

ANNUAL REPORT
Church Year 2019-2020

St. John's
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

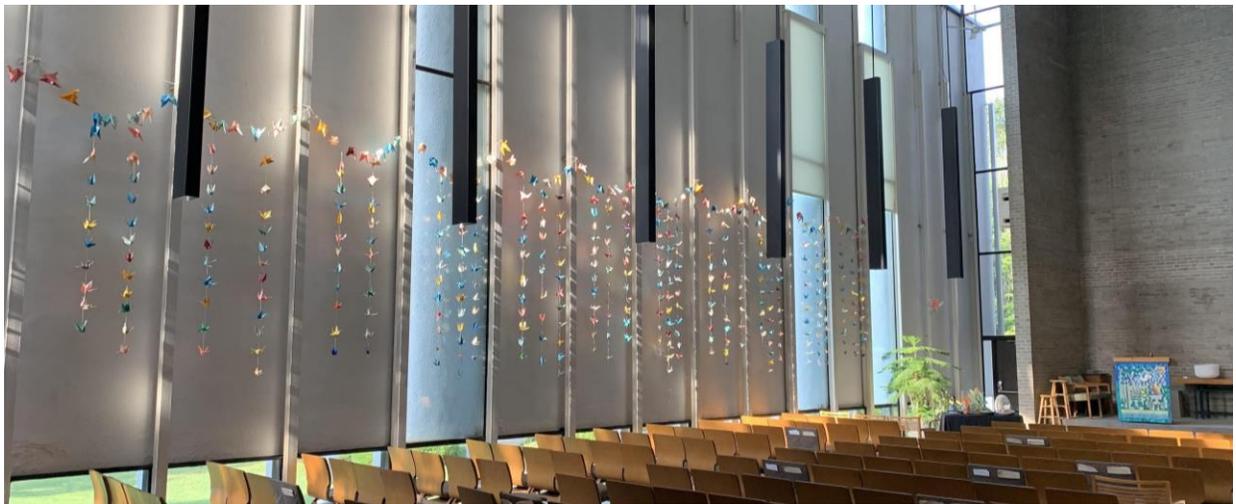


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PRESIDENT' S REPORT by Matthew Cowperthwait

Dear Church,

The past year for St. John's has been unique and challenging for our community in a variety of ways, and as I write this in early June, the only thing I can be certain of is that the final chapter has not yet closed. We have faced a variety of challenges this year, across a wide spectrum, and I believe St. John's has worked admirably to rise to meet them all. So much has happened within the past year, and much involving numerous members of the St. John's community that it is hard to do justice to them all. When people look back on the past year, the global coronavirus pandemic and social justice protests sweeping every major US city and numerous countries will undoubtedly be the focus, and rightly so. However, I hope that much of the other good work that the Church has accomplished within the past year will not fall by the wayside either.

A Focus on the Future

A significant portion of the first part of the year was looking to the future of the Church. A large amount of time was invested in understanding how to help bring the Master Plan to fruition, understanding timelines and setting expectations. We spent significant time sitting down as a board and discussing next steps and the formation of teams and responsibilities within the Church. We also invited a consultant, Rachel Maxwell from 'Stewardship for Us' to visit St. Johns and meet with a large range of our congregants and share her expertise in conducting capital campaigns. From this visit, we learned a tremendous amount, both about the strengths of St. Johns, as well as some areas where we've developed some unhealthy habits to work on. In many ways, it confirmed how much of the work we have done is on the right track, it additionally confirmed how much work we have left to do as we plan our congregation's future. The board also sat down with the architects from Childress and Cunningham, to ensure they fully understood the work that was done, as well as perceptions of next steps.

As David Roth discussed in his report last year, there are many areas within the church in which we have members taking a step back in church life after years, and in some cases decades, of service to the church. While we will miss the continuity that these members have graciously provided, it also provides the chance to involve new members. One such example is that a Partner Church refresh weekend was held, with Rev. Roger Bertschausen, the Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC) coming to St. Johns. This weekend included a service, and daylong discussion of what it means to have a transformational partner church program, which concluded with traditional Hungarian folk dancing and dinner. Last but certainly not least, the weekend included a Soup and Bread Luncheon which provided funds for the Bread for the Elderly program in Szentlászló.

