

Active and engaged committee chair, committee member contacts with external 2SLGBTQ groups helped with goal achievement and success.

Involvement by many committee members on other initiatives in addition to EDC limited the group’s capacity somewhat.



Funding limitations required adaptability (e.g. committee members facilitating workshop over hired, external facilitator(s)), and more cross-committee collaboration on projects as well as greater project prioritization to deal with capacity issues would assist in achieving goals in the future.

Future goals include

- Greater focus beyond 2SLGBTQ issues.
- Liaising with other groups to develop resources (i.e. RE, Welcome & Membership, Stewardship, Minister/ Worship, Board, Indigenous Relations, staff).
- Continued offering of “Beyond Tolerance”, including for the Fellowship. Lead or support activities required for recertification as a Welcoming Congregation for the 2021 year and prepare the associated application.
- Hosting a “Diversity Fair” on campus (COVID-19 developments permitting). Assess accessibility of First U building, programs, communications for people of all ages.

Finance Committee

-Margaret Linton

Our mandate is to assist the Board by helping to provide watchful and careful monitoring of, review/propose policies for, and facilitate communication related to financial matters. Sustainable Finances are key to keeping First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa viable so it can achieve its charitable purposes.

Each year this Committee reviews and recommends changes to the audit, and assists with development of the budget. The goal of updating the first 10 financial policies (from pre 2007) was not met (zero completed), though most have passed the Governance review step.

Advising the board on financial matters took a few forms this year: recommendations were made for budget goals (less deficit); the overall net worth (excluding property) change over 5 years was developed using data from Audited Statements; a Financial Sustainability report was delivered to the board; the committee recommended that the drawdown from the Legacy Fund to Operation be raised – this was accepted.

The board request to consider ramifications of the Finance Committee taking over Audit Committee functions was discussed and determined to be feasible.

Beyond the reviewing of finance statements quarterly, contributing to the planning of the fall budget and projections and reviewing and recommending changes to audited statements in the spring, the Finance Committee will continue to make the Financial Policies current and applicable. The board may also ask the Finance Committee to do functions of the Audit Committee.



Governance Committee

-Guy Belleperche, chair

The Governance Committee assists the Board by helping to provide watchful and careful monitoring of, review/propose policies for, and facilitate communication related to governance matters.

The Governance Committee has been focused on reviewing and updating existing policies, developing new policies where required, updating the Governance Manual to reflect changes to governance structures and Committee, Group and Team roles and responsibilities, and beginning work on revising our Charitable Purposes.

Additional members on the committee would be beneficial, as policy work is very detail oriented, and having extra hands to do the work, and extra eyes to review, is always helpful.

Continue work on updating the Governance Manual, reconciling our various policy documents, and updating our charitable purposes.

Nominating Committee

-Marilen Gerber and Joseph Connor

The Nominating Committee in 2019 nominated one new member for the Board as an at-large Director and proposed one other at-large member for re-election. The Committee proposed the re-election of the four officers of the Congregation.

The Committee proposed: that Carl Sonnen be elected as Member at Large for a 3year term, that Amy Berube be re-elected as a Member At Large for a two year term, Guy Belleperche be elected President for one year, that Margaret Linton and Eva Berringer be re-elected as Treasurer and Secretary respectively each for one year, that Lisa Sharp be re-elected to the Board for a two year term to serve as Vice President.

The Committee is mandated to nominate members who are representative of the range of views and interests found in the Congregation. If you look at the composition of the Board we feel we have met our mandate.

At the end of 2019 the Committee turned over its responsibilities to a new Nominating Committee consisting of Sharmila Khare, Doug MacDonald Jan Glyde, and Joe Connor. The new Committee members wish to thank the retiring Nominating Committee members, especially its Chair, Marilen Gerber, for their excellent work and their stellar choices.



Personnel Committee

-Chuck Shields, chair

We assist the Board by helping to provide watchful and careful monitoring of, review/propose policies for, and facilitate communication related to personnel general practices and policies and general practices. The committee shall also provide assistance, as requested, to staff regarding personnel matters.

