

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS FELLOWSHIP
OF CHICO**

**2019-2020
ANNUAL REPORT**



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2019-2020 BOARD MEMBERS

T.W. Theodore – President

Courtney Boyden-Singer

Danetta Cordova-Cox

Bob Crowe

Dave Keller

Tom Lewis

Merrily Stover

Board Report

The UUFC Board of Directors made significant progress in this fiscal year, strengthening the committees by creating Charges that authorized each committee to act independently within their budget and under the Charge that each was given by the Board. A Board member was identified as a liaison to each committee and acted as a conduit for the flow of information between that committee and the Board. With these changes, when a major issue arose that required Board approval, the Board was not the first group to address that issue, but rather its role was to review the recommendation of the appropriate committee and approve or suggest changes to that recommendation.

A new chart of accounts for the financial system of the Fellowship was created by the Finance Committee that recognized the strong role that committees take in the leadership of the church. The Board ratified that new financial structure shortly after the New Year and reports by the Treasurer began to be provided in that new format.

In January, a rough draft of the 2020-2021 annual budget was presented to the Board by the Finance committee. The Board established a timeline that would lead to final budget in May to be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting in June. The initial pledged income, the largest income item by far, was projected at \$111,000. The Stewardship committee began its work based on this projected pledged income amount. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the members of the Fellowship went into lock down and financial planning by congregants became uncertain. Unable to make face-to-face contact with congregants in this new social and economic environment, pledged income fell to a projected \$80,000. The projected budget shortfall was mitigated by an SBA loan (to be forgiven), by the judicious use of some reserve funds and, most important, by reducing to three quarters time of our minister, our music director and our administrative assistant.

The Board began meeting via Zoom in March and continued this practice through the end of its term. Other major items discussed during the year were the minister's sabbatical, the work towards a revised Use Permit for our facilities, an increased attention to the Fellowship's Endowment and a forward looking response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Minister's Report

Our church year started normally enough with our Gathering Service in early September. In the fall and winter, we conducted business as usual: I preached three or four Sundays each month, with a guest in the pulpit on the remaining Sunday. We held board meetings and other committee meetings. I was awarded Full-Fellowship (akin to tenure) by the denomination. I attended the fall UU Ministers' gathering near Novato in October. Also, in October, we exchanged pulpits with the UU Congregation, Santa Rosa, with the Rev. Chris Bell speaking at UUFC while I spoke at UUCSR. We have a kinship with UUCSR: that is where I did my internship, and we have reached out to help each other in the aftermath of the 2017 Tubbs Fire and 2018 Camp Fire.

I conducted a lay person training for sermon writing through the fall and into January. Three members and one staff person participated, with each of them creating a delivery-ready sermon. This was a growth experience for all of us—it has oft been said that the teacher learns more than the students. These sermons will help to fill the pulpit during my sabbatical.

Sabbatical was scheduled to begin in February 2020; this did not happen. Due to Camp Fire caused delays in planning, neither the congregation nor I were prepared. I proposed that my sabbatical be delayed until May. Planning with the Sabbatical Committee continued for a May 1st start, but again, it was delayed. With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and all the changes in worship and more generally, I proposed that I delay sabbatical until September 1st and shorten it by one month.

During January and February, the threat posed by Covid-19 slowly built. By March, it was apparent that daily life was going to change. In mid-March, the governor effectively shut down California, including in-person church services. We were unable to move online with only two days' notice, so worship was canceled for March 15th. By the following Sunday, with a huge effort from a few worship leaders and staff, we were able to move to online worship using the Zoom platform. About 40 people attended, down from the low 50's for in-person worship, but a nice showing. Attendance stabilized in the mid-30's for the balance of the spring.

Online worship was a steep learning curve for all involved, but we continued to improve the quality of worship throughout the spring. The time effort involve for worship preparation online is 50 to 100 percent greater for all involved, from the minister to the Zoom host to the musicians. The unsolved problem for online worship is achieving consistently decent quality in the music offerings. Zoom is temperamental when it comes to music; it is not a platform optimized for music. Settings and internet speed also influence quality.

Our virtual coffee hour following the Sunday service has been a popular feature. Through Zoom, the host can create breakout rooms of four to six persons that are randomly populated. We have heard that this small group interaction with people you might not otherwise speak with has been good for building relationships.

Zoom has been a useful, and oftentimes more convenient platform for conducting business and other meetings of church members. It has allowed persons for whom it is difficult to get out to participate when they otherwise might not.

Concurrent with the Covid-19 shutdown came a melting down of the world economy. Stocks and mutual funds plummeted. Unfortunately, this happened during our annual pledge drive. Pledging dropped substantially. Pledging was also negatively impacted by the loss of major donors—through death, or moving due to the Camp Fire or for other reasons.