Physical Safety

In the fall of 2019, St. John's received a series of threatening letters from an individual. This, coupled with the theft of a TV from the premises, served as the tipping point in many ways for us to take a long overdue hard look at some of the practices within the church from a safety and security perspective. Short term, it led to the presence of a police officer at the church for a period of several months. With the assessment provided by our own Safe Congregations team, and the recent history of violence against places of worship such as the Jewish Synagogue in Pittsburgh and others, the board felt this action was necessary while we performed our due diligence in understanding the threat, reviewing our processes as well as working with the legal system to get the individual the help he needed. It however, and understandably so, provoked a wide range of responses from within the church – from individuals who felt the action was warranted, to those who were understandably saddened or frustrated by the presence of the police. We left the year with much work left to be done, both in improving our facilities safety, as well as in terms of continuing to have a conversation within the congregation. While we were able to have one listening session on the topic of safety, perhaps the biggest takeaway I can offer from this was the need to make conversations regarding safety and how our congregation should approach it as a part of the church's ongoing culture.

Budgeting & Our Congregation's Relationship with Money

As we started to begin the budgeting process for the new year, the board had tried to take some of the advice from Rachel Maxwell visit to the congregation regarding the Master Plan to heart. A series of conversations were held with congregants to discuss our own money stories, and how we related to money – how we grew up with it and what our relationship with it is. This was intended to help us start to talk as a congregation about money in a healthy context. There was talk of potentially in the future hosting a series within the church to discuss money – whether through a UUA program such as the 'Wi\$dom Path', or through an external program such as 'Financial Peace'.

This was then coupled with a desire to start working towards a balanced budget. For years, we have passed budgets that were a little lopsided. We managed to keep relatively balanced budgets at the end of the year through the individual restraint of members not spending budgeted amounts, or the year end presence of the 'St. John's Miracle' where an additional gift, or other windfall would allow us to balance things out. The desire was instead to start working towards a budget that may be smaller all around, but where members felt encouraged to spend their respective portions of it for the good of the church.

A Global Pandemic

In late 2019, a viral outbreak called COVID-19 began to spread across Asia, and by early March it had reached Ohio. To say this virus had a profound impact on the shaping of the year would be an understatement. While the virus itself was well known by early March and had been a topic of some discussion prior, the speed with which it moved I believe caught many members still off guard. By the time the first cases were confirmed in Ohio on March 9th, the board met in an emergency session on March 11th with other leaders throughout the church and made the decision to cancel in-person activities and close the facilities. This came amongst a nationwide, if not global, shutdown of thousands of businesses, restaurants, and other facilities.

Despite this hardship, St. John's did an amazing job pivoting to hosting its first online virtual service the following Sunday, just a few short days later. While we still have

much to learn about how we grow and learn as a community, we have also done a tremendous amount. We have found new ways to connect over virtual services and coffee hours, held discussion groups online, and had the chance to connect with one another new and inventive ways, and we are just getting started. From a more procedural perspective, we have hosted budget sessions online, and even held an emergency congregational meeting online as well to approve pursuing money through the 'Paycheck Protection Program' (which we successfully secured).

Within all of this though, we know that no number of online meetings is a substitute for real, face to face human connection, and we are all eager for the day when we return to services as before. As of June, the board has extended the shutdown through the end of December, based on guidance from the UUA, observation of actions being taken at other churches and our workplaces, and significant discussion. We know this may change and hope it does. We know that as of early June, businesses in Ohio have already started to reopen, and we the final chapter on this has not yet closed.

Social Justice

In any other year, a global pandemic may be the defining characteristic. While it is too early to say the eventual outcome, the reality is that the extrajudicial killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and too many others at the hands of the state has sparked protests against Police Brutality that have spread to every major city across the US, and as of now, at least forty countries. Within Cincinnati, there have been continuous protests for over a week, and I know numerous members of St. John's have been in attendance already as part of the fight for Social and Racial Justice.

Within St. Johns, this has also caused us to take a hard look at our commitment to Social Justice. While we made a commitment in June of 2016 to Racial Justice and have numerous groups that actively work to further the causes of Racial and Social Justice, this has also caused the board to take a hard look at the work we are doing. We do not want to diminish the work that members and individual teams do, but at the same time, want to ensure that at the highest levels of our Church's leadership, we are working to meet the ideals we approved as a congregation in June of 2016.

I suspect with the recency of this, much will change regarding how this story is told in the coming months, and perhaps even by the time of next year's Annual Report. We know that in the meantime however, we can help influence how this story ends.

In Faith,

Matthew Cowperthwait

President, Board of Trustees

MINISTER'S REPORT by Rev. Mitra Jafarzadeh

Dear Church,

I am writing this report on ministry at St. John's for the 2019-2020 year during the days of COVID shutdown and energetic protests against police violence.

