

Annual Report  
December 9, 2018  
Rev. Robin Landerman Zucker, Interim Minister

Earlier this year, I stopped into one of the local auto repair shops to get some assistance in opening my hood! For some unknown reason, it was stuck and I needed to replace the windshield wiper fluid and see to an oil change. After freeing my hood, I asked what I owed him and he replied, “Nothing. I love what you folks are doing over there at the Unitarian church.”

For anyone here at UUCM who doubts that we are visible and have a positive impact, this incident should reassure you. It reassured me. When I began my Interim time with you and pushed for more visibility (literally and figuratively) for our congregation, someone remarked that “everyone who is going to be interested in us, already knows about us.” We pushed through that misconception and have attracted new faces and new energy over the past few years, even as we have lost some members to disinterest, death, moves, and life changes.

As we are poised on the brink of a New Year and with it, some changes in leadership and a new contract minister in September 2019, I believe you are more healthy and remain hopeful in some key areas of church life.

First, I want to lift up the diligent and excellent work of staff, lay leadership teams and the Board. Let me express my deep admiration and gratitude to those leaders and congregants who have not just identified problems or levied complaints, but have stuck around and dug in for shape and implement solutions and new strategies for vitality and growth. The Board has worked overtime to address financial concerns, issues with the building, and burgeoning relationships with Creating Landscapes and the Teen Lounge. If you have not thanked them recently, please do.

Our face and our ethos are more visible in the community thanks to folks like Dan Hunter, Shayna Morrison and Michele Baker, among many others. We’ve been hosting dances, partnering with community events like Winterfest, tabling at Second Saturdays and showing up for civil actions and community conversations. Keep doing this! Fling wide open the doors.

Our administrator, Jodi Sipos, is a gem. She offers a welcoming and stable presence as folks enter our building. She goes above and

beyond on a daily basis and executes her work with professionalism and good humor (and she makes some very cool mini terrarium necklaces, too!)

Our RE Coordinator Kristina Brink is a ray of sunshine. She and others, especially the ebullient Sharon Kaplan, have brought energy and creativity to our RE program, first in the “Lessons from Dr. Suess” curriculum and now in the engaging “Creation Myths” one. Our hope is that we can attract more families that will be consistently attending so that the program can grow and thrive. Our Adult Ed programs were mostly successful this past year, especially the writing group I facilitated and the Long Strange Trip program, led by CLM Caron Carnahan.

The Music and Worship programs go from strength to strength. Have you heard our choir lately?? Gratitude and respect to the choir, Aimee Reash and Mary Lynne Peters (and all of our guest musicians) for the contributions that enhance our Sunday morning worship. And to the worship team, who has put together an engaging schedule of guest preachers and programs these past few years, and to Jodi, who has streamlined and simplified the scheduling process for Sunday morning pulpit assistants, ushers, and coffee hour hosts. Through some pulpit assistant trainings, we have also smoothed the delivery of our Sunday services.

Our custodian, Chuck, is what is often called a “keeper.” We are fortunate to have him on board.

Back in January, we hosted a community screening of a film called “Within Reach” about co-housing and intentional communities and eco-villages around the US. It got me to thinking about what UUCM would look like as a “collective.” We are there in certain ways as we are the “free church,” owning and maintaining our own building, paying our bills, deciding on our programs, and hiring/calling our staff and minister. That said, there are areas of church life that need more attention and collective effort.

If you have any bright ideas about any area of church life, please share them with me, a Board member or leader of one of our teams. I am thrilled that Peggy Bell has agreed to chair a revitalized Membership Team. We need a coordinated effort to attract, welcome, integrate and sustain visitors, newcomers, and new members. I look forward to collaborating with her and those who join this effort. Interested? As an aside – for fear of sounding like a broken record – wear your nametag and approach those who you do not know at social hour.

Fran Smith is completing her time as leader of the Pastoral care team. Thank you Fran for your open and warm heart and attentiveness. If you would like to join this team, please be in touch. UUCM is great at peer-to-peer pastoral care, but an established team is necessary, too.

The Board has approved an excellent Search Committee who is building on the very fine and careful work of the Transition and Partner teams to attract and hire a new half-time Contract Minister for the congregation. I can honestly say that my input to that individual will be balanced, and filled with optimism and affection.

During the past year, some trust issues have reared their ugly head, reminding us that past experiences with ministers and others can reappear like a gremlin. It is my hope that we can schedule a retreat for myself, the Board and Search Committee with our new UUA Congregational Lead, Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, to explore these issues and also establish a strong foundation for welcoming your new minister in September of 2019.

Thank you all so very much for inviting me to be among you, grow with you, laugh and cry with you, strategize, stumble and succeed with you. Let's make the remaining nine months of this Interim time connected, authentic, and fruitful.

In faith,  
Rev. Robin