The Finance Committee and the Board had lengthy discussions about a budget that was fiscally responsible and sustainable, given the likelihood of a lengthy rebuild required to pre-Camp Fire levels of pledging. We decided on a 25 percent time reduction for all staff, including the minister. This, with other cutbacks, allowed us to present a budget with only a \$2,000 in deficit. This budget was approved during our first-ever online congregational meeting in May.

Our annual UU General Assembly, held in late June, was also forced to move online. Although it was not the same as being there in person, in many respects, GA was better. One great advantage was vastly reduced cost. Because of this, our congregation had five members attend GA this year in addition to me. Had this been a normal GA, it is likely only I would have attended. All of us who attended came away charged and excited with what we learned in the workshops and by the quality of the worship services.

The murder of George Floyd by police on May 25th in Minneapolis was a turning point for many, including many in our congregation. Eyes previously closed or hooded, were now opened to the systemic injustice that affects Blacks and people of color in this country. On June 7th, my last sermon prior to the summer schedule, I challenged the congregation to “walk our talk” and to hang a Black Lives Matter banner prominently on church property. There had previously been some resistance to this action. That resistance has disappeared. We closed out our fiscal and church year on July 31st, well on our way to displaying a banner. (On Sunday, August 30th, this came to fruition in a public unveiling.)

It has been a challenging year, following the challenging year of the Camp Fire. The UU Fellowship in Chico has suffered in membership and financially. Some among us still suffer emotional hardship. But in many ways, we have risen to meet the challenge. We have strong and committed leadership. We have sent four members to our Western Region Leadership School in the past two years. All are serving leadership roles. We have continued to improve our online worship and music offerings. We have taken steps to put our finances in order, from accounting procedures to repayment of our endowment loan to the budgeting process. We have realized that online worship serves some in our congregation who cannot otherwise participate, and we will continue with this in some form, even after pandemic restrictions ease.

I look forward to returning from sabbatical in January renewed and recharged. I eagerly anticipate learning of the work the congregation will have done while I was gone.

Budget Report

Once again, the treasurer is faced with reporting Church Finances for a very out-of-the-ordinary year. The end of in-person Sunday Services, beginning in early March due to the Covid-19 Pandemic has had various effects on our bottom line for the end of the year.

Fortunately, on-line giving had been set up just before the Pandemic, which has made it relatively easy for people to keep up their pledge payments the rest of the year. In fact, pledges came in above the budgeted amount, due to several new pledges that were made in in the fall. Plate (cash) collections, however, lagged, in spite of on-line giving. Thus, while Fund Raising income and Plate Collections were negatively impacted, expenses were also down a bit, so we managed to finish the year with an actual deficit of only about \$2,000, after using some of our 2018 Special Fund, as budgeted.

The Covid circumstances had two other major impacts: the Stewardship Drive coincided with the first Pandemic shut-down as well as the market fall which affected those who lost jobs or were reliant on retirement incomes. It also meant that the Minister's Sabbatical had to be postponed.

The Finance Committee and the Board realized that with the loss of some large pledges due to death and moving after the Camp Fire, they needed to develop a greatly reduced budget for 20-21. Funds budgeted for Sabbatical were carried over to the 2020-21 budget, as was a Government PPP Grant/Loan of \$17,600 which came in late in the Fiscal Year. Even so, it became evident that more drastic measures were needed to achieve a balanced budget. After exhausting other options, and because salaries are our largest expense, it was decided that we will have to operate with a $\frac{3}{4}$ time minister next year and cut other staff to $\frac{3}{4}$ of their previously budgeted time.

As we go forward, the need to re-grow into our financial needs is clear, so that we can maintain ministry which inspires us and create a foundation from which UUism can go forth as a community force. Pledges to the Special Fund drive of 2018 are continuing to come in. The Fund presently stands at \$40,708 as of June 30.

Also, the Finance Committee this year implemented a revised Chart of Accounts to better reflect the nature of our activities, hired Merrell, Irwin & Associates to handle our Accounting and Payroll needs, and worked to put some of our money into short term CDs to get better interest on our money.

Respectfully submitted,
Lucy Sperlin, Treasurer

Fundraising Report

The major fundraiser this year was our online auction, which raised \$5482.05 from 4/4/20 through 4/18/20. Pam Sachs, Mary Collins, and David Keller were the primary organizers of the auction, and follow-up help came from Marvey Mueller and Linda Converse. Sixty-one items, events, and services were offered this year. The maximum amount of money we could have earned based on the offerings was \$8995 which means that we made it 61% of the way towards our goal. The decision was made to go fully online due to the shelter-in-place order. The online auction had a couple advantages as well as disadvantages compared with our traditional silent/live auction combination. An advantage was that we sold an item to at least one person outside our church community. Additional advertising might boost this revenue source in the future. Another advantage is that people can simply donate money, though in practice we earned only \$10 from one donation. Again, additional advertising might boost this revenue. Another advantage is that the auction is automatically organized and analytics are provided by the website, www.32auctions.com. For example much of the money was collected through Paypal. One disadvantage is that the auction is partly a fellowship building event, but we unfortunately could not meet in person this spring. Another potential disadvantage is that we weren't able to run the live auction, which has been the primary revenue-driver in the past.