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The main task of the committee was the completion of the Employee Handbook, which was done and forwarded to the board early in 2019.

The committee provided advice to the minister and staff regarding a range of issues that they brought forward.

The committee began to consider developing a statement regarding employee use of social media to add to the Employee Handbook and the congregational policy regarding social media.

The committee began the process of searching for new members of the committee to replace one who had resigned and others who had served on the committee for a long time.

On the request of the minister, the committee began the development of a policy and procedure about how to handle a conflict between a staff member and a congregant.

On the request of the board and minister, the committee began the process of reviewing the congregation's approach to performance reviews for staff and the minister.

The committee, through the chairman, maintained contact with the board at regular points during the year to check whether there were issues it wanted the committee to address.

To help address challenges of gathering all the members of the committee for meetings, the committee began, in January 2019, to hold meetings via Zoom. This helped particularly during the period of bad winter weather.

In early 2020 the committee completed the development of draft annual review forms and processes for all staff and the minister and forwarded these to the board and the Committee on Shared Ministry.

The committee will identify new members to recommend to the board to take the place of departing members.

The committee will complete a recommended statement regarding employee use of social media for inclusion in the Employee Handbook.



Stewardship Committee

-Larry Jones, chair

Stewardship is a year-round function focussed on recognizing, nurturing and celebrating GENEROSITY in all its forms within our congregation and community towards enabling our covenant.

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Data-driven and project-oriented, Stewardship supports cross-functional and congregant engagement and provides an objective basis for evaluating our community dynamics (DY) and diversity (DI), along with analysis and measures for effective governance (EG).

Accomplishments in 2019 include:

- Stewardship Orientation / Update Town Hall (TH) deferred to Jan 2020.
- Finance 101 TH not done; morphed into FirstU Health Indicators TH (see below).
- Conducted and Completed 2020 Pledge Campaign with regular reporting – achieved the financial goal.
- Established 2019 Pledge Campaign Metrics Reporting including contributions Tracking – to end Dec 2019 Continued with the Legacy Giving Program (Re-)Development & Delivery Project (brochure completed, Bequests support, presentation planning).
- Supported & Funded a successful Chili Cook-Off Event (Nov 2019) – sponsored by 2020 Pledge Campaign Continued Project ReConnect activities (in collaboration with Welcome & Membership - contact with select congregants)
- Spring 2019 – extensive data capture & incorporation into membership database. We continued development of a multi-year ‘standard’ for data collection and Metrics Reporting for the Pledge Campaigns using historical data.
- Furthered work on Multi-Gen Profile Project, including Health Dashboard concept Program Development with reporting on indicators such a Service Attendance, Attrition, Pledging History & forecasting, etc.
- Developed, published and continuing to grow the written Testimonial Statements Collection– maintained publication ‘standard’ of select 6 testimonials per (now quarterly) SPIRE Issues, dispersed throughout. Initiated a Stewardship Fun-Fund Raising Event Ideas (FFREIs) Assessment Group (Minister, Operations Manager, Finance & HR Manager, Stewardship Chair, Kathy Yach) to evaluate & support approved FFREIs for execution, including DRAFT Assessment criteria / checklist (based on Board directive for more FFREIs implementation).
- Conducted a Town Hall on FirstU Health (Dashboard) Indicators (Oct 2019) – good discussions, not well attended – due to conflicting meetings, limited TH event announcements. Finance & HR Manager in collaboration with Stewardship resolved to upgrade PowerChurch rather than initiate a replacement project.



Factors that affected our success included the following.

- Engaging volunteers with Stewardship functions – drafted a recruitment plan; largely not executed – structural elements need to be mostly completed first
- PowerChurch data integrity and maintenance – associated processes & procedures, including membership categories formulation is work-in-progress with Finance Manager
- Congregants 'Participation' (Pledging) in the Pledge Campaign remains a challenge
Internal communications – awareness & understanding of the Stewardship vision, mandate and its functions for better engagement – initiated a Communications Plan, eUU, SPIRE, etc.- not yet thoroughly implemented.



One leaf equals one pledge!



