

## **Operation Team Reports for Congregational Meeting**

June 14, 2020

### **Community Report:** Submitted by Saphronia Young

It is hard to remain in community during Covid-19 quarantine. It requires deliberate intention, and it requires effort. It's a good reminder that for those people and activities that matter in our lives, where we put our time reflects our values. At Saltwater, the amount of time these community teams have continued to put into this work, reaching out deliberately, being together intentionally, and supporting each other compassionately, show who we are. Our hearts are here, even while living in UU Diaspora!

#### **I. THE MEMBERSHIP TEAMS**

1. Kitchen and Treat Team – led by Joanne Loeliger, the kitchen team functioned very well right up to quarantine. They designed sign-up sheets, filled every slot, and kept us coffeed and fed! The kitchen team also updated their job and team descriptions and attended a training session in January of 2020 that makes them very ready to resume when quarantine is over...we hope at the end of this year.
2. Membership Development –With Bev Ross as lead, this team also updated their job and team descriptions, attended the January training, and developed innovative ideas for advancing folks from visitor status to membership. This included hosting “getting to know you” meetings on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays; designing new forms to explain the membership process and to apply for membership, creating beautiful quarterly book signing ceremonies, (including one on Zoom), and implementing a new member mentoring program. The team welcomed 12 new members in this last church year. Way to go!

#### **II. CONNECTION TEAMS**

3. Potluck Team –this team, headed by Pat Montgomery, was going strong and even geared up to assist the pledge team with an amazing kick-off luncheon when quarantine struck. This team has always been ready to step up to the plate and serve community. Pat even organized a virtual potluck for last night on zoom. It's great to be together when there isn't any particular focus or purpose, so thank you, Pat.
4. UUG & PUUG – led by Aaron Sperry, this group had regular get-togethers for fellowship and modeling strong and healthy relationships to the younger crew...until quarantine. Aaron wrote an amazing poem about it that won't fit here, but ask me and I shall send ye!
5. Retreat at Seabeck –Poco Soldano was ready to lead a very fun retreat, when quarantine hit. Luckily, we are on for the first weekend in May next year! Poco has agreed to remain the lead, and the contract is signed. Please mark your calendars.
6. Creative Hands – This amazing group has continued to meet and encourage each other's art and projects through Zoom meetings on Tuesdays at 1:30. You should join them if you have any talent at all.

**PASTORAL CARE** The Caring and Lay Ministry Teams have been amazing – Denise Yanega, Debra Valpey, Lynn Crow, and Mike Yanega have continued to be a support to folks hit hardest by quarantine. Their work is private, but our thanks is not. **THANK YOU.**

## **Stewardship Report:** Submitted by Mary Paynter

To be a steward is to take care of resources other than your own. The five teams that comprise Stewardship Operations are charged with making wise use of all of the material resources of the church. Facilities Team ensures that our buildings and grounds are maintained. Finance team oversees day to day financial matters and makes recommendations to the Board regarding the annual budget. Fundraising teams plan and carry out events that raise money and also build community. Pledge Team plans and carries out the annual drive, working to ensure every Saltwater Church member has an opportunity to learn where the money goes, what our sources of income are, and how our pledges support our programs. The Endowment Fund Team makes investment decisions for our long-term funds.

We have a rich legacy bequeathed to us from those who went before us. We have benefited from these past members so that now we have land, buildings, an Endowment Fund, and no mortgage. We also benefit from current members who express their values through pledging generously. In turn, we hope to leave a solvent and thriving church to those who will come after us.

### **Accomplishments**

Stewardship Operations are able to function effectively thanks to the hard work of our team leads and volunteers. Several of our volunteers serve on more than one team. Thank you!

*Planting Flowers* It's hard to believe, with all that has happened in the last few months, but less than a year ago our church embarked on an ambitious plan to renovate and bring up to code the Lighthouse building so we could rent it out to a fulltime preschool/daycare. The success of this project is to be celebrated even though it was overtaken by Covid-19 related events. A small group of children returned to campus in May.

*Our hardworking and skilled Facilities Team* and volunteers have kept our campus well maintained, safe and looking good throughout the year, as well as during the shutdown. Facilities Team is coordinating with the Synagogue in upgrading the security of our campus.