A first-time fundraiser this year is the Rose Bouquets, organized by Pam Sachs. Each bouquet will have a baker's dozen roses, and be unique and include garden greenery. Other helpers include Jeff Sachs, Bob Crowe, Angela Risdon, and Marvey Mueller, who prepared notecards to accompany the bouquets. The bouquets cost \$30 and the proceeds are donated to the church. Currently the amount raised is \$295.00.

Worship Committee Report

UUFC's official start of the worship calendar began September 8, 2019. September's theme was "Covenant". Rev. Bryan started the month with the traditional sacred water service which welcomed everyone back from their summer adventures. Rev. Bryan was the worship leader for three Sundays. UUFC's own Bonnie Bennett graced the pulpit on September 22nd.

October's theme was democracy. We enjoined two visiting ministers. Rev. Bryan participated in a pulpit exchange as part of wildfire relief. Rev. Chis Bell and Rev. Eileen Brownell gave very thought messages. David Keller, another one of UUFC's own took on the message of democracy. Rev. Bryan raised our consciousness with a message on Indigenous people.

Rev. Bryan was in the pulpit three times exploring the month of November's theme – Vision and Mission. Rev. Joy Atkinson also spoke to the fellowship on same topic on November 17th when came down to join our fellowship.

December started off with a visit from Reb. Lisa Rappaport with an inspiring message on building the world from love. Rev. Bryan working with the theme Compassion created meaningful messages on two Sundays. Rev. Bryan help create an interfaith Christmas Eve service which was held at First Christian. As is becoming somewhat of a tradition, several members of the fellowship created the end of the year service.

January's theme "Authority and Leadership" came right in time. Rev. Bryan's messages spoke keyed into the theme and the concerns with the many expressed over the presidential elections. UUFC's own Rev. Asya Leslie spoke to the fellowship on MLK. In February, Rev. Bryan addressed the theme "Generosity" three times. At month's end several members of the fellowship joined UUFC member David Strohmeyer and created a memorable service.

The theme of "Forgiveness" was explored in March. Rev. Bryan delivered his message through the month. It was during the month of March that Gov. Gavin Newson ordered at stay at home order. And the fellowship had just entered the world of Zoom.

Together the fellowship pulled together meaningful worship services using Zoom. Members of the fellowship learned how to create slides and record music to enrich the services. Several times we joined other fellowships, including Reno, Portland, and Grass Valley.

Shared Ministry Report

Committee members: Megan Johnson, Angela Risdon, Pam Sachs (until she joined the Board), Mike Cassetta, Rev. Bryan Plude.

We meet monthly with the purpose of monitoring and supporting the mission and the ministries of the church, including that of the minister.

In 2019-20, we celebrated that Rev. Bryan received his Fellowship. We monitored Rev. Bryan's workload and began a discussion about what his 3/4-time ministry will be like when he returns from his sabbatical in January, 2020.

Our tasks in 2019-2020 included keeping track of crucial Fellowship committees and of our stewardship drive, and responding to congregational concerns from members.

We spent time the second half of the year drafting the charge of the COSM. It was completed in August, 2020 and reads as follows:

COSM Charge, August 19, 2020

The Committee on Shared Ministry (COSM) is concerned with the spiritual health of the entire ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Chico (UUFC), as reflected through its mission.

COSM shall evaluate and make recommendations regarding the effectiveness of the various ministries of UUFC. These shall include, but are not limited to, the minister. Ministries will be evaluated by how well they support fulfilling the mission of the church. The congregation as a whole owns and is responsible for the success of its ministry.

The members of COSM are charged with:

- Overseeing the general health of the congregation
- Further the congregation's mission, vision and covenant
- Provide conflict mediation

Megan Johnson, Chairperson

Sabbatical Committee

Committee Members: Megan Johnson, Dennis Daniel, Angela Risdon, Courtney Singer, Rev. Bryan Plude

The Sabbatical Committee began meeting in October, 2019 with the purpose of preparing for and overseeing the Sabbatical that Rev. Bryan Plude would be taking in 2020. An important part of our job was to arrange for and ensure the smooth running of the Fellowship in Rev. Bryan's absence. We met monthly.

Largely because of COVID, Rev. Bryan's Sabbatical, originally scheduled for May, and Sept-December, 2020 was shortened to the fall only (Sept-Dec, 2020).

The committee was in charge of a job description for an interim, Sabbatical minister (1/4-time during Rev. Bryan's absence) and finding a Sabbatical minister to recommend to the Board. The lion's share of these tasks was done by Rev. Bryan.

The committee prepared for supporting both the Fellowship and the Sabbatical minister during the fall of 2020. A brochure was created to communicate with Fellowship members about the Sabbatical period, and who they could contact for various needs.