Fundraising

Fall Fair

-Carol Card, chair

Each year we hold a bazaar run by volunteers that raises funds for the operations of the church, build community within and with those outside the congregation, disperse unsold donations to charitable organizations, and put our environmental principles into practice in dealing with waste and recyclables.

In 2019, revenues increased once again, reaching the highest level ever. Customers and volunteers were in good spirits, and no safety or security incidents occurred.



Leadership positions were filled, so that the workload was generally spread around enough to avoid excessive strain. A safety/contingency plan was developed, receiving Board approval and was also implemented. A large street sign was rented to improve promotion. The use of credit cards (expanded) and debit cards (new) increased to 17.5% of revenues.

Fall Fair is a success because our congregants step up to volunteer, take on leadership roles, involve and welcome helpers from outside the congregation, donate items and promote the event.

We hope that more ways can be found for the congregation to take advantage of the opportunity offered by Fall Fair to increase our outreach in the community. Student recruitment needs to be increased; more volunteers are needed, especially for setup and cleanup.



Our future goals include

- to do as well or better financially,
- cultivate new volunteers,
- involve families and younger congregants more.
- continue to increase promotion, and
- obtain more metrics on customers, including numbers and feedback on their Fall Fair experience.



Time and Talent

-Bob Armstrong, organizer

The Time & Talent annual auction raises funds for the Operating fund of the church.

T&T takes place in the spring of the year, usually finishing in early April. The 2019 net income after expenses was \$7,000. This is \$1,400 lower than last year and \$700 lower than 2017.

The division of income was:

- dinners or entertainment in homes or cottages: 45%
- Paul McCartney guitar: 14%
- certificates, passes, tickets: 11%
- services: 10%
- arts & crafts: 6%
- food items: 5%
- non-categorized / donations: 9%



The numbers of items donated were about the same as last year, so the drop in income was due to lower final bids. In fact, the drop in income was much greater when the Paul McCartney guitar is discounted.

Additional income did come in later and missed being credited to T&T. We estimate that to be more than \$1,000.

One suggestion for the future is to widen the customer base similarly to Fall Fair which depends on hundreds of customers coming for outside our church community. Another suggestion is to promote the donation of more dinners/entertainment in homes or cottages. These are widely appreciated and generate the largest portion of the T&T income. Covid-19 has made it impractical to attempt a silent auction this year.



Teams

Adult Learning Team

-Wendy Doyle, Chair

The Adult Learning Team oversees Adult Learning Groups, Events and Courses. These attract people to the Congregation. The Adult Learning Team produces the Lifespan Learning & Events Guide in January and September. The Guide helps Members and newcomers to find out about upcoming courses, events and groups.

Some of the courses which were really popular were the Enneagram Essentials Workshop, The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity, and the Mental Health First Aid Course. Several events were Indigenous Musicians in 2019 and the Zatoun Story. We have many groups which operate well. Some of the most popular ones are Mindfulness Meditation, Gentle Yoga, Spirituality and Philosophy Discussion Group, Arts Night, 55+ Program, and the Monday and Friday Non-Fiction Reading Groups.

We have been very happy that members of the Congregation have come forward to lead the above courses and events. We would be happy if the Adult Learning Team had more members. We could then lead more courses and events.

The Adult Learning Team helps guide members of the Congregation in arranging courses and events. There are several new initiatives including Friends of the Little Free Library, the Environmental Action Working Group with a congregational focus on the climate change crisis, and the Advanced Care Planning Workshop. The Rare Books Workshop from the Montreal Jewish Public Library should be really interesting.

Caring Network Executive

-Alexandra Devine, chair

The Caring Network Executive strives to encourage caring connections and outreach among all in the congregation through a somewhat formalized network of two Caring Contacts each month. Cooperation with the Minister(s), the Spiritual Care Council, and Membership enhance the work of our group.

In 2019 volunteers provided: 7 drives, 24 telephone visits, and 5 personal visits. 101 Caring Cards were sent, most signed by everyone at a Sunday Service and mailed or hand-delivered to those celebrating a special occasion or bearing sickness, injury or loss of a loved one. In addition initiative was taken by many others, recognizing needs or joys and achievements. In the winter holiday season, cards and/or Christmas plants were taken to shut-ins, especially those who



whether through age or illness, were unable to attend Services regularly. We assisted the Memorial Receptions Coordinator, Evelyn Algar, with 5 receptions, where attendance ranged from 80 to 130.

