

**ANNUAL REPORT
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS
2023-24**

What a wonderful year we have had! There was a renewed energy this year and so many fantastic things happened. I am so incredibly grateful to our Circle Coordinators who kept their circles running smoothly and supported their committees and committee leaders.

Growth and Learning- Linda Impastato

Community – Darren Howard

Stewardship- Steve Trout

Worship- Dave Lloyd

Home and Garden- Thom Brackett

Social Justice- Tiff Schafer

You can read about the good works of all of the circles in their individual reports. The staff is still committed to supporting the Circle Coordinators in their work. Below are some highlights of how I have been involved.

GROWTH AND LEARNING

The Growth and Learning report has a lot of information about our programs but here are some highlights.

In September when the RE program started there were just a few in attendance and not regularly from week to week. But if you build it, they will come. I used the Soul Matters curriculum and wrote three lesson each week. My goal this year was to foster a sense of belonging and trust as we rebuilding the program.

This spirit of togetherness caught on and now we have between 7-10 young people each week with several new families.

We have a strong middle youth attendance and Joe Saintcross worked with them most of the year and has committed to being their fearless leader next year.

In working with the Soul Matter Themes, I tried to emphasize the Article II changes in an age-appropriate way.

To address our strategic goal of improving our Anti-oppression and Multicultural Awareness I continue to be acutely aware of choosing stories and books that highlight diversity and use language that is inclusive.

COMMUNITY

The Community Circle Coordinator report has a lot of information about our community initiatives but here are some highlights.

Our Membership Committee and Hospitality Teams are working so hard at providing a welcoming experience for everyone but especially our visitors. We have been averaging between two and four visitors a week. The ushers and greeters try to introduce visitors to Darren Howard, members of the Membership Committee, and me and Rev. Beth.

Following each Sunday service, I reach out to the visitors.

The Membership Committee hosted several New Comer's Breakfast this year. I prepare an invite which is sent to all visitors and a News and Notes article is an open invitation.

I helped coordinate and facilitate the New UU class this Spring. These are two session classes that share information about Unitarian Universalism and our church. We were thrilled to have many participants and welcomed new members into our congregation at the New Member Signing Ceremony.

I planned and oversaw two Friday, Faith and Fellowship Nights this year. It included a dinner, a vesper service, and two activities, such as craft workshop, a meditation workshop, sing along, etc. There were about 25-30 people in attendance and they were wonderful evenings of connection and fellowship.

It has been wonderful working with the Membership Committee. They are a hard-working, thoughtful group of people who have so many fabulous ideas! They, too, were committed to helping our church get through this year.

WORSHIP

I am so incredibly grateful to have Rev. Beth here as our minister. She is so dedicated to our church and is a lot of fun to work with. And our worship associated team is awesome!!

Each week I work with the worship leader to choose a story, reading, activity, etc. that will fit with the theme of the service for the Time for all Ages. I try to contribute something that adds to the service for all ages.

Be sure to read the Worship Circle's report for more information.

STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Circle has a tremendous group of dedicated volunteers that make working on huge events a joy. Below is how I supported the Stewardship Circle's accomplishments.

The Mission: Po\$\$ible Auction was a success! We had over 80 guests and raised about \$24,000.

I was happy to work with the Auction Team including supporting the effort by writing announcements, collecting donations, decorating, organizing food and entertainment. After the event I was responsible for contacting the hosts of events and donations, collecting outstanding invoices and helping to schedule events.

Our pledge drive, "ALL IN" was a success thanks to the efforts of our amazing pledge drive team including chairs Chris Hainey and Dave Mrazek; and the rest of the team; Nancy Kranz, Steve Trout, Darren Howard, Megan Griffin, Chris Hainey,

Mike Pabian and Susan Mooney. We are grateful to all of you for your support of UCH.

I helped develop a preliminary working budget for the Board of Trustees including our pledge numbers, input from our Circle Coordinators, current costs and income from our space sharers.

HOME AND GARDEN

It has been a joy to support Thom Brackett! Over the course of the year so many things have been fixed and upgraded.

I worked to put our Heating and Cooling units in the church online so they can be adjusted off property.

In an effort to make sure that space sharers can use our sound system as well as being sure we know how to use it I had Alex Dvorak teach me how to turn on all the equipment and use it properly. I made an instruction manual with photos so that anyone can use it. They are located in the pulpit, sound closet and in the sound desk.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

I continue to support Tiff Schafer and our social justice work. There are so many amazing people doing such good works in this circle! This fall I worked with Lu Crowley and Mary Getty to start our food collections for Beds Plus. Each month I am in communication with Beds Plus to schedule our donations.

ADMINISTRATION

During the fall months I continued to handle the many office tasks.; such as scheduling events and managing the calendar, working with and orientating space sharers and inquiries about using our space, managing all the membership data in

the database and producing the directories, name tags, ordering supplies, etc., working with closely with Nancy Kranz, our News and Notes editor, and Suzanne Williams, our webmaster and answering office emails and answering and returning general phone messages.

In February I was happy to welcome Gail Hengels to UCH as our Office Coordinator. I work closely with her to train her to do many of the above listed items.

LEAD TEAM

I worked with the LEAD Team including Carol Petersen, Gene Schafer, Susan Hebble, Susan Stephens, Rev Beth and myself, to create a program to evaluate the congregation's work and elicit new ideas. We held a Circle Coordinator meeting to roll out "Doing UCH's Laundry Helping UCH Dress for Success" program.

I led both the Growth and Learning Circle and the Community Circle sessions.

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

In addition to the work I do here at the church, I continue to be active in LREDA, The Liberal Religious Educators Association. I attend monthly meetings of CARE (Chicago Area Religious Educators.)

I am so incredibly honored to serve my church community and am blessed to be a part of this UU family.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Fodor