ANNUAL REPORT
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS
2025-26

What a wonderful year we have had! There was a renewed energy 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

Community – Darren Howard

Stewardship- Steve Trout

Worship- Susan Hebble

Home and Garden- Gene Schafer

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 we had about 12 young people enrolled. I hired a young adult childcare provider for our play group and worked closely with Joe Saintcross to get the youth group off to a good start. Through the course of the year, we doubled the size of our program with the addition of a number of new families!

I hired two additional childcare providers and continued to support the activities of the youth group.

Our adult programs included: Buddhist Meditation, The Sunday Discussion Group, Wise Elders. I am so grateful for the committed leaders of these programs.

COMMUNITY

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

Our hospitality Teams have been hard at work all through the year providing a warm and welcoming Sunday morning experience. I help coordinate these teams and work to connect new members and friends to the joys of hospitality through the teams.

Our Membership Committee works so hard at providing a welcoming experience for everyone but especially our visitors. I commit to meet every visitor each Sunday and to reach out and follow up.

The Membership Committee and I hosted several New Comer's Breakfasts this year. I prepare an invite which is sent to all visitors and a News and Notes article is an open invitation. During these breakfasts we are able to get to know new folks more personally and they are able to ask questions and find out more about us.

I helped coordinate and facilitate the New UU classes. These are two session classes that share information about Unitarian Universalism and our church. We were thrilled to have many participants. Following these New UU sessions, I help connect participants to committees and programs that they are interested in.

I work closely with Rev Beth to invite friends to become members by signing the Membership Book during our New Member Signing Ceremonies. We had two ceremonies this year and also welcomed a number of new members through more private signings.

I also worked hard on a reboot for our Caring Committee. It has been a while since we have taken a look at how our Caring Circle was organized so I looked at our members and friends list and re-figured our geographical areas and had a

reboot meeting. We have Caring Captains for our areas and are ready to continue support and care for our church family.

Because there are so many new families and children I revamp the Children's area in the Alice Warren Room. It is very important to have a space for families to be able to connect with each other and the larger church community.

It has been wonderful working with the Membership Committee. They are a hard-working, thoughtful group of people who have so many fabulous ideas!

WORSHIP

I am so incredibly grateful to work with Rev. Beth. She is so dedicated to our church and is a lot of fun to work with. And our worship associate 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.

I led our annual Stone Soup Family Thanksgiving Service and thanks to my husband and daughter we dined on our own version of delicious Stone Soup following the service.

I worked closely with Rev Beth and Swamini Saraswati, our intern minister, on several All-Community Services.

I had the pleasure of working with our intern minister over the course of the year.

Be sure to read the Worship Circle 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 “There’s No Place Like Home” auction was a success! We had over 75 guests and raised about $22,000.

I was happy to be a part of the Auction Team that included Nancy Kranz and Liz Reyes. The auction is our only fundraiser and requires a considerable amount of time and effort. My support included writing announcements, collecting donations, decorating, and 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.

I supported the Pledge Drive team by producing materials, helping to prepare the mailings and collecting and sorting the incoming pledges.

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.

Be sure to read the Stewardship Circle report for more information.

HOME AND GARDEN

It has been a joy to support Gene Schafer! Over the course of the year so many things have been fixed and upgraded it is hard to keep track.

I work regularly with our space sharers to provide support around our buildings so that they can get the best we have to offer them.

I purchase and handle refilling the water coolers located in the Alice Warren Room and RE Building.

Be sure to read the Home and Garden Circle report for more information.

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 year our Chapel Children worked on a social action project. The Humanitarian Service Project collects and distributes Birthday Boxes for DuPage County families in need. In those boxes of age-appropriate gifts are also a Birthday Party in Bag. Those bags contain everything a family needs to throw a birthday party. Cake mix, frosting, candles, plates, napkins, balloons, and streamers. Thanks to the generous support of our congregation, we collected enough supplies to put together 54 bags!

I supported the LGBTQIA+ Welcoming Committee by packing a bin of supplies for when they attend three area Pride Fests.

I help set up and organize the Social Justice Brunch in May.

Be sure to read the Social Justice Circle report for more information.

ADMINISTRATION

I work closely with Linda Liberacki, our office administrator, everyday to help things run smoothly as well as support our bookkeeper, Deb Strama.

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