We continue to encourage all to let the monthly Caring Contacts know of any situation where it is thought action should be taken through the Network. In this way our efforts will expand to include those who do not call on their own behalf. Feedback on actions taken is also very helpful, as is follow-up by those who know the member or friend, or have special training in visiting or can suggest Community agencies that might be appropriate.

We will continue to recruit Caring Contacts, assign two each month and advertise their contact information. A representative of the Caring Executive will attend Spiritual Care Council meetings, usually held once a month, and have a contact listed in the Leaders' list published through the Office. That contact or a representative will attend and participate in Leadership Council meetings. We may organize and lead relevant workshops or presentations.

Denominational Affairs Team (DAT)

-Maury Prevost, Chair

The Team's mandate is to connect our congregation and its members to other UUs and their activities in Canada and around the world, especially through the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC). These connections strengthen the congregation's ability to fulfill its mission and charitable purposes beyond just the local community.

We accomplished all the activities in our 2019 plan, including the annual "Sharing Our Faith" service, participation in the CUC AGM, and regularly communicating about CUC activities. Our plan also included "Participate in CUC Eastern Regional Gathering". We went far beyond this objective by hosting the event at FirstU very successfully on October 19, 2019. There were over 60 participants in total, coming from all over the Eastern Region, some from the Central Region, and two from the US. The event also at least broke even, with no net cost to the congregation except for staff time.

There were several factors that contributed to the success of the Eastern Region Fall Gathering:

- Early and consistent support from our staff, especially Rev. Pat, Jen, and Deirdre, and our Board.
- Launching a Host Team in May, with two participants from our local partner, the UU Fellowship of Ottawa.
- Focusing first on planning our program so that registration via the CUC website opened in July.
- Recruiting and organizing a team of 40-50 enthusiastic volunteers from the two Ottawa congregations.
- We intentionally made the event as multi-generational as possible.



The DAT is responsible for quite a few activities that recur annually.

Our key objective for 2020 was to promote participation in the national conference May 15-17 in Halifax. We had 6-8 people who were planning to go; however, the conference was cancelled on March 13 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The CUC AGM is going ahead on May 15 as an online only event.

Lay Chaplaincy Team

-Bob Armstrong, chair

Lay chaplaincy is an outreach program. As such, it offers its services (officiating rituals) primarily to the general public not necessarily connected with FirstU/UUFO or, often, who have no idea that FirstU/UUFO exists.

Alex Campbell and Nicki Bridgland will complete their 6-year terms in April, 2020.

In 2019, Evangeline Danseco of the UUFO received registration in Ontario as a wedding officiant. She then started her term as an Ottawa UU lay chaplain.

In March 2020, we interviewed 5 applicants to replace one of Alex and Nicki. The Lay Chaplaincy Team (Ottawa LCC) selected one applicant (Lisa Boulay) to commence training to become a lay chaplain with Evangeline. A motion will be presented to the Congregation at the AGM to approve Lisa as a FirstU lay chaplain.

We expect that the Covid-19 restrictions will have a significant impact on the numbers of rituals we will be able to perform. The Ottawa LCC has discussed possibilities such as streaming rituals to avoid physical gatherings of many people. We will continue to explore how we might be able to continue providing an outreach service.

Spiritual Care Council

-Rev. Ellen Bell, chair

Our directive is to monitor the congregation and try to ensure that nobody “falls through the cracks” of needing spiritual care.

Due to a lack of volunteers and lengthy absence of the Spiritual Care Visitor due to a medical condition, fewer visits were accomplished than in previous years.

There is a plan to hold a volunteer visitor training in the upcoming year.