It has been my joy to look back at the start of our year and I hope this report will bring you some fond memories.

We started the year with two very powerful services in July. Anjali Dutt and Miciah Thacker preached on "Insights on Compassion and Consciousness while traveling in India." Both women, Anjali, a college professor of Indian heritage and Miciah, an exceptional high school student, had traveled to India for their own reasons and brought back stories of depth and meaning. Later in the month, we welcomed Imam Ismaeel Chartier to the pulpit. Many of you told me how meaningful it was to have an Islamic faith leader spend time with us.

Along with Water Communion, early fall brought Frank Meyer to the pulpit on September 29th when he preached, "Your Friend the Darkness." Frank is always a thoughtful and beautiful speaker. The surprise of the season was the service with the blessing of backpacks. We invited adults to come meet each child in the church and offer them a blessing bead for their backpack. The adults were clearly as

blessed as any child present. Our co-directors of religious life, Ashleigh Rhodes and Marie Inanli, surely succeeded in making cross-generational community happen that day!

Lucy Steiner shared the pulpit with me on September 15th for a moving service about Dohn Community School. On Sunday, October 13th, Manuel Perez spoke to us about faith and the workers movement. He reminded even me of the depth of St. John's justice work for the immigrant community.

Joetta Prost brought us a meaningful sermon about the local history of Unitarianism and Universalism as it relates to racial violence. Through her research, she uncovered a story of the Universalist church in Northern Kentucky and the horrific history of lynching.

Universalism showed up again on November 10th when our Religious Life leaders put together a charming and delightful play about John Murray. The kids were perfect and the whole congregation learned some of our history. December brought a live reading of *A Christmas Carol* with help from Nat Kutcher and Kate Elliot and lots of kids.

December brought another delight in the form of musical vespers services. Ron Esposito, members of The Guitar Society and Peng Cheng He all offered their gifts to provide a time for reflection and rest in a busy season. (This is different from the faith formation curriculum, Evensong, which we also offered this winter.)

2020 saw Alicia Rosselot, David Roth, Alice Diebel and John Kachuba in the pulpit. The highlight of February was a sermon by the Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, Rev. Roger Bertschausen. Roger concluded his "Partner Church Refresh Weekend" with us by preaching a message of renewal and reminding us of the importance of partnership. Alicia Rosselot and I had the joy of participating in the Partner Church Thanksgiving Pilgrimage in October. We traveled Transylvania with UUs from around America and were able to foster the relationship of partnership with the minister and congregation of Szentlászló.

I spent a portion of my study time on a trip to Italy organized by my seminary. The focus was on the life and teachings of Paul, and yet, the most impactful moment



came when I stood before Michelangelo's Pieta. The history of the church is long and complicated. The human call to care for each other shines through all trappings of faith and brings us again into covenant with life itself. While I doubt that I will ever seek a similar learning opportunity, I came away with a little more knowledge and a lot more love for the tradition we share.

The dream of early 2020 was to take a family pilgrimage to our partner church. We can learn so much of the history and variety of our faith through travel. The staff even met with Racheal Maxwell of 'Stewardship for Us' during her visit to discuss how we might fund such a trip. Given the changes brought on by a global pandemic, all plans are on hold.

The pandemic of COVID-19 and church building closure meant that everyone who works on worship had to shift quickly to offer worship opportunities online. With the generous help of Claire Wagner and Ben Hutchison, we were able to begin producing videos of sermons, music, and other elements of worship almost immediately.

The shift in energy has been significant, the learning curve steep, and the rewards meaningful. Phyliss Flanagan, Rita Volz, David Roth, and Joetta Prost have stepped up to round out the online worship experience.

Even through the change to online worship, we have sustained extra elements, such as membership and board moments. With help from the finance team, we reshaped giving options to allow us to continue to offer split the plate.

My gratitude goes out to the many families and volunteers who have offered chalice lightings, stories for all ages, and special music. Your work has helped to expand our community and reminds us that everyone is important. Thank you.

This year we tried something new by having quarterly themes. In the beginning of the year we considered, "Your Place in the Universe." December was given to an in depth look at *A Christmas Carol*. The early months of 2020 had us looking to "Deconstruct Colonialism." (Does anyone remember the upside down map?) Spring's theme was "Abundance" – a theme made true by this year's very successful

pledge drive! We would like to continue with themes in the 2020-21 year, but incorporate justice action work alongside the worship and learning opportunities.