Note: the Sabbatical committee continues to meet monthly and will do so until after Rev. Bryan's return in January, 2021.

Megan Johnson, Chairperson

Membership Report

The Membership Committee consists of: Bonnie Bennett, Linda Converse, Bob Crowe, Thelda Eli, Sharon Stallings; Gail Ross and Susan Theodore.

During the recent church fiscal year 2019-2020 we have:

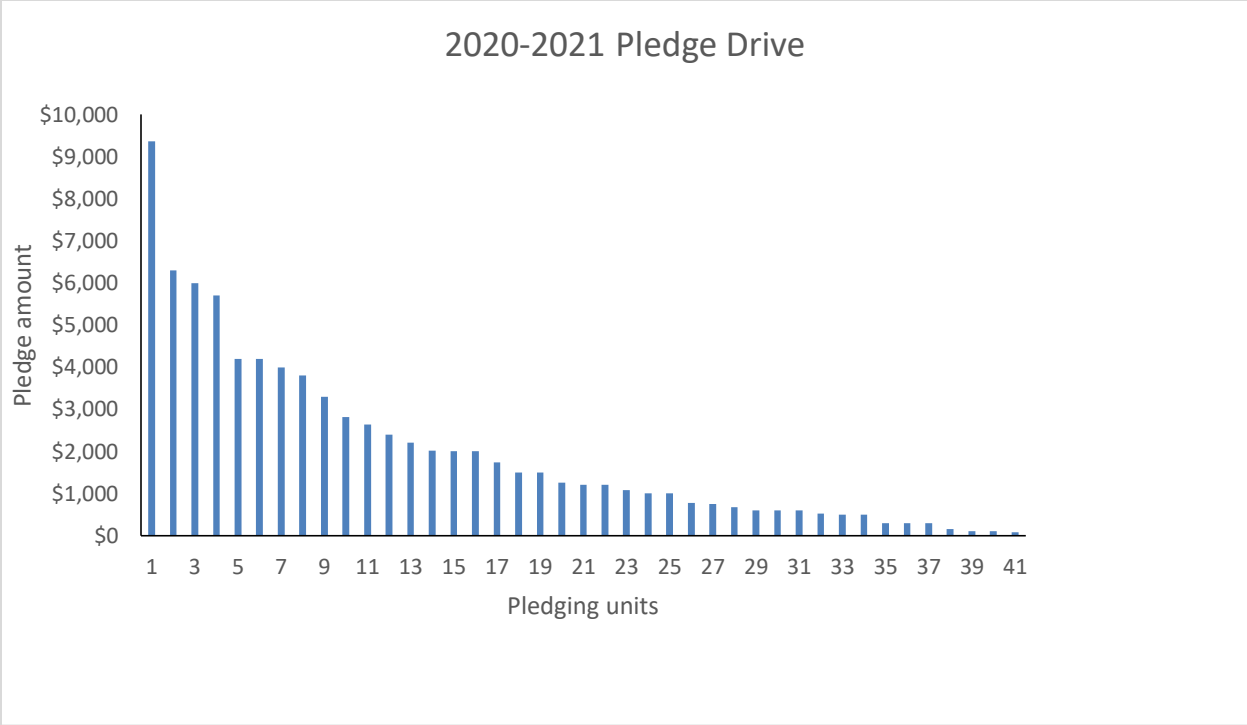
- Worked to incorporate a newcomer as the second Greeter each Sunday;
- Held a “get acquainted” gathering for newcomers at the home of Bob Crowe;
- Created a “How to Become a Member” info sheet for inclusion in the Visitor packet;
- Added a “Members Only” area to our website;
- Worked with Margaret Aumann to upgrade the weekly Enews and have it replace the Newsletter;
- Created a publicity poster and posted it in public areas throughout the community;
- Added new signage to the information table area outside the Sanctuary;
- Completely restructured Orientation Class for newcomers (it is shorter, more efficient, offered more often i.e. every two or three months on Potluck Sunday, each section presented by a member of the Membership Committee and one section presented by the minister;
- Created packets for Orientation Class to include UU principles and values, history of UU, history of UUFC and activities and involvement opportunities;
- Held two Newcomer Orientation Classes before “shelter in place” put a hold on all activities;
- Viewed and discussed “Changing Times” video to determine steps for moving UUFC forward;
- Continually updated the Church Directory and posted on the website in the “Members Only” section;
- Planned New Member Ceremony during Sunday service. This did not take place due to on-site services being curtailed for “shelter in place”;
- At onset of “shelter in place” reached out to newcomers and members living alone to insure their well-being.