Sunday Hospitality

-Tarrel Armstrong, coordinator

Our mandate is to supply beverages and snacks to those gathered in Fellowship Hall after services. Our efforts from volunteers, to give a congenial setting for conversation for the congregation is well received. The profit from donations for 2019 was \$1173.89 which is \$89 more than 2018. This profit includes the donations from the Breakfast Forums, being \$437.85. (This shows donations to Hospitality Hour itself are down.) Possibly, if people attend both Hospitality Hour and the Breakfast Forums, they only donate once. There were no other big expense items over the year for the kitchen. A suggestion put forth before Covid-19 arrived was to reduce the number of tables in Fellowship Hall for the snacks and beverages to allow for a better flow of traffic. This was discussed with my regular volunteers who set up, clean up and serve and they agreed it was a positive idea. This will now be essential once we gather in the future.



Welcome and Membership Team

-Jane Lindsay, chair

The Welcome & Membership Team helps ensure FUU's sustained vitality by welcoming newcomers and congregants, supporting them to feel connected and engaged with our community and helping those who wish to do so to become members.

Greeting and welcoming newcomers on Sundays was supported by the recruitment of new volunteers, more sharing of task leadership, and changes such as having two "green muggers". Nonetheless, more new volunteers are needed to relieve long-time ones and provide better coverage, especially of elevator monitoring. Two new member welcome breakfasts and services were held as forecast, and the conduct of the membership application process continued smoothly. Only one abbreviated "Introducing Ourselves" session was delivered but ideas for a more frequent and flexible approach were identified. Bolo name tags for ongoing attendees continued to be well-received and utilized. Participation in the Spiritual Care Network and periodic liaison with the Stewardship Committee continued. Only a few contacts were made with inactive members, rather than the intended series of reconnecting calls, but these led to some updating of our records or enhanced connection with FUU.



Enthusiastic and creative team members and continued active support from our office contributed to the W&MT’s success. Accomplishments were constrained by a few key volunteers being overly relied upon and others having limited availability.

For 2020, the team plans to implement several new or revised initiatives to enhance our welcoming and integration of newcomers. Focus on oversight of these would be supported by finding someone other than the team leader to produce new bolo name tags. Continued work beyond the W&MT to make FOU’s website more appealing, to solidify the RE program and to have more small group activities to connect congregants will assist us in building membership and FOU vitality.

The welcoming of newcomers and congregants on Sundays is receiving very positive feedback but we need to implement more initiatives and practices to help people feel connected with others and, to the degree they wish, engaged in the activities of the congregation. The W&MT has outlined a set of such initiatives, some of which it can implement on its own, some of which will require collaboration with other teams / groups. The accomplishment of these initiatives will be supported by the W&MT leader focusing much of her 2020 FOU volunteer time on them.



Welcoming a new addition to our UU family!

Social Responsibility

Social Responsibility Council (SRC) & SR Coordinating Team (SRCT)

-Ed Willer, chair

The SRC mandate is to support and coordinate SR activities based on our UU principles, Congregational Mission and priorities through the SRCT and seven Working Groups—Child Haven, Environmental Action, Global Justice, Indigenous Relations, Mental Health, Poverty Action, Refugee, and Unitarian GoGos.



Annual Pride Parade, August 25 2019

The implementation of Work Plans was expected to be enhanced by continued improvement of communications and coordination among the Working Groups and with other congregational groups, and the use of information and publications such as the e-UU, Spire, etc. This expected improvement was largely achieved. The

Congregational focus on Indigenous Issues was a near automatic consideration when making plans. The funding of SR activities was changed from a congregation budget allocation based on 3% of pledges to a portion of Sunday offerings. The result was that the offerings almost matched the allocation—(offering \$10,600; allocation \$10,900).

One of the contributions to our success was the Membership and Work Plan required specific attention to Developmental Ministry Priorities such as increasing congregational, family, young adult and youth involvement in SRC activities; the Congregational focus; welcoming and outreach.

The clear and focussed format was (at their request) shared with other congregational groups. The coordinated approach also prompted calendaring of SR activities but showed the need for a more comprehensive congregational calendar.

The plans for next year were generally based on the current work plans with the addition of the new Congregational Social Responsibility Focus on the environment (Confronting Climate Catastrophe: Transforming Fear to Empowerment.) These plans are being reviewed and revised as the Congregation deals with the new COVID reality.



