

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



**River Road
Unitarian
Universalist
Congregation**

SENIOR MINISTER'S OPENING REPORT REV. NANCY MCDONALD LADD

To River Road's Members, Friends, and Partners in Ministry—

It's been a vibrant and energizing year here at River Road. As always, the programming that helps us deepen our commitment to Fellowship, Spirit and Service is underway. And the relationships that make all of that programming worthwhile are deepening as well. From the debut of a new clergy team (Welcome Rev. Amanda!) to curriculum that help us dive deep in our spiritual journeys and justice programs that connected generations, we've taken our vision seriously in a great many ways.

There are just a few key projects and shifts that I want to highlight for you this year.

Growing and Deepening as Worship Team

Clif Hardin, Rev. Amanda, Gabrielle Farrell and I make up the core of our staff worship team. Gabrielle's clear guidance in connecting the worship themes to religious education is something that could be easy to take for granted, but the connection between the "work" of the worship service and the work of the classroom is important to lift up. Together, we've teamed up with each other and with lay leaders to bring innovative, heart-centered worship throughout the year.



SENIOR MINISTER'S OPENING REPORT

REV. NANCY MCDONALD LADD

Serving Together

Rev. Kären Rasmussen was with us for our yearlong Serving Together projects, including the hugely successful Rise Against Hunger meal packing event (which will be coming back next year!) and meaningful partnerships with our friends at South Lake Elementary. As we bid her a loving farewell in February, we're continuing to plan how intersectional and multigenerational service projects can enhance our life together as a congregation.



Pastoral Care

This year, I stepped into a primary leadership role on the staff/clergy team in Pastoral Care. We honored the lives of so many of our members and friends, including our beloved Dr. Nancy Grace Roman, seen here admiring a modern space telescope that her groundbreaking work made possible. With the help of Peggy Bourg, we're re-energizing our Ministry of Action, which helps in tangible ways when we need it most. But we need more willing hands and some skilled coordinators to keep the whole thing running smoothly, so that each of us can know that our congregation has our backs in and through whatever comes our way.



SENIOR MINISTER'S OPENING REPORT REV. NANCY MCDONALD LADD

Building Maintenance and Repair

We could not be luckier to have Amanda Kelly as our Facilities Manager and Ana Lim as our Congregational Administrator. Between the two of them, and the Building, Finance and Grounds Committees, along with other lay leadership teams, we've been able to take on both the planned maintenance of our historic space and the unexpected challenges that come along. Mold remediation in Room 32 is almost complete, construction on the kitchen renovation is set to begin shortly after the Annual Meeting, and the long-awaited renovation of the pathway leading to our worship space is on schedule to commence over the summer.



Legacy Sunday: Honoring our 60th Anniversary

As we approach our congregation's official 60th anniversary in October of 2019, we honored the 60th annual Stewardship Campaign with conversation and commemoration alongside our founding members. The leadership, courage and good humor that each of them bring to our congregation is incomparable. What a joy it is to live out our congregation's legacy alongside each of them today.



SENIOR MINISTER'S OPENING REPORT REV. NANCY MCDONALD LADD

Collaborative Ministry

This is the first year of Rev. Amanda and me as a collaborative ministry team! I really can't say enough about my colleague's skill and graciousness in this work. We've not only built trust with each other, but built a team of supportive colleagues and lay leaders who can help sustain our work together well into the future. She and I will both be at the UUA General Assembly this summer helping to model collaborative ministry for large congregations and it's safe to say we're working hard and deeply enjoying each other's company while we're at it.



I am, as always – so grateful to serve alongside all of you,

Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE & COMMUNITY BUILDING

REV. AMANDA WEATHERSPOON

What a full year it's been for both myself and River Road! As this year comes to a close, I find myself naturally reminiscent and a tad sentimental as I recall my dynamic first year at River Road.