Stewardship Report

The stewardship drive raised \$81,200 in pledges from 41 pledging units, short of our target goal of \$111,000. Admittedly that was a stretch goal because we knew going in that there would be a decrease in pledges from the past couple years. One contributing factor is the lasting impacts of the 2018 Camp Fire. Since that time, attendance during Sunday services has decreased. Several members and pledging friends have moved out of the area. A second contributing factor is the financial uncertainty in the wake of COVID-19. A third contributing factor was the sad loss of two major donors in the past two years, though through bequests they are continuing to support our fellowship. Between 2019-20 and 2020-21 we lost six pledging units and gained six, however we experienced a net loss of \$5658 in pledges primarily due to a couple generous donors leaving. Also between 2019-20 and 2020-21 six pledging units decreased their pledges, while 11 increased their pledges. However, the increase did not compensate for the decrease as we lost \$4950 in pledges primarily due to a couple generous donors decreasing their pledges. Together this loss amounts to \$10,608. Still, it is encouraging that 11 of 41 donors increased pledges in times of uncertainty.

This year the Stewardship committee consisted of Dave Keller (Chair), TW Theodore, Angela Risdon, and Bob Crowe. We carried out TW's suggestion of using pledge liaisons to make contact with small groups of members and pledging friends (ranged from 3-8). The pledge liaisons were to be the contact person between the pledger and the committee. The liaison would collect the pledge forms from the pledger, then return as a group to the Chair. In addition to the committee members, the pledge liaisons were Susan Bachlor, Bonnie Bennett, Linda Converse, Thelda Eli, Adrienne Edwards, Pam Sachs, and Courtney Singer.

We encouraged the pledge liaisons to meet face-to-face with the pledgers, but unfortunately that was stopped short by COVID-19. Dave Keller introduced the stewardship drive on March 1st in Sunday Service and the official beginning was the next Sunday March 8th. Several volunteers agreed to give testimonials explaining how the donations contribute to the life of the church. On March 8th Bob VanFleet gave a powerful testimonial on how UUFC supports social justice work locally in Chico. The March 15th service was then cancelled due to COVID-19 and services resumed using Zoom on March 22nd. Courtney gave a wonderful testimonial about the Youth RE OWL program that we would like to offer this upcoming year. On March 29th Bonnie gave a testimonial about the UUFC book club and about building community in general.



The number of pledging units and their pledges. Nearly half of our pledged income comes from the top 9 donors.

Music Report

The vision for our Music Ministry is to enrich our Sunday Services and to bring music into other aspects of our UUFC community life by engaging the talents and aspirations of musicians within our congregation and in the larger community of Northern California.

Within our Worship Services the primary goal is the *singability* of the music. We achieve this by repeating hymns throughout the year until they are more comfortable for all to sing, and by adding new hymns that a Song leaders, UUFC Choir and the Guitar Ensemble perform and/or teach the congregation. Let me know what you would like to hear!

The UUFC Choir performed and led songs at least one Sunday each month from September 2019 to March 2020.

The Pandemic, COVID 19, created a necessary *Stay in Place* situation, with churches listed as NON-essential venues for gathering. The use of ZOOM for online services created a way for all to connect, but posed a major challenge for music. Although You Tube or other streaming music could be heard more clearly when embedded in the prepared ZOOM Worship Service slides, our good quality mp3 recordings by the Choir, did not come across on ZOOM with the quality of the recordings. We hope to improve the sound by September 2020.

Black Lives Matter Services, May 31st and June 1st, 2020:

Four Choir members and a pianist met to record the hymns and special music for these two services centered around Black Lives Matter. They met in the UU Sanctuary, allowing for safe space with each other and the pianist. Music selections included:

There is a Love by Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, *Ella's Song/We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest* by Bernice Johnson Reagon, *I Choose Love* by Lindy Thompson and Mark A. Miller, and gospel hymns: *Guide My Feet*, and *O Woke Up This Morning*.

The Guitar Ensemble played one time per month from September to March, and was able to record once for use in a ZOOM service in May.

Volunteers Pam Sachs and Margaret Aumann, add rich textures and vibrant energy, weaving music seamlessly into the topics of our Worship Services, using a wide range of music. They often create their own arrangements of songs by musicians like Iris Dement and MaMuse. We are grateful for their offering of time and talent: rehearsals, creating arrangements, and teaching us new music, adding percussion and other instruments, that make these Sundays vibrant! The same problem occurred with ZOOM: not being able to help us create a clear and enjoyable sound for singers and instruments.

Pianists: Soloists and Accompanists, plus Song leaders: Pianists, Nick Arteaga, Heather Thams and Avery Campbell, worked with the Music Director, Choir and Song leaders, as well as choosing the Offertory music for their assigned Worship Services.

Heather Thams volunteered as pianist and Song Leader for the Easter Service this year, recording privately in the Sanctuary to create the mp3 files for ZOOM. Song Leaders, Mary Collins, Margaret Aumann and Heather Thams, led us through a variety of familiar and new hymns, on Sundays without Choir or Guitars

Nick Arteaga enriched our services with his own compositions, his own arrangements of our hymns or music by other composers.