To go alongside the themes, the staff team (mostly Marie) produced a Seasonal Journal of congregant's reports, prose essays, poetry, and art. St. John's, you have reasons to be proud!

We can also be proud of our Safety and Health team for their leadership as we weathered threats to the congregation. By the end of November we had been to court and had a restraining order in hand. Let me be clear, the work of the congregation was to hold the delicate dynamic of caring for ourselves and respecting the inherent worth and dignity of all people, while creating as safe a space as possible for worship and spiritual growth. As your minister, I view this as spiritual work and I am proud of the board and other lay leaders.

Some programs were challenging in the past year and resolution has not yet been attained.

OWL

This past August, local UU clergy had an online meeting with Dr. Melanie Davis, the Our Whole Lives program coordinator for the UUA. We decided to suspend the junior and senior high programs until we could retrain volunteers. At St. John's, the board is committed to the value of this work. The staff team would like to expand our offerings to all ages. We have put together a team to pursue next steps, but their work was interrupted by the virus. We will continue in the 2020-21 year.

Beloved Conversations

As of this writing, it is clear that racial justice is a dominant concern of America. At St. John's, we began to embody the work of our 2016 resolution on Racial Justice through bringing the Beloved Conversations program to our church. In the past year, we have been in conversation with other churches to share the work with them. This effort has paused, but will continue.



Caring for the Congregation in a Time of COVID-19

We have worked with the Caring Circle to reach out to people of our community.

We have:

- ❖ Online morning meditation three times a week
- ❖ A new Facebook CommUUnity Group
- ❖ CommUUnity Connections group
- ❖ Extended Chalice groups
- ❖ Thursday Theology (or Thoughtful Thursdays)
- ❖ Virtual coffee hour
- ❖ “Time with the Hymnal” 6 week class (completed)
- ❖ Regular meetings with Dohn School volunteers to assess their needs and encourage further engagement.
- ❖ Doubled the frequency of the newsletter to share more information more completely
- ❖ Begun sharing work of entrepreneurs as a way for us to support each other

We ended this year / began next year with an online retreat for the program staff team (including Claire Wagner).

Let me conclude this report with a word of assurance: we have done and will do good work together in providing for spiritual growth and serving the world.

I look forward to another year together.

-Rev. Mitra Jafarzadeh

RELIGIOUS LIFE REPORT by Marie Inanli, Co-Director of Religious Life

On a sunny Sunday in August, congregants gathered at St. John's for an intergenerational service - *the Blessing of the Backpacks*. Intended for children to feel that the adult members regard them as significant, this ritual embodied a message of caring and sharing. The children later assembled the beads they received onto keychains stamped with chalices. Hanging from their backpacks, these talismans could remind children that they can carry UU values wherever they go.

In anticipation of incorporating more intergenerational activities and including a wider age range in children's classes, Ashleigh hosted teacher training and parent workshops in order to share the rationale for the changes and answer questions.

First Hour

The following Sunday, August 25, we launched the first phase of First Hour. A few families gathered to light a chalice, share snacks, and choose an intergenerational activity. After Labor Day, Amy Monson and Ann Shuur prepared and led classes for children based on Evolutionary Curricula developed by Connie Barlow to align with the fall theme of Our Place in the Universe. Meanwhile Bill Gordon hung out with middle schoolers in the kitchen where they could share the challenges and opportunities of adolescence while preparing simple snacks.

Given the low and sporadic attendance of middle-school aged students, we asked for input from their parents. Feedback indicated that the increased rigor of schoolwork and extracurricular activities along with less inclination to participate in family time at church meant that weekly attendance was not to be expected. Given changing biorhythms, the teens also relished the opportunity to sleep in on Sunday mornings.

In response, we offered monthly movies *after* service and a youth gathering immediately prior to game night. Feedback from parents as well as volunteers informed the switch to the alternating week format, with thematic content shared among age-segregated groups during the second and fourth Sundays and a variety of self-selected intergenerational activities during the first and third Sundays. We were looking into field trip options for the occasional fifth Sunday.

As more space opened up downstairs, we added adult programming. Alicia Rosselot rearranged the space in Gandhi so that it was more conducive to meditation. During alternate weeks Christine Mooch led a meditation class during First Hour. Even during weeks without a leader, the space was kept open for quiet reflection.

Other opportunities for adults included ongoing and limited series, usually on an alternating week or monthly basis. Offerings included: *Love and Social Justice* led by Charles Seibert, *Fun with Decision Making* led by Brennan Grayson, *Your Place in the Universe* led by Nathan DeLee.