Child Haven Working Group

-Leslie Baird, Tara Upreti, Co-Chairs

We work to inform people of the efforts to raise and educate children in Child Haven International homes in several Asian countries. We promote Child Haven's fundraising efforts. This supports the UU principles: 1. justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, and 2. the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

This year we have been organizing a Concert event, the Child Haven Fiesta, to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of Child Haven and to raise money for their Endowment Fund. This is our first attempt at an independent fund-raising event. We have more involvement of congregation members as volunteers for the event. Our ticket sales were less than expected, but the date (Friday of the beginning of March break) may have lowered sales. In future we would stay away from that week. The corona virus may have affected ticket sales also. (Probably should say that the event was subsequently postponed)

It is most helpful to have the "three-minute SRC sharing" time during the service. Many people commented that it was much more effective to have a personal presentation rather than just words in the Communique. Although there was not a "Breakfast Forum" available, it also is a very effective to have a more in-depth presentation of issues.

After the Concert event we will be able to assess strategies for next year.

Global Justice Working Group

-Anita McLean and Sharen Bowen

Our goal of justice and human rights also includes climate action and respecting Indigenous rights in Canada and in the rest of the world.

We had Elder Claudette Commanda speak about Restorative Justice Program. Sharen and Anita attended a Restorative Justice meeting on November 21. The planned Holtom Lecture with Bill Van Iterson speaking about treaties, natural resources and land rights was unfortunately not approved by the Holtom Family and was cancelled.

Give new members the information of our various working groups so they themselves can make a decision of where they would like to be involved.

Our future goals include getting more involved with the over-representation of Indigenous people in our jails and working directly with Indigenous people on this topic. We are also involved in crime prevention. We walked in the Climate Change Protest in Ottawa in 2019 and will continue in these steps in 2020.



Indigenous Relations Working Group (IRWG)

-Jane Lindsay & Mike Lloyd, co-chairs

The IRWG supports reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people through relationship building between the Congregation and Indigenous individuals and organizations, through direct interaction, education and being an ally or advocate. We contribute to Unitarianism's first and second Principles (respect for all and social justice), and promote apolitical work for reconciliation in Canada.

The group grappled with ways to enact its mandate. In education, we hosted a breakfast forum, "Indigenous Musicians in Canada Today", led by Music Director Deirdre Kellerman.

For skill development, we participated in the pilot of the Canadian Unitarian Council's "Building Bridges for Reconciliation" workshop. We participated in events such as the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health's Màmawi Together program, and more. We collaborated with community partners, including the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa, to consider Circles for Reconciliation in Ottawa using the model successfully implemented in Winnipeg. Efforts to have prominent author Rupert Ross lead a public event were unsuccessful.

Our accomplishments were fueled by several people of Indigenous heritage as group members or resources and by collective commitment to reconciliation. At the same time we were challenged by a number of members feeling "spread thin" and our group getting smaller as several needed to withdraw. Challenges for us also lay in finding doable, concrete ways to build new, positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. While we know that we are not unique in this challenge, we think the framework of action areas and initiatives we have articulated will help us – both to take focused action and to recruit new members.

We will use our framework to focus on education, direct relationship building and being allies/advocates, through: a Breakfast Forum on the Indian Act and one other educational event; outreach to indigenous communities to plan a public presentation on Circles for Reconciliation; consulting with Algonquin leaders and engaging the congregation in developing a meaningful land and relationship acknowledgement. We will recruit members to the IRWG or to specific initiatives and continue personal experiential and traditional learning.

Mental Health Working Group

- Linda Goonewardene and Paul McGinnis

MHWG offers support to congregants who live with a mental illness or act as a caregiver. We endeavour to inform the congregation about mental health issues. We make every effort to coordinate our activities with the congregation's current outreach focus.

We strengthened and fully instituted for each meeting open sharing of the concerns and achievements of the participants with respect to mental health issues. We organized a well-attended Mental Health First Aid course which ran for 12 hours over 4 weeks. We also hosted



a Breakfast Forum on the topic of Mental Health and Spirituality. At the regional Canadian Unitarian Council forum in Ottawa, Rev. Linda Goonewardene facilitated a workshop on Stigma as a Barrier to Treatment and Recovery for 12 participants. Patricia Stockwell delivered to 12 attendees, at the same regional CUC forum, her talk on Mental Health and Spirituality.