Religious Education

Adult R.E.: Religious Explorations

This year we continued Religious Exploration for adults in our Fellowship. While nearly 30 people attended at one time or another throughout the fall and winter, a core group was fairly regular in attendance. Attendance at Sunday morning gathering was between six and 12 people.

September 12, 2019 through January 5, 2020: Sunday mornings: 9:30 – 10:15. Youth Hall.

Brian Kraemer facilitated the discussions on topics of self-exploration. Brian initially volunteered to lead the group for one month. However, because his sessions went so well, he agreed to keep going through the end of the year. Through Brian's leadership, a number of people who had never attended the UU Fellowship joined the group.

Although a very popular leader, Brian fell out of favor with the Board when he used the Fellowship listserv to announce a controversial speaker. The Board made it clear that all Adult R.E. announcements should be conveyed through the Fellowship e-news, through the Board's Liaison officer.

Suggestion: Such ground rules should be made clear in advance to all concerned.

January 12 to March 8, 2020. 9:30 – 10:15. Youth Hall.

With the new year, Merrily Stover agreed to lead the sessions focusing on the book "Radical Acceptance" by Tara Brach. Coincidentally, the author, Tara Brach, sponsored a free webinar series on "Radical Compassion" which paralleled the topics discussed in the RE session. This added richness to the discussion. Joan Lawrence and Linda Converse each served as facilitator on those Sundays when Merrily had out-of-town commitments.

March 8 proved to be the last day for meeting. We received word that all face-to-face church activities were to be suspended, beginning March 15, because of the novel corona virus pandemic.

March 15 – April 5. Hiatus. No meeting of the Adult R.E. activities.

During these early days of the pandemic, the Fellowship was figuring out how basic activities could be carried out without face-to-face contact. Worship Service began almost immediately via Zoom internet video conferencing. In late March, Rev. Plude contacted Merrily Stover about possibly conducting Adult R.E. discussions via Zoom. Merrily asked Amy Gaffney to see if she might be willing to lead the discussion for a few weeks. Amy agreed, and proposed that she led a discussion on the topic of prayer for three weeks.

E-mail discussions amongst members ensued. It was agreed that the meeting need not be at its regular time of 9:30, but could meet after church, or later in the day. The possibility of using the Fellowship Zoom account was explored and determined it would

not work. Amy agreed to host using her own Zoom account. The first Zoom RE discussion took place on April 12, at 1:30 p.m.

April 12 through May 31. Meeting via Zoom.

For three weeks, Amy led the group in the discussion of prayer. Seven people initially attended. However, the level of the Zoom account did not allow people to join via telephone. So those who wished to connect by telephone could not and so dropped out.

For several weeks, the group met at different days and times in order to avoid conflict with other church Zoom session. Eventually, the group decided to meet on Sunday evenings at 7:00. Leadership was passed around and the focus was expanded to Spiritual Practice. It was agreed to keep the Zoom meetings open to all and to continue meeting through the month of May. Amy agreed to lead the discussion based on the book "The Spiritual Life" by Evelyn Underhill which took the group through to the end of May. By this time, the group was able to use the Fellowship's Zoom account which gave time beyond 40 minutes and could allow for telephone participation.

What comes next?

What comes next is unclear. In previous years, we have disbanded, Adult R.E. for the summer to resume in the Fall. This was primarily because the Worship Service took the form of discussion during the summer. However, with Zoom, and the possibility of having small discussion groups meet at times other than Sunday morning, it might be that the Adult R.E. discussion group could continue in the summer months.

A new liaison for Adult R.E. will be in place starting in July with the new Board of Directors, so new directions and ideas may be initiated. During one of the last meetings this spring of the Adult R.E., it was pointed out that the Adult R.E. discussion group has been an important support group for a number of people. So hopefully there will be new leadership to enable Adult R.E. to continue.