The number of participants ranged from two to fifteen. As the year progressed, when offerings coincided with Money Conversations or Team meetings, some people expressed that they really wanted to attend more than one program. Other adults expressed delight in the opportunity to sit quietly, read, or chat while their children attended class in Rosa Parks.

As the new calendar year began, we started Principles and Play, which included a series of discussions on topics related to the Seven Principles. People who agreed to facilitate sessions include Jeanne Nightingale, Brennan Grayson, Pamela Wilz, and Diana Long. During alternate weeks, we offered multiple playful intergenerational activities in Krolfifer. Anne Skove guided those who wanted to draw; Bridget Shoe demonstrated needlecrafts, while Nat Kutcher and Kate Elliott led improv and acting.



Events

Partner Church Refresh Weekend included a discussion with Rev. Roger Bertschausen about the ultimate field trip—a family pilgrimage to Transylvania, planned for summer of 2021. After focusing on learning during the morning and early afternoon, participants enjoyed a delicious dinner of Hungarian food, followed by dancing. Everyone in attendance crowded the center of the sanctuary to learn a couple of dances after watching several performances.

We hosted multiple evening events for families including Scarecrow Building, Gingerbread House Decorating, and Parent's Night Out. Ashleigh started a new daytime opportunity for parents with toddlers to gather for socialization on Friday mornings.

Communications

One of the challenges in most organizations is communication. The lack of a current brochure and intermittent participation contributed to confusion about expectations around programming, particularly among parents. Updating the website, creating a welcome packet for parents, and sharing plans with more advance notice are goals for the coming year. We have already increased the frequency of the e-news. The format continues to evolve to increase functionality for readers. When Marie's role expanded last August, Rev. Mitra shared her vision for a publication where congregants could share their creative reflections connected to seasonal themes. The newest Seasonal Journal increased to 12 pages, including a broader range of contributions. Most recent communications involved listening to concerns and inviting engagement in recording videos to share with the congregation.

MUSIC REPORT by Josh Dufford, Director of Music

This year has been a fabulous year of music making, fellowship, and outreach for St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church. In my first year as Director of Music, I maintained a focus on building relationships with members and learning about the history and community of the church. Here is a brief outline of the music activities that have gone on in St. John's this past year.

The St. John's Choir began rehearsals in late August on Thursday evenings from 7-8:30 pm and adopted a system singing 3-4 times each month while allowing the First Sunday to be reserved for special music. The choir presented a special Christmas music service on December 22nd which featured four songs interwoven with a sermon. On January 19th, St. John's hosted the Bowling Green State University Collegiate Chorale for an evening concert. The church provided the singers with a delicious, homemade dinner, hosted singers in their homes overnight, and returned them to the church the following morning. The event was incredibly well received by an appreciative audience and music-lovers from all over the greater-Cincinnati area. Unfortunately, the outbreak of COVID-19 prevented the choir both from singing for Alice Diebel's ordination and presenting a spring concert, both of which were in the works.

The Music Team did a fine job of helping to execute several projects throughout the year to support music in the church. These included facilitating the BGSU Concert, ordering choir folders for new members, ordering new music-storage boxes for the library, and helping to provide new large-print hymnals for worship services.

In our transition to online worship, several St. John's members have had the opportunity to share their musical gifts with the congregation. This has been met with gratitude from viewers who were otherwise unaware of the many talented people who attend church at St. John's.

As we continue to adapt to an online-platform of worship, Music at St. John's will continue to innovate in order to engage more congregants in music and community

with one another. This was done beautifully through an online, small group hymn class facilitated by Reverend Mitra and supported by myself. Though we may not be together at the moment, finding ways to continue making meaningful connections with the membership is key. I hope to continue facilitating these special interactions for the duration of our time apart, and until we can make music together once again.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT by David Roth

It has been an eventful year for the Personnel Committee. We were pleased to welcome three new members this year including Michael Johnson, Michael Neugent, and Brennan Grayson.

In August we welcomed a new Music Director, Josh Dufford. Unfortunately, Josh will be leaving us at the end of June to pursue other opportunities. He will continue to support us remotely while music activities remain on a reduced schedule.

This year's normal activities were interrupted by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic which curtailed in-person church gatherings. In response to this unprecedented event, the Personnel Committee recommended, and the Board of Trustees approved, emergency measures that were put in effect in early March that will run through the end of the church year on June 30th.

These emergency measures included converting the pay of our religious life staff from an hourly basis to Salaried Overtime Eligible (SOE). This allowed greater flexibility and income security for our staff as we adjusted our programming to meet the needs of our congregation during the pandemic.