Social Justice

- **What feeds your soul?** Prior to my arrival River Road already had an intricate Social Justice organizational structure, therefore much of my work in Social Justice has been to familiarize myself with the structures and systems already in place. From week two on, I began meeting with Social Justice leaders and groups and targeting ways that I can support the work already being done. My joy is in working with individuals or teams to get to the “heart of the matter” in their work. A question I often ask is how a person/entity came to their social justice involvement, more so, what aspect of this work “feeds” them. This is the groundwork for the ministerial support that I provide.
- **Shout out:** I would like to lift the Earth Ministry Team in their efforts to revitalize their ministry. The co-chairs of the Earth Ministry Team were among the first to reach out to me for a one-to-one and the first group which received my other favorite question ‘How is this ministry?’. They took that question and ran with it. Through collaboration, willingness, and open-mindedness, this team brought some renewed energy in their ministry.
- **In the world and of the world:** Another aspect of my social justice portfolio is the overarching ministerial vision. While I support and work closely with social justice teams and groups, there is a separate task at hand - working towards a collective vision of justice. This is done in relationship with area congregations, colleagues, and our larger faith movement of Unitarian Universalism. This is basically a part of every minister's role - to bring our faith into the wider world, and to be agents of change. This aspect of my portfolio is ever unfolding.
- **Moving Forward:** Much of my work has taken place with the Social Justice Ministry Team. We are working on organizing a 2019 SJMT retreat, a 2019 summit for the River Road social justice community, and other ministry-based initiatives (more to come on these ideas as they solidify). SJMT and I have created a fun atmosphere of trust, love, and ministry.

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE & COMMUNITY BUILDING REV. AMANDA WEATHERSPOON

Community Building

- **Coming into focus:** The Community Building aspect of my portfolio is coming more into focus as this year has unfolded. I have learned and am continuing to learn the importance of cohesion in our faith community. There's a need for relational community building within RRUUC, in social justice spaces, and among leadership.
- **Training the Heart to Listen:** River Road has launched the community building program "Training the Heart to Listen". This program is led by Sabrina Sojourner, a consultant and facilitator who has a rich body of work. This is not another racial justice training, or seminar, or workshop. This is an opportunity to share and listen deeply while journeying to the heart of the matter with anti-racism as a context and foundation. The program will extend through the 2019-2020 congregational year.
- **More to come:** I'm excited for what's to come in community building. I have been in conversation with key leaders regarding community building.



Worship

- **The Heart of Ministry:** Worship will always be at the heart of my ministry. It's a time for us to come together, share our joys and sorrows, and witness the fullness of who we are. Our worship team, Rev. Nancy, Clif, and Gabrielle work well together. We plan and coordinate River Road worship services with love and humor mixed with skillfulness and depth. At different times, we each have been in the "stretch zone" allowing ourselves to be with vulnerability and even discomfort, taking risks, doing things a little differently, and experimenting with what works.



Professional Development

- **Better Together:** Rev. Nancy has been incredibly supportive in my professional development at RRUUC. A large portion of my time is spent intentionally building my professional capacity with Rev. Nancy's encouragement and supervision.
- **Inward/Outward:** I serve Unitarian Universalism in a variety of ways - I serve on national committees, participate in identity based UU groups, and am involved in governance on a national level. This allows me to remain present to the ebbs and flows of UUism and ways that River Road can continue to be a presence and a fixture in our movement. Rev. Nancy and I are both heavily involved in our larger denomination and continue to identify ways to bring what we do at River Road to the larger community.
- **Working Differently and Working Harder:** From my hire date on, we knew that we were and are attempting something that, statistically, doesn't yield the best results. Maintaining a multiracial ministry team has been... challenging - to say the least. Unitarian Universalist congregations and churches haven't had the best track record with maintaining these ministries, for a variety of reasons. Our Association also struggles with anti-racism and how to "make it work" in practical and realistic ways. A lot of work is happening in our Association and in our congregations to make multi-racial ministry teams more sustainable and nourishing. River Road is no exception. Rev. Nancy and I have put in immense time, effort, and treasure to invest in this multi-racial team. We do this knowing how we do the work is just as important (if not more) as what the work is. We continue to be committed to doing our part to make Unitarian Universalism anti-racist, inclusive, and equitable for generations to come. We hold this with great seriousness.