Buildings and Grounds Report

1. In August 2019 UUFC passed a rigorous fire inspection by a Fire Dept. Inspector from the City of Chico. A renewal certificate was issued and posted near exit door to hallway in sanctuary. The inspector was thorough in every detail. i.e. all fire extinguishers were recharged, exit signage was approved with some minor changes, the space between rows of chairs and the created exit isles (by chair position) was measured and corrected, a small tree was removed that was partially blocking access to fire hydrant on NE corner of property. We met with the inspector twice for several hours. We are confident we meet and exceed the Fire Code for Chico.
2. In April 2019 we purchased equipment and the ongoing services of Accularm. There have been numerous false alarms since that time. Many doors were found not secured. We checked the campus regularly and noted that each week we had 1-3 doors left unlocked and false alarms occurred about 2-3 each month. Even with additional training and periodic announcements this pattern has been consistent for the year. We are not sure how to proceed to correct this chronic problem.
3. Neighbors: Due to some loud talking by some of our group attendees (renters) one evening after their meeting, we began to have complaints by nearby neighbors. Their complaints materialized into their questioning and the premise we were not in compliance with our "use permit". During this year, with Board approval, we have been reaching out to several neighbors to "be a good neighbor" and an ambassador. We have met personally with six neighbors to build a better relationship. Early this spring TW Theodore, Tom Lewis and Rev. Bryan Plude met with our adjacent (southeast) neighbor Martha and Pam. We visited their home and discussed how we good build better relations. They agreed to host a neighborhood meeting in the future in order to communicate and improve relations
4. Irrigation to patio tree: All irrigation lines have been maintained and the following improvements were installed: Eight or 10 new sprinkler heads were added to center island in parking lot. A new supply line was added to the large tree on the patio. A PVC pipe was tunneled under patio and six new sprinkler heads added to improve the health of this important shade tree.
5. Tree trimming: In midspring this year a diseased medium sized tree in front of Youth Hall was removed. The main patio mulberry tree was trimmed back away from our buildings. Trees on the island parking lot. These removals and pruning were completed by a professional arborist.
6. Sanctuary door lock: Our main double door locks have been very problematic this winter and spring. After analysis and several locksmith opinions, the Board decided to replace and upgrade the lock for security. Lower locking rods were installed along with new locks.
7. Building and Grounds for the specified year spent under budget.

Social Justice Report

Our UUFC Social Justice Committee (SJC) re-started its efforts to take a more active role within and beyond our Fellowship in the Chico community this past year. The earlier portion of the year saw several newer voices attending – most often 6 to 8 were together. The SJC is responsible for selecting the local organization that receives each quarter's dedicated portion of our UUFC weekly cash plate collection. This year we donated to Safe Space, 6th Street Center for Youth, Chico State Basic Needs Project, Bethel AME Church, Love Chapmantown Community Foundation. Sixth Street Center for Youth were also the recipients of our Holiday Giving Tree gift/donation endeavor which was very successful.

UUFC, under the leadership of Pam Sachs, continues a long-standing service of providing a meal one Saturday night per month to Torres Community Shelter. Prior to the pandemic, five to seven volunteers shopped, cooked and served food to approximately 170 people. Once the pandemic started, the population dropped to an average of 70 people. The ingredients along with a recipe is dropped off at the door and cooked by guests of Torres Shelter (those who are currently living there are referred to as "guests").

Bob Van Fleet and Angela Risdon the primary committee leaders – lead us by example, both are actively involved in several local social justice organizations and we also showed a more active presence with Chico's Interfaith Council alongside Rev. Bryan. The SJC committee with support of several Fellowship members purchased two new 'Side with Love' banners to display permanently on our campus and to also use on behalf of our UUFC congregation bearing witness to our public when we are able to do so.

Early spring of 2020 brought regular meetings, activities, and other efforts to a standstill – the advent of the global health pandemic remains a story that continues to impact everyone's lives for the foreseeable future. Just before our church year came to an end – with the national social upheaval, its impacts and wanting to make a public response to the Black Lives Matter movement our SJC ordered a Black Lives Matter banner. The SJC plans to hold a 'public display' event sometime in the summer to show it on our campus as a constant reminder of our bearing witness to the BLM cause.

Social Activities Report

COVID-19 put a damper on our church social gatherings this year, but we still managed to have fun until the shelter-in-place order was announced. We began the church social year in September with a game night and ice cream social. That was followed in October with a Dinners for Eight and the annual UU Boo Halloween party. Activities at the party included sack racing, bobbing for apples (always a hit!) and cookie decorating. Adrienne cooked up some indigo dye and the kids tie-died ghosts. In November we had a movie night for families using the new projector—Muppets Most Wanted. Despite the slow internet speed, the movie was a hit. Approximately 10 people attended. In December we went Christmas caroling after church, braving the rain, and visited Eileen Pritchard, Tedo Best, Betty Benson, Marylyn Collier, Samuel Ready, and Jim Goodridge. This was the last time some of us saw Jim before he passed. In February we had another game night, this time with cupcakes. The Sachs family attended, along with the Conkeys, the Kellers, and Shelly Bower. And finally in March before the shelter-in-place we had a classic movie night, showing the original Haley Mills Parent Trap. Bob Crowe was a huge help in boosting our internet signal in the sanctuary and we could now easily stream movies!

WOW (Wild, Wonderful, Wise Older Women, 50 and older) has been meeting since 2015 from 1:30 to 3:00, on Third Wednesdays, September thru May. We love fun! We sharpen our minds with games, stories and open discussions. We weave lots of laughter and wild stories into our wisdom. We are not afraid to address any topic, and together choose what we want to do each month, taking turns to lead or inviting a guest leader. There are currently 6 women active on the WOW Roster. Four previous members have moved to Assisted Living. Two others moved out of state due to the Camp Fire. Some WOW members are meeting with the Women's Group on Monday evenings on ZOOM. Other WOW members do not enjoy the ZOOM connection, since the COVID virus sent us to shelter in place. There have been no meetings since March 2020. Our topics from Sept 2019 to March 2020: *Coming Together Again* (sharing stories and photos), *Art as Play*, *Winter Holiday Party* led by Suzan Scott, *White Elephant Gift Exchange* led by Thelda Eli, *Movie Madness* led by Bonnie Bennett, *Spring Equinox Celebration* led by Patty Shepherd and Mary Collins.