In addition to this, we guaranteed pay to all our hourly employees for their regularly scheduled hours while we adapted our services and programs to the pandemic.



As a result of the pandemic, and in response to the normal evolution of the congregations programming, the Committee recommended several changes to church staffing and compensation for the 2020 – 2021 church year in the proposed budget to be voted upon at the annual meeting.

They include the following:

- ❖ A freeze on all salary increases for the next church year.
- ❖ A reduction in the hours of the Office Administrator from 25 to 23 hours as media and communication work has shifted to the Religious Life staff.
- ❖ A reduction in the total number of budgeted hours of the Religious Life staff from 40 to 35 hours and a rebalancing of the remaining hours amongst the staff to accommodate the requests and needs of staff members. Going forward we will have one staff member, Marie Inanli at 30 hours and one staff member, Ashleigh Rhodes working on an on-call basis up to five hours per week.
- ❖ We have also made the change from hourly to SOE paid permanent for Marie Inanli.
- ❖ We have reduced the number of budgeted hours for our Caretaker from 20 to 17 hours reflecting reduced building use.
- ❖ We have reduced the number of budgeted Child Care Worker hours from about \$4,700 a year to \$2,250 a year due to the absence of on-site events.

In addition to the work done in the response to the pandemic, we have also been working with Rev. Jafarzadeh to provide additional resources to her and her team related to goal setting and performance management as she strives to foster a results-oriented environment for her team. While it has been a difficult year in many ways, we continue to be blessed by the hard work of our dedicated and thoughtful staff and we look forward to emerging from this trying time with a stronger and more dynamic team.

FINANCE REPORT by Linda Heath, Finance Director

The recent Board of Trustees reorganization, including elimination of the Council structure, means over 25 different Team Leaders and Staff have oversight of at least one line item in the Operating Budget. This prompted streamlining the Request for Funds (RFF) process for reimbursement, including the payment of routine bills. The closure of the church building moved us to institute a process for digital signatures on RFFs and other documents. Church Administrator Nancy Greenlee's help is invaluable in both of these procedures.

Jim McDonough, Treasurer, prepares the Financial Reports that allow the Board to track the Income and Expenses of the congregation compared to the adopted Operating Budget and to understand where and how the assets of St John's are held or invested. (**See Treasurer Report.**) A Summary 2019-2020 Year End Financial Report will be available after the close of the fiscal year.

The Fund Trustees (Melissa Asman, Nicole Stanforth, Linda Heath, Jim McDonough ex officio) oversee the investment and disbursement of St. John's 3 endowment funds: Legacy Fund, Miller-Lorentz Property Fund, and Music Endowment Fund. This year 6 projects (\$18,900 total) were approved by the Board and financed by the 3 funds. (**See Fund Trustees Report for details**). St. John's members have donated to these endowments to provide resources for special projects, unique needs, and new initiatives, outside of the Operating Budget.

The Pledge Campaign was again ably coordinated by Joetta Prost and Rita Volz (**See Pledge Campaign Report**). Given the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are especially grateful for our members and friends, who will continue to support St. John's in 2020-2021 with pledges of over \$265,000. With the decreases in rental income and offering plate donations, this is vital in helping us to begin weaning ourselves from a deficit Operating Budget.

The pandemic also led us to apply for and receive a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan available to nonprofits through the Small Business Administration. We are using this money to currently retain and pay staff, after which it will become a grant. Special thanks to Cliff Shisler, Nancy Greenlee, Jim McDonough, and Matt Cowperthwait for past and current work.

The pandemic also pushed us to increase our options for digital giving. We are now able with **GIVE+** to donate online, by app, and by Text to multiple St. John's accounts, including - pledge, offering plate, minister's discretionary fund, and Split-the-Plate. Thanks to Claire Wagner, Greg Franseth, Joetta Prost, and Cliff Shisler for past and ongoing assistance.

Even with the uncertainty about the course of COVID-19 and its effects on the economy, I am confident that your generosity will continue to support St. John's, its members and friends, our community and the wider world.

TREASURER' S REPORT by Jim McDonough

Nancy Greenlee and I keep the books for St John's UU church. We work as a team. Nancy does all of the entries into the Power Church system (a job she does very well). I balance the checkbook every month as well as manage the investment accounts. We send out reports to all who contribute. The January report is intended to remind you of how much you have paid on your pledge, and to assist you with information for tax preparation. We also send out a pledge report in May to remind you of your pledge commitment and the progress you have made towards completing it. We also send out letters acknowledging special contributions, and reports when requested by a church member.