In conclusion: There is no social justice or community building that does not first begin within these walls. There is great work happening in our community - real, heart-centered and vulnerable conversations, community giving, spiritual deepening, dynamic worship, social justice, and programs for everyone. I'm glad to be on the journey and look forward to what is to come.

FROM OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRPERSON HOLLY FLUTY DEMPSEY

Dear River Road Members and Friends:

Here at River Road, the song “Blue Boat Home” is cherished. Our voices join to sing with measured reverence and other times with full-throated joy. The lyrics speak of companions, questioning, thanks, and wonder—all of which describe River Road.

This year has been a bit like riding in a boat with fellow travelers. July 1 was the start of the 2018-2019 congregational year with Rev. Nancy on her well-deserved sabbatical. Rev. Kären was at the helm of River Road and maintained a steady hand along with her infectious energy. At the beginning of September, everyone welcomed back Rev. Nancy and provided a warm welcome for Rev. Amanda. Our new, dynamic ministerial team quickly became well established and continues to flourish—keeping our spirits refreshed and invigorated.

At the Board’s Fall Retreat, we discussed what makes River Road important and special in our lives. All of us agreed River Road is a source of personal spiritual growth and a place to live our commitment to important values both within and outside our walls. We form relationships that are meaningful all week long, not just on Sundays. Given how essential the sense of belonging is for everyone, the Board is committed to work with Rev. Nancy, Rev. Amanda, the staff, and lay leaders to offer additional Fellowship events.

This year the Board also engaged in several discussions about service and lay leadership. Recognizing the hours and hours many of us spend at River Road—teaching RE, committee meetings, Bazaar, the flower angels, choir rehearsals, keeping the building humming, Cabaret, the Sunday morning welcoming team, Friday Black Lives Matter vigils, finance deliberations, and the Earth Ministry, to name just a few—the term volunteer isn’t exactly the right description.

FROM OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRPERSON HOLLY FLUTY DEMPSEY

Service is volunteering combined with spiritual depth and love—love for each other, the community, people in the United States and throughout the world, and our Blue Boat Home.

For this year and in the times ahead, a solid financial foundation is essential to keep us afloat. A sustained round of applause for the many hours of service from the Finance Committee, the Financial Stewardship Committee, the Endowment Committee, our Treasurer, and the staff, with Rev. Nancy at the helm. Deep gratitude for each and every one of you who participated in the Annual Stewardship Campaign, our monthly Extend the Offering, all the fundraising events, and the myriad times you provided additional money to River Road. As we wrote in the November letter with the update on the Capital Campaign, the Board is filled with extraordinary appreciation for the pledges that were required for our physical spaces.

As a beloved community, our Blue Boat Home is sailing through turbulent water and areas of calm. As Rev. Nancy wrote in her splendid book *After the Good News*, “We are the meaning makers for each other...” Together at River Road we are experiencing the now while dreaming about the when.

Yours in fellowship, spirit, and service,

Holly Fluty Dempsey

2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Fellowship



Fellowship draws us into deeper relationship to our congregational community, so that we might choose connection over isolation.

Spirit



Spiritual growth draws us into deeper relationship with the sacred, however we might experience it or name it, so that we might be connected to the sources of our strength.

Service



Service draws us into deeper relationship to the world as it is and the world as it could be, so that we might be agents of change and hope.

Governance and Administration

Governance and Administration provides the resources and leadership to help us manage our organization and do our ministry.

COVENANT

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation affirms this Covenant as a declaration of how we desire to be together.