The Poverty Action Working Group

-Kathy Yach, Chair

We bring attention to the concerns and needs of economically marginalized people. It takes or promotes action on anti-poverty and affordable housing matters, and encourages Congregational awareness about the issues.

Indigenous Issues

Supported several Indigenous aid projects, including direct funding and fund raising through individual support for OshkiKizis women's shelter, Shawenjeagamik Dropin (Centre 510).

Affordable Housing

Maintained membership in Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI) and raised \$4,000 through the MHI Tulipathon. Supported student success programs.

Community Connections: Joined the Mother's Day Inter-Faith Food Drive program. Promoted October's "Chew on This" Ottawa anti-poverty campaign.

Congregational Involvement

Presented at Sunday Services and the Breakfast forums. Prepared quarterly Parkway Spire articles about needs in our community, and maintained a presence through the weekly e-UU email. Presented petitions to congregants within the PAWG mandate. Chair, Kathy Yach is a member of the Campus Planning Committee.

Goals include increasing group membership as well as diversity in membership – ages, interests, skills, and so on. Increasing active volunteer involvements with the community groups we support, from across the congregation. Continuing the planning for a major entertainment event for the congregation, with a fund-raising focus for Social Responsibility. Supporting the strengthening of the Campus Planning Committee and the Communications and Outreach Team. Offering Breakfast Forum speakers, and collaborating in Sunday services.



At the Student Global Strike for Climate Change, Ottawa, May 24 2019.



Groups

Arts Night

-Joycelyn Loeffelholz-Rae

Art is good for the soul. Arts Night attracts new people who appreciate art and also introduces them to our congregation. We light the chalice at the beginning of each event and explain to the audience the reason for doing so.

In recent years, the average attendance has remained at about 35 people, guest artists not included, and most of these are not related to our congregation. Most artists are willing and ready to talk about their artistry despite not being compensated, and we have had some real professional artists among our guests. There are nine Arts Night events each year with at least three guest artists at each, which adds up to 27 or 30 guest artists each year. So far we have not had to cancel events due to weather conditions this year

Arts Night started in April of 2003, and turns 17 years in April 2020. It has worked well because we have had a number of dedicated people at the helm, however the Core Committee is aging, and we would like to see other members of the congregation taking on an active role. So far we have included only members of First Unitarian in The Core Group. We have no budget for Arts Night. Everything is donated and the gross proceeds from each event is handed over to the congregation.

The quality of the Arts Night presentations deserves a larger attendance. We advertise with posters around the church and a few other areas, but have no way of spreading this to the greater Ottawa public. This is an area where I think the church can help.

Bridge Group

-Maury Prevost, chair

The role of the congregation's Bridge Group is to strengthen informal relationships within our community through a common interest in playing bridge. This supports the congregation's charitable purpose to "foster fellowship".

All levels of players are welcome to this mentally stimulating fellowship activity.

In 2019, we met eight times on Friday evenings in Room 3, in January, February, March, April, May, September, October and November. A total of about 20 people, including 15 congregation members, participated in one or more sessions. Attendance ranged from 6 to 15 people per session, with an average of 11. We had some new participants in the fall and average



attendance increased from 9 in January-May to 13 in September-November, a positive development. The group contributed \$390 to the congregation in 2019.

Finding some new participants in the fall of 2019 through regular communications (e-UU, Sunday Communiqué) and word of mouth has offset normal attrition and increased our numbers.

Future activities may include some bridge lessons and online bridge. The latter is now being actively explored, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused us to cancel our March 2020 session, with the April and May sessions also being in question. Maury Prevost is stepping down as the Bridge Group organizer at the end of the spring 2020 season and is still looking for a replacement.

Empower Dance

-Janet Clayton

This group was started more than 20 years ago. It was developed as a mode for, rekindling our spirits through self-expression, movement and music. The suggested Buddha pot of \$3.00 per week was to help with the costs of the use of the building each Wednesday and to show our appreciation for the use of this meditative and healing space.