The Men's Breakfast meets every Thursday, 9:00 am at Jack's restaurant in Chico. The group has no leader and no agenda, but between eight and fourteen men gather to enjoy each other's company and to talk about whatever comes to mind, sometimes serious, sometimes not, but always with a sense of shared community

Pastoral Care Report

The Pastoral Care Committee (formerly the Sunshine Committee) began meeting regularly again this year. The committee has reached out by phone and/or by letter to persons shut-in or needing pastoral presence. We were able to make some visits in-person prior to the social distancing required by the Covid-19 pandemic. While the committee lacks an official chairperson, Pam Sachs has been instrumental in keeping things going. Pam, a music therapist, also provided a pastoral musical presence to Jim Goodridge in his final months of life, and to others who were in the hospital.

Hospitality

In the Spring of 2019, when TW Theodore was transitioning into his Board President position and Marie Hubbard was planning her move to Nebraska, Bonnie Bennett volunteered to head up the Hospitality Committee. Marie trained Bonnie over the course of several weeks and Bonnie took over as chair, right before Marie moved in July. Bonnie served as chair of Hospitality for eight months before the pandemic closed the doors of UUFC.

Bonnie made attempts to actually form a committee but was unsuccessful. Several members said they could be on the committee but it didn't work out for them. However, she found that what worked out was that people just stepped up every Sunday to help in various ways. One UUFC member said he didn't do committees but he helped out every Sunday.

During the eight months, Bonnie oversaw the after -service hospitality every Sunday except for two. Thelda Eli took the lead one Sunday and David Strohmeyer the other.

Bonnie notes that so many members and friends helped each Sunday that she has chosen not to make a list that might leave someone out. Different people did the dishes, helped set up, and helped clear tables after potlucks. Many helped with all aspects of the coffee hour.

Every Sunday that Bonnie was there, she stayed until about 1:00 PM until everybody was ready to end their conversations. She locked up and set the alarm.

Bonnie has typed a list of duties which she left in the kitchen. Tom Lewis has said he would retype and laminate it. Bonnie did not turn in any reimbursement forms but did buy some paper products, sugar and creamers. Tom Lewis bought dish soap and coffee.

Tom Lewis, as head of Buildings and Grounds, recently had the custodian help clean out the cupboards and thoroughly clean the kitchen since the buildings were not being used due to the pandemic.

Bonnie thoroughly enjoyed serving as Chair of Hospitality. However, she has decided that she will move on to other assignments: one being to serve on the Board starting in July.

Suggestions:

Bonnie suggests that the best idea for Hospitality is to rotate the Sunday Coffee Hour amongst UUFC committees and groups. That way many people will learn how to do it. Even though the process is very straight forward, many people feel intimidated about being the "coffee maker."

If the next Hospitality Chair decides to have committees and groups rotate the coffee hour duties, Bonnie recommends that the Hospitality Chair leave the tasks to those who

are assigned them, and not show up and start doing things. Otherwise, she notes that it can be confusing.

Bonnie expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve. She is willing to train people to carry on with this important aspect of gathering on Sundays.

In Memoriam

UUFC lost two beloved members this year.

Maryjo Callahan, 64, died on August 30, 2019 at the UCSF Medical Center. Maryjo had battled pancreatic cancer for eight months. She is survived by her husband, Bob Callahan, a Friend of UUFC, and her son, Joey. Bob sought out our church after Maryjo's diagnosis. He soon persuaded Maryjo to attend. Maryjo found herself welcomed by our members and found peace with our Unitarian Universalist emphasis on acceptance and love. Maryjo was a beloved schoolteacher in Chico for many years. In retirement, she helped to coordinate the Reading Pals program in Chico.

Jim Goodridge, 92, died peacefully at home on January 5, 2020, surrounded by family and friends. Jim was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Alice, on April 5, 2019. Jim was a longtime member of UUFC. Jim served honorably in the U.S. Navy, but was far too independent a thinker for the military. Not long after leaving the Navy, Jim discovered his passion for data and weather. Jim served the California Department of Water Resources as Climatologist for many years. His service to the department continued well into his 80's. Jim was a fan of folk music. At Jim's memorial, we joined in song to old favorites such as "Home on the Range." Finally, Jim wrote poetry. Here is an excerpt from a favorite,

"Long Ago"

It was discovered long ago that the way to happiness
Was to look for and find a way to serve.
Time was wasted in acquisition and instant gratification.
It is in giving that satisfaction is achieved.