This Covenant serves to guide our interactions, as we engage with the world as it is and work toward shaping the world as it could be. We draw strength from our diversity and seek to form a Beloved Community through bonds of fellowship, spirit, and service. We choose connection over isolation and support each other in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

I intend to cultivate in myself:

Openness to different viewpoints and approaches
Joy and a sense of humor
Strength and the courage to act
Curiosity about the world around me

I promise to be mindful and considerate in my communications and interactions by:

Listening to understand rather than to judge or prove a point
Expressing appreciation of others' efforts
Taking responsibility for my actions
Trusting that others have good intentions

I commit to sustaining this congregation by:

Giving generously of myself and my resources
Supporting and nurturing myself and others
Showing gratitude for the blessings of being in community

Together we pledge to fulfill and renew these promises, beginning again in love when we fall short, in order to nurture our spiritual growth, our congregation, and its larger vision

FELLOWSHIP

Activity Groups



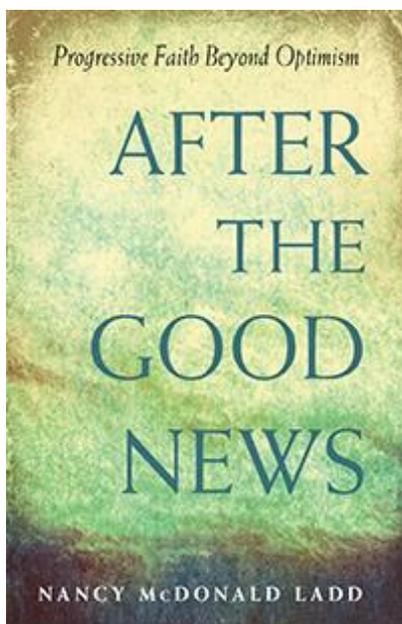
Activity groups are where you can meet others, have fun and connect! Groups are drop in and can be of varying sizes. This year eleven groups met including those below. Read about other groups at our website.

Mindful Knitters

The act of creating a shawl, chemo hat, baby hat, or lap robe transfers love and caring from our hands to a deserving recipient. In addition to a monthly meeting, we instituted Knitting Circles after both services during fellowship hour on the first Sunday of the month. These circles have increased our outreach to members of the congregation who stop by to visit or discuss the projects underway.



Morning Book Group



This year, the Morning Book Group's titles reflected RRUUC's focus on social justice, such as our choice of Matthew Desmond's *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, and our own Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd's book, *After the Good News*. Rev. Ladd attended our discussion of her book and answered questions. We chose new titles, such as Michelle Obama's book *Becoming*. One of the novels we chose is *Lincoln in the Bardo* by George Saunders.

The group gained a few new members who had belonged to the Evening Book group which disbanded during the year. The Book Group welcomes everyone. The group's open sharing of ideas builds a special camaraderie of warmth, humor, and an exposure to books we might not have known about before.

FELLOWSHIP

Bazaar 2018

The 2018 Bazaar in a nutshell:

- 7 days of set-up
- 461 volunteers
- 12 customers in line at 5:30am
- 252 customers through the doors in the first minutes of the day
- \$61,000+ in sales
- Bazaar #44 in the books!

Held on Saturday, November 3, 2018, the 44th annual RRUUC Bazaar was once again a profitable and unifying endeavor for the entire congregation. Following the popular and effective changes implemented in 2017, this year's Bazaar was held the first Saturday of November, had a one-week set-up period, and Wanda the White Elephant served as our purple-bedecked mascot.



As the congregation's largest fundraising event, the Bazaar's major accomplishment each year is the financial profit it contributes to the budget. While this year's Bazaar brought in approximately \$5,400 less than in 2017, a gross total of \$61,831.79 for what is essentially a single day event is remarkable. After expenses of \$20,045 were deducted, the Bazaar chairs were proud to contribute \$41,786.79 to the operating budget.

FELLOWSHIP

Bazaar 2018

A secondary accomplishment but one of equal importance is the spirit of community the Bazaar generates each year. This long-running event is woven into the very fabric of the congregation and brings together far more members in common purpose than any other yearly enterprise. More than 400 volunteers worked and laughed together during set-up week and on Bazaar day.