We all feel a lightening of our hearts and revival of our emotional and mental states, when we move in this space which is the Now Room. We do not want instruction. We want to be able to dance and stretch, as we wish, according to our own feelings and abilities. We have added a meditation component on the second Wednesday of each month which gives us an added notion of connectedness to the universal web of life. We always feel great after we have had this chance to move freely!

We will continue, as we have for years, enjoying and being very grateful that we are supported by this Congregation.

Friends of the Meditation Gardens

-Lori Snyder, chair

FOMG have the following mission: we nurture the web of life by maintaining the Gardens as an outdoor sanctuary which provides spiritual and physical peace and renewal for all; builds connections among humans, plants, water and soil; and celebrates the circle of life and death.

We continued to maintain the Gardens as best we could; we hired an outside company at a cost of \$2000 to do an overall weeding and mulching job to supplement our



efforts. There was an adequate amount of rain over the summer that we did not need to tap into the Church’s water supply a great deal.

We don’t have enough volunteers to maintain the Gardens as they should be maintained. Others giving an hour or two here and there to help would solve this. We will continue to ask.

As the long-term future of the Gardens is so uncertain, we will not undertake long-term projects, except for likely examination of the pond area, which is a safety / property issue as well as an esthetic one. We will continue to do normal garden maintenance to the best of our collective ability.

Knitters Group

-Rosemary Bonyun and Coral Sato

The Knitters is an “interest group” under the umbrella of the Lifespan Learning Committee. We meet weekly to pursue a common interest together; all members/friends of the Congregation and others from the community are welcome to join us.

The program year 2019 progressed much as previous years, with regular weekly meetings where we experienced the fellowship of working together, exchanging ideas, and supporting each other. As usual, we took part in several fund-raising activities, including a January sale at Unitarian House, the Congregation’s Fall Fair in November, and the sale of items for the Mitten Tree; in all, we raised about \$3300 for the Congregation. During the year several of us



explored new ideas that would be of current interest – such as walker bags, holders for remotes, specialized designs for toques, etc.



We are grateful to the Congregation for providing us with space to meet and to store our supplies and creations. We are also grateful for the many donations of yarn and other equipment which allow us to create items for sale. We hope to continue in much the same mode for next year.



Spiritual Growth Circle

-Lisa Boulay, coordinator

The Spiritual Growth Circle provides a space for members to explore their spirituality which is in line with the mission and purpose of the Congregation.

In the fall of 2018 Jane Lindsay and Donna Bowen-Willer co-facilitated a 10-week workshop: Enneagram and Spirituality. The Spiritual Growth Circle formed organically as the workshop ended and the group has been meeting monthly since then. Currently the group is a closed group and we will be exploring ways to open the group. Monthly meetings are loosely structured, and we use a variety of modalities to deepen our spirituality through a mind-body-spirit lens (i.e. meditation, intuitive reflection, using resonant voice techniques, drumming, creating a labyrinth).

The Spiritual Growth Group intends to continue to meet monthly and co-create each meeting with the members who are present.

Women’s Personal Growth Group

-Evelyn Algar, chair

We explore, grow and also take care of our inner selves. As our inner strength grows we expand “taking care” into the congregation and beyond (the larger web of life).

Members lead topics. The topics and presenter are published in the e-news. This has contributed to the growth in our membership, as women drop in out of interest and some continue. For example, in March 2019 Joycelyn presented “Breathing While Black”. Our discussion expanded into April. We learned an incredible amount, though accompanied by sadness.

If there was a co-chair, they could assist the chair to nurture the members as needed. New to the congregation members see friendly faces at service and coffee hour to talk to. This reinforces the link to First U. More members now volunteer within the congregation in other areas. We plan to continue as we are as it works.

1 inherent worth and dignity for all	3 spiritual growth and life-long learning	democratic process 5 and voice for each	6 global harmony & fairness
2 justice & compassion	4 responsible search for truth and meaning	7 respect of the interdependent web of existence	

