

## Minister Report June 2022

Rev Pamela Rumancik

The 2021-22 church year brought a series of 'firsts' and displayed the creativity and perseverance of the UCH community. Entering our second full church year under the restrictions of the Covid 19 pandemic the church managed to take the middle way by being mindful of reasonable restrictions and still avoiding falling into the grip of irrational fear. When immunizations became widely available in spring, the church reopened for summer services in June of 2021 with the decision to invite vaccinated and masked folks into the church buildings. Services continued to be available on Zoom to allow immunocompromised and unvaccinated folks to attend. Summer services were provided by the worship team, but coffee hour was held out of doors to allow for unmasking.

The church year kicked off with a welcome back to church celebration in September with services being shared via YouTube on the [UCH channel](#). Alex Dvorak was hired for weekly support of technology. He worked with Suzanne Williams and Gene Schafer to continue to upgrade the sanctuary technology. A new pc was purchased for the pulpit and a separate zoom link was provided to folks at home to enjoy virtual coffee hour after the service.

John Cooperrider managed the building issues which had been unaddressed since the retirement of Herb Hiestand. Three major projects were set in motion including replacement of the Fire Alarm system, upgrading of Electrical service to the RE Building and restoration of the west wall of the Alice Warren room due to degrading foundation stones. In addition, fire doors which had been scheduled for replacement in 2019, finally got on the docket. As of this writing the foundation wall is complete. The other projects are in various stages of waiting on materials due to supply chain issues. John submitted his resignation in April but will continue to monitor these projects until they come to completion.

Cherita Axel managed the church social media posts and created weekly News & Notes and Monthly Touchstone publications. Linda Karlen volunteered to edit submissions to the Touchstone and Nancy Krantz worked to help maintain the integrity of communications.

The church lost bookkeeper, Lily Field, due to her unwillingness to comply with vaccination and masking requirements in September. Darren Howard maintained records during the search for a new bookkeeper. It was challenging because the software the church uses is not well-known and by the time Jeffery Mosely agreed to learn PowerChurch, Darren had taken ill. It was a perfect storm of problems that set back the financial accounting of the church all year. After struggling for six months, Jeffery quit in March of 2022 without ever bringing the accounts fully up to date, despite support from outside accountant, Kathy Holt. This is an area of the church which needs specific attention so that it doesn't fall behind so easily again.

Despite immunizations, Covid returned to surge with an Omicron variant in the late fall of 2021. Steeply rising numbers caused a pause of in-person services beginning on Christmas Eve. The church offered virtual services through early February when Covid numbers again declined but remained masking indoors through March. The mask requirement was rescinded but brought back again in May with yet another surge.

Rev Pam engaged with a controversy in the D86 School District over the implementation of Diversity Training initiatives. She spoke before the D86 board of trustees and engaged local clergy resulting in a

coalition of several church's social action groups. She was quoted in both the Chicago Tribune and Hinsdalean in standing up for values of fair treatment for all our children.<sup>i</sup>

In the congregation, the 2021-22 church year involved a whole lot of loss and some moments of joy. Rev Pam facilitated a 'Pregnant Moment' blessing for Maggie Potthoff before the birth her second child in November and celebrated an offsite wedding. Sadly, memorials outnumbered celebrations with many members losing parents, grandparents, and other family. The church bid farewell to Tom Stillman, Mona Taylor, Sally Packard, Michele Hansen and Jim McDonald in combinations of hybrid and onsite Celebrations of Life. We also lost dear friend and longtime church member Albert Fischer. With the tremendous losses of the previous year, it has been a lot to weather as a community.

In March Rev Pam took leave with a diagnosis of Burnout and came to the sad conclusion that she needs longer time away from ministry to recover. She gave notice and will conclude 8 years of service on June 30, 2022. Rev Karen Mooney will also relinquish her role as community minister as they both take time off to evaluate what comes next.

The Worship Team, led by Dave Lloyd and consisting of Anita Jencks, Ron Solberg, Linda Rio, Susan Hebble, Linda Karlen, Megan Griffin, Paula Sejut-Dvorak, Gene Schafer, Jonathan Hand, Julia Beckman, Ashley Kennedy (who moved to California with her family in March), and Karen McDowell created wonderful services when Rev Pam was off throughout the year and did an amazing job of leading services while she was on leave. Sara, Celia & Jeff Teppema, Tim Hays, Carolyn May, Dennis Sejut, Jonathan Hand and Tony Meadors offered their musical talents during the year.

Pam Fodor has done double duty, taking care of her own portfolio and picking up many stray tasks left undone. She has been a tremendous blessing to this community, along with the creative work of Julia Beckman and Jamie Pastman who continued to find ways to bring music and joy despite challenges of distance and masking.

This has been an extremely challenging year for the church. Board President Bob Daniel Wayman has done an amazing job keeping up with all the challenges and this board (Susan Mooney, Dave Mrazek, David May, Darren Howard, Gene Schafer & Mike Pabian) has been among the most responsive and engaged in years. There is a lot to deal with going forward including repairing financial accounting, (hopefully getting a more accessible software) restructuring staffing and beginning the process of search for a new minister. This church has weathered much more difficult times and will be strong going into this next decade with engagement and support from the community.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/letters/ct-letters-vp-012822-20220127-w722qknmlvhjbeyihy5digx3ty-story.html>  
<https://patch.com/illinois/darien-il/see-video-hinsdale-d-86-leader-under-fire>  
<https://www.thehinsdalean.com/story/2022/04/07/news/ministers-sought-prentiss-not-reverse/4535.html?m=true>