Beyond our own community, the Bazaar touches the wider world in the following ways:

- Welcoming hundreds of diverse shoppers through the doors
- Offering the refugee families supported by the congregation the opportunity to shop for free
- Supporting local charities: each year the Bazaar receives more donations than can be sold. This year these excess donations were given to A Wider Circle, Lupus Foundation of America, Lutheran Social Services, and Montgomery Animal Shelter



Unique Challenge: Bazaar 2018 faced an unforeseen challenge this year and overcame it by the grace of unflappable volunteers and RRUUC staff members. Due to toxic mold in Room 32, the space typically reserved for the Toys department was closed. To work around this loss, Children's Clothing and Toys combined into one space (Room 31) and Children's Books (usually in Room 31) was taken in by the Books and Music Department on the upper level. Next year's Bazaar will see the return of Room 32, but it may be determined that the Children's Books department should stay on the upper level as it did very well there.

The Future: After two years of service in the roles of Co-chairs of the Bazaar, Karen Chopra and Laura Piervincenzi are handing off leadership to the very capable Lara Akinbami and Susan Messina. Bazaar 2019 will be held on Saturday, November 2.

Retreat: Plans for the Future

Due to low enrollment for the 2018 retreat, neither a 2018 nor a 2019 retreat was planned in order to allow RRUUC to re-think the Camp Tockwogh model. The committee explored new Retreat options based on the input to congregation members and selected the West River Retreat Center for the 2020 retreat. The West River Retreat Center has:



- one-mile of frontage on the West River near where it flows into the Chesapeake Bay
- a compact campus that is accessible for those with special needs
- contemporary dining hall with a lovely view of the West River that serves good food and accommodates special diets
- accessible cabins, single-family rooms with bunks, and AC and heating.

We hope to see many congregants at our next retreat and welcome your input and help in preparing for it.

Serving Together



The goal of Serving Together was to create monthly multigenerational service projects where we could enjoy fellowship together and serve the community at the same time. We worked together in community to take our values out to those around us.

- June & July: Food Drives for South Lake Elementary School, Gaithersburg
- August: Animal Ministry Team, Pawsitively Helping Shelter Pets
- September: Children's Book Collection for our Community Box
- October: Rise Against Hunger
- November: Thanksgiving Dinner for 50 Families
- December: Holiday Gifts for Children of Beacon House & La Clinica Del Pueblo
- February 23, 2019: "Foodraiser"

In February, we also said farewell and thank you to Rev. Kären Rasmussen, our Minister for Serving Together, for her time and social justice work with us.

FELLOWSHIP

Spring Services Auction



This year's auction kick-off in May brought a major change by employing new auction software, Auctria. Auctria assists auction administration by providing an auction website, registration, reports, and materials such as bid sheets and an auction catalog. Congregants offered over 85 items, including dinners, vacation opportunities, and classes, as well as a chance to bid on a sermon topic for Rev. Nancy to preach. Auctria was such a success, next year's bidding will be online.

Welcoming & Membership

- **The Welcome Team** greeted over 89 people who signed the guest book on Sunday mornings.
- **Newcomers Brunches** held on October 14, 2018 and March 10, 2019 welcomed 53 newcomers.
- **23 new Members** were welcomed between May 2018 to May 2019.
- **On April 14, 2019, we held a New Member Recognition Ceremony.** That evening, we hosted a New and Five-Year Anniversary Members' Family Dinner for 24 Members.
- **There are 505 Members** of the congregation. We shared congregational life with 246 friends and 318 people who participated in congregational programs



Adult Religious Education

This year marks our inaugural year of *UU Wellspring: Spiritual Deepening for the UU Soul*. Two groups, for a total of 19 participants, spent the year meeting twice monthly for deep listening and sharing around the UU Sources, committed to daily spiritual practice and monthly spiritual direction. Groups were led by Rev. Nancy, Rev. Amanda, and Beth Irikura. It has been a profound experience that will lead to spiritual deepening of the entire congregation. We are excited to offer the next curriculum, *Deep Questions* for those who participated this year and offer the introductory curriculum, *Sources*, again next year.



We held our sixth *Beloved Conversations* group this year. This curriculum for “exploring the role of race/ethnicity in individual and congregational lives” gives our congregants a firm background for continuing racial justice work.