*Pledge Drive and Fundraising* were spectacular successes, thanks to leadership and to our generous members. 99% of our members responded to communications from the Pledge Team. Pledges were \$5,000 more than last year, for a total of more than \$230,000. Two major fundraising events raised over \$8,000. Thanks to all.

*Finance Team*, building on the success of the Pledge Drive and Fundraising, was able to make recommendations to the Board for a prudent, fiscally sound budget that preserves all staff salaries and benefits. Thanks to Gaye Greeves, Treasurer and Finance Team Lead, we applied for and received about \$39,000 from the Paycheck Protection Plan. Gaye will carefully document our use of this money, so that as much as possible will convert from loan to grant.

*Endowment Team* continues to oversee our Endowment, a fund whose use is governed by its Charter. When net gain from the earnings of the Fund allow, one-third of the gain is disbursed to the General Fund as directed by the Board. In future, when circumstances allow, disbursements

are intended to be used to augment the Facilities Depreciation Reserve Fund. Even in these uncertain economic times there are easy ways to support the Endowment Fund and help it grow. For more information contact Carol Mohler or Gaye Greeves.

**Growth and Learning Report:** Submitted by Susan Aigner

I assumed the role of Growth and Learning Operations Lead in January. My favorite part of the job so far is getting to work closely with Melinda, out-going G and L Lead. Since she was the Lead for the first 6 months of this church year, we collaborated on this annual report.

Areas of success:

- We have worked to strengthen and expand our chalice circle program this year. A training for small group facilitators was held in January. Creation of additional groups was delayed due to the transition to online-only church; we are now again working to expand our chalice circle offerings online during the summer.
- The Lighthouse space was cleared, sorted, and updated to make space for our new tenant, Planting Flowers.
- Maia Bjornson was hired as our new nursery lead teacher, and since the move to online church, has been co-teaching our children's class with our preschool class lead teacher, Kelly Blaylock.
- Our Whole Lives classes for grades K-2 and 7-9 were offered this year.
- Family classes to introduce the monthly themes were held in the fall and winter, before the move to online church. Support for families has continued with parent support circle online.
- Movement of small groups to Zoom has been mostly successful.

Challenges:

- Some "growing pains" and storage challenges in the Lighthouse as we adjusted to sharing space with Planting Flowers childcare.
- Delay in expanding our chalice circle offerings due to transition to online church.
- Zoom does not work well for everyone.

**Worship Report:** Submitted by Rev. Kristen Kuriga

The Worship Operations Team provides support for Sunday morning worship, worship associates, the meditation group, CUUPS-Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, Ushers, and AV/technology.

This year, we did not have a lay leader serving in the worship operations lead position. I am excited that Galen Guffy will be stepping into this leadership position for the coming church year. I am also happy to share that Robert Snipes is now the A/V technology lead. I am very grateful to Nelson Schmitz who served in that role for several years and completed his time in

that position in December of 2019. Also this year, Toska Rodriguez agreed to the position as lead Usher.

Here are a few highlights from Worship Operations this year:

**Theme based ministry:** This year we launched theme-based ministry with the Soul Matters themes and materials to connect worship, religious education, and small group experiences. This has led to a more integrated and multigenerational approach to faith formation. We will continue to deepen in our work with themes in the coming church year.

**Quarterly Worship Planning Meeting:** Last summer we began quarterly worship planning meetings. These open meetings bring together worship associates, choir members, staff and members who are passionate about worship arts to reflect on worship and brainstorm service topics, hymns, stories, and special music for upcoming services based on the themes. The meetings have been well-attended and bring more voices, energy and creativity to the worship planning process.

**Rites of Passage:** We also marked important moments in the life of our community through Child Dedication, New Member Blessing, Bridging, Blessing of the Animals, Water Communion, and our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

**Virtual Worship:** The biggest change we have navigated this year is the move to virtual worship due to the coronavirus. I am so grateful to our amazing staff team: Melinda Einander, Tom Burt, and Oleg Dusaev who have demonstrated creativity, flexibility and commitment as we learn to offer worship online. We also could not do this work without the support of Bert Snipes, our A/V lead. Although we miss worshipping together in person, there is excellent attendance on Sunday mornings through zoom, averaging 110-130 people on Sundays. This summer we will be part of an exciting experiment--worshipping with three additional congregations in July and August: Westside UU, Cedar UU, and Northlake UU.