Each month I provide the board with an Income and Expense report for the year to date, allowing them to see and address areas of concern, I also provide a Budget Report which compares income and expenses to the budget.

For your information we have our Checking, Ministers Discretionary Fund and Money Market at 5th/3rd Bank. We have an account at Schwab for the Music fund, our CDs are at Union Savings. The major investment accounts are managed by the UUA. We recently received a Paycheck Protection Program loan to assist in continuing to provide employment for all our employees. That low interest (1%) loan was gained with the assistance of Heritage Bank in Kentucky. This loan is a forgivable loan if used for the intended purposes, which it will be.

Despite the loss of many income streams your board has reworked the budget for next year to account for the losses mentioned above. We have also had an increase in the pledges for next year which helped. Thank you all for your continued support. We are a strong congregation and will get through this pandemic.

Cash & Cash Equivalents		As of date
Union Savings Bank Certificates of Deposit	\$80,703.15	6/1/2020
Minister's Discretionary Fund	\$5,575.33	6/1/2020
Fifth Third Checking	\$80,703.15	6/1/2020
Fifth Third Brokerage Account	\$74,606.12	6/1/2020
Endowed Funds		
Legacy Fund	\$244,218.24	5/1/2020
Miller-Lorentz Fund	\$212,067.51	5/1/2020
Music Fund	\$82,067.51	6/1/2020

ST. JOHN'S FUND TRUSTEE REPORT

by Melissa Asman, Chair, & Nicole Stanforth, Secretary

The fund trustees, along with the treasurer and finance director, met in August 2019 and were scheduled to meet in March 2020 when the church closed for COVID-19. The 2nd meeting was then postponed until markets stabilized and we could get a more accurate view of the funds remaining.

This year saw the closing of the Schwab Money Market accounts for the Legacy and Miller-Lorentz funds with consolidation of monies into respective 5/3rd MM accounts for both funds. Also, Anne Septic and Chris Wagner were removed from access to the Schwab accounts and Melissa Asman was added.

Approved allocations from each of the funds for the year were as follows:

Legacy fund – Landscaping front entry & back parking lot \$1100; Capital campaign consultation from UUA \$2300. Remaining available \$48,900.

Miller – Lorentz fund – Driveway repair \$5525; Heating system repair \$4150; Restoration of Stanczak painting \$4130. Remaining available \$53,395.

Music fund – Storage boxes for choral music \$1652; There was also approval for a Jason Shelton event but it was canceled and the money was returned. Remaining available ~\$4350.

PLEDGE CAMPAIGN REPORT by Joetta Prost, Pledge Campaign Coordinator

STEWARDSHIP IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

The original plan for this year's pledge campaign was to conduct small group gatherings (known in the stewardship world as "cottage meetings") during which

we would discuss ideas gleaned from UUA Stewardship consultant Rachel Maxwell. The Board invited Ms. Maxwell to St. John's in October 2019 to offer guidance in advance of a possible capital campaign. Her report includes praise for our congregation's strengths as well as honest feedback about our patterns of giving and budgeting. For example, she noted that St. John's average pledge amount ranks 31st out of 43 UU congregations across the country with a similar number of pledging households, and 18th among 31 Ohio congregations. Rachel recommended that St. John's begin developing budgets wherein expenses and income are balanced and encouraged us to develop a culture of generosity and abundance thinking. Rachel's report and slides are posted here: <https://stjohnsuu.org/members-corner/big-build/>

With a great team of volunteers who were prepared to host and lead discussions about generosity and envisioning our future, the pledge campaign events began just two weeks before the world shut down. As we paused to catch our breath and reboot, we were grateful for the excellent guidance received from our UUA Regional Staff; Zoom meetings helped pledge campaign leaders in the Mid-America Region develop messages that fit the suddenly-different world of COVID-19. The campaign message became:

"If EVERYONE gives as they are able, St. John's will be able to meet our mission: creating a safe and caring community, working for peace and social justice, and celebrating beliefs that respect freedom of thought. We believe that while this pandemic will threaten the financial stability of some members and friends, others will still be able to give, and some will be able to step up to give more to support our community."

We bravely set an audacious goal of matching last year's pledge campaign amount of \$250,000, while the Board began work on the budget. The good news is... our belief in the generosity of St. John's members and friends was confirmed!