Reflection: Ailea Sneller

Our family consists of me, and Marshall Dispenza, and our daughters Audrey and Ellis. The first service we came to at RRUUC was the spring music service, and we were blown away by how beautiful it was. It was clear right away that this was a place that nurtures spirituality in many ways, and we've appreciated getting to explore them all in the past year.

Along with the beautiful music every week, the congregation offers us space for reflection and inspiration that are otherwise hard to find in a busy week. We have connected with other families and feel like a part of a community that can help us and our children explore and practice values that are important to us. I love that the congregation really puts words into action through many active partnerships, ministries, and social justice activities. We're constantly invited to be a force for good in the world, surrounded by friends ready to help us contribute. From the inspiring leadership to the welcoming community, the great music and the many opportunities to learn and grow, we are grateful to have found a home at RRUUC.

Religious Education Highlights

Our new Family Ministry initiative included two family brunches, a Family Ministry Blog, and First Sundays for Families, including social justice projects for families. On each First Sunday of the month, children and youth began a social justice project in their classroom, and then parents joined in after worship. Projects included keychains for kids at South Lake Elementary School, soup jars to include in Thanksgiving bags, and parachutes for the planet.



Family ritual candles made on a First Sunday for Families.



Making dog biscuits with the Animal Ministry.



Summer RE Makerspace for elementary students.



Christmas Pageant 2018.

High School Youth Group

Our high school youth group Sunday morning time is youth-directed and adult assisted. Youth choose topics to learn about and discuss from current issues to world religions. They also use this time to bond as a group, do social justice projects, and projects that serve the congregation.



The middle and high school summer program was youths' very own Makerspace.



22 youth and adults served in rural McDowell County, WV, for a week. They completed about seven home improvement projects and got to know the residents and their culture.



The Coming of Age class was 10 strong. They were challenged by trapeze school, mask making, and tackling life's Big Questions.

SPIRIT

High School Youth Group



The High School Youth Group was involved in several social justice projects including their annual Murder Mystery Dinner Theater where they raised money for Kids in Need of Defense, helping children separated from their parents at the border.



Middle and High School classes created Parachutes for the Planet for Earth Month.



Members of the Middle School class chose to focus their studies and efforts on gun violence. The culmination was a video they put together at one of their Late Night sessions. Watch it at <https://youtu.be/SkBmADS4XYA>.

Choirs

We continue to have three strong groups, spanning kindergarten through high school: The Chalice Lighters Choir, The River Road Youth Choir, and the River Road Teen Choir.

Youth Choirs

- From September through May, the youth choirs have performed for over twenty Sunday services.
- Thirty-six children and youth participated in the youth choirs this year.



The River Road Choir

- Highlights of the year included the Winter Music Service, Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*, the fall multigenerational service with guest artist, Glen Thomas Rideout, and our *Spring Music Service, Songs and Prayers of the Earth*.
- Fifty-five people participated in singing with the River Road Choir this year.



Other Music Notes

- The community music making of the Winter Cabaret was held on February 24 in a warm and festive setting.
- Music Outreach continued to reach out to those in assisted living.



Bookstore



The Bookstore was very busy in 2018-19, selling about 200 copies of Rev. Nancy's book, *After the Good News!* During coffee hour, we give a warm welcome and connection – for visitors, new and existing members. Plus, it provides a modest income for the congregation (this year, about \$1500).

This year's favorite books included Linda Ryden's books, *Rosie's Brain*, *Henry is Kind*, and her newest one, *Sergio Sees the Good: The Story of a Not So Bad Day*. Social Justice books included *White Fragility*, a New York Times bestseller, and *Justice on Earth*. Good books for newcomers included the series of *UU Voices – Jewish, Humanist, Buddhist, Christian and Pagan/Earth-Centered*, plus *Seven Principles in Word and Song*.

Contemporary Issues Forum (CC&C)

- Presented 31 programs focused on social justice issues, plus themes on foreign relations, US security issues, art, culture, history, and nature. Eight were led by RRUUC members.
- Our new Medical/Science theme covering policy, personal health, drugs, and research, was well received, plus initiated new two-part programs.
- Our program committee has shrunk, but we're