**Training:** In January, worship operations coordinated with the community operations team to provide training for Sunday morning volunteers, including the usher and tech team.

**CUUPS:** Our Saltwater CUUPS group continued to offer spiritual support to our community through leading rituals, in person this fall and winter, and online this spring.

**Meditation:** Our meditation group continues to provide a weekly opportunity for spiritual practice and has made a successful transition to offering meditation group weekly online. Members of the meditation group also offered a lay led worship service called "Breath by Breath" where they offered teachings, practices stories, and reflections on mindfulness.

**Challenges:** The biggest challenges this year for worship operations were: difficulties with our sound equipment when we were having in-person worship needing to learn how to provide worship over zoom  
not having a worship operations lead

Opportunities:

Continuing to innovate in worship

Welcoming new leadership

Deepening our work with theme-based ministry

Providing worship opportunities outside of Sunday morning

**Social Justice Report:** Submitted by Diane Dobrowolski

Social Justice Operations consist of four teams/programs: Sound Alliance, SCAN (Saltwater Climate Action Now), Share the Plate, and The Giving Tree.

**SOUND ALLIANCE**

Saltwater UU Church is an active member institution of Sound Alliance. Sound Alliance is a collaboration of 20 nonprofit and faith based organizations, labor unions, and educational associations dedicated to working for social justice. Some of the issues Sound Alliance has been working on this past year include homelessness and affordable housing, immigrant rights and responding to the social and economic impacts of the recent pandemic.

Accomplishments:

The Saltwater Sound Alliance Team is a member of Sound Alliance's South King County Housing Team. This team is researching and advocating for affordable housing options, reducing homelessness and permanent supportive housing and has met with King County and State legislators to advocate for these issues.

Sound Alliance hosted an assembly in November to launch the upcoming Civic Conversations on Homelessness. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, these conversations have been postponed.

The team planned, recruited, and volunteered for a Legal Clinic for Immigrants in collaboration with Colectiva Legal. This clinic helped 39 families with legal assistance, Know Your Rights information and care plan preparation in the event of a family member is taken by ICE.

Team members provided Know Your Rights trainings to several institutions in the area.

Sound Alliance continues to support the Federal Way Day Center and has assisted in fundraising efforts and other donations. A member of our congregation is the Volunteer Coordinator there.

Sound Alliance is currently starting a new project called Social Connections to reach out to individuals who are especially isolated due to the pandemic. Members are also meeting with State legislators to advocate for no cuts to social services while balancing the state budget during the pandemic.

**SCAN (Saltwater Climate Action Now)**

Saltwater Climate Action Now Team is dedicated to raising awareness about climate change among members of our church and to participating in direct actions to reduce carbon emissions.

#### Accomplishments:

SCAN members organized a climate themed Sunday service in September with two dynamic speakers and handouts regarding climate change.

SCAN members advocated for the Save Weyerhaeuser campus.

SCAN members participated in Climate Strike activities in 9/19 at various locations in the Puget Sound region.

SCAN members have actively opposed the Tacoma LNG plant and the Kalama methanol plant.

SCAN members testified in December in favor of a Clean Air Standard for the Puget Sound area.

SCAN continues to post Climate Messages of the Week every week in the News You Need to Know (when we were meeting in person) and in our Weekly Update email.

#### SHARE THE PLATE

Share the Plate is the practice of sharing 50% of the undesignated funds in the Sunday collection with a local nonprofit organization that reflects our UU values of compassion and justice.

#### Accomplishments:

We hope to get the congregation more engaged in this program by asking members to nominate organizations that they would like to see be recipients. A description of this program, as well as criteria for recipients, is now on the church website. The nomination form has been revised and is also available on the church's website.

#### THE GIVING TREE

The Giving Tree is a program which provides gifts during the holiday season to families in need at Mark Twain Elementary School.

#### Accomplishments:

The Giving Tree served 16 families at Mark Twain this year. This included one wish gift and one need gift for each child, as well as a \$25 gift card for each family. We also donated \$200-\$300 worth of snack bars to the school.