Those whose livelihood has been impacted by the pandemic have reduced their pledges to take care of themselves and their families – as we want them to do. After all, as we say in our mission, it is our responsibility – our covenant – to create a safe

and caring community that supports all members and friends. Approximately 15% of our households decreased their pledges or declined to pledge for 2020-2021.

About 34% of our pledgers let us know they could continue with their past level of giving despite our uncertain world situation. We are so grateful for the ongoing generosity demonstrated by these members and friends.

And an amazing number – 51% of our members and friends – have increased the amount they will give for the year ahead. Those increases for 2020-2021, ranging from \$20 to \$3,200, were gratefully received. Overall, our median pledge has increased this year from \$792 to \$1,000. Likewise, the range of our quartiles has improved.

As a result of EVERYONE giving as they are able, we exceeded the financial goal of \$250,000 that we set after the pandemic began, and as of May 31 have received pledges of more than \$265,000! The members and friends of St. John's community have dug deep to support our congregation. This pledge campaign says so much about our love of St. John's, and the strength of our congregation, now and in the future! It is wonderful that our increased generosity can assist the Board in developing a more sustainable budget for 2020-2021, which helps build financial security now and in the future.

But remember: with income down from building rentals and uncertain times ahead, there is still a need for increased giving. If you feel called by the spirit of generosity, you are invited to increase your pledge by sending an email to pledge@stjohnsuu.org. Or give an extra contribution using our **GIVE+** online tools here: <https://stjohnsuu.org/community/donate/>

We could not have exceeded our goal without the help of the following dedicated volunteers: Carol Fencl, Charles Spencer, Cliff Shisler, Emily Hodges, Erin Zoller, Greg Terhune, Kathy Rentz, Linda Heath, and Nancy Henry. These members followed up to confirm pledges during April and May, at a time when so many of us were distracted by events taking place in our families, community and the world.

Special thanks also go to the folks who originally volunteered to host and/or facilitate cottage meetings: Alicia Rosselot, Barbara Hadden, Bill Luerssen, Claire Wagner, Cliff

Shisler & Linda Heath, Debbie Combs & Marc Baskind, Emily Hodges & Charles Spencer, Edie Holder, Erin Zoller, Gay Glasscott, Kate Elliott, Kathy Rentz, Laura Bange & Matthew Peterson, Lucy and Mike Steiner, Lyn O'Brien, Marty Harrington, Mary Newman & John Kachuba, Melissa Rowland, Monica Pellman, Myra Pucci & David Glasser, Nancy Henry, and Rita Volz.

PROPERTY TEAM REPORT by Cliff Shisler

- ❖ Parking lot asphalt resurfacing and sealing completed. Also, spots that were missed were cold filled by Bill L.
- ❖ Painting of all metal surfaces outside the church was completed. This allowed SJ to be in compliance with the fire escape police
- ❖ Railings inside the church were painted by Jeff. Also, the ceiling of the main entrance is being painted by Jeff F.
- ❖ Valves in all the basement meeting rooms were replaced because of leakage
- ❖ New carpeting was installed in the Library and a dehumidifier added to protect the books
- ❖ The AC in the Library was repaired
- ❖ Gender neutral signs were installed for all restrooms
- ❖ HVAC Maintenance Agreement was signed, and the cooling system has been inspected
- ❖ Burned out light bulbs in Sanctuary were replaced by Bill L. and Jeff F.
- ❖ Risers stored next to the Organ were removed and destroyed, thanks to Stan L. and Jeff F. Risers that are currently used were moved from the basement and placed next to the organ
- ❖ New lighting was installed at the top of the stairs in Haehnle
- ❖ The Stanczak painting at the back of the sanctuary was repaired/restored
- ❖ Re-keying of all rooms was accomplished
- ❖ The basement meeting rooms were de-cluttered
- ❖ A smaller dumpster with less frequent pickup was arranged.

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- ❖ Preliminary work has started on appraisal of the building and all artwork inside and out for insurance purposes.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by Nancy Henry

As of June 4, 2020 St. John's had the following -

212 active members

1 Member Emeritus

83 Friends

On June 7, several people who have been waiting through the quarantine period will sign the book, which will increase the number of active members.

Membership consists of welcoming visitors and acquainting them with UUism and St. John's with monthly "Exploring St. John's" sessions and occasional potlucks, in addition to many other related activities.

This year's major event was a Connections Fair held in September 2019. Teams and groups of the church used this opportunity to let people know the roles they play. Members, friends, and visitors learned about volunteer opportunities. This event took major organizational effort and was a huge success.

Another highlight of the year was in November when we recognized and celebrated ten folks who have been St. John's members for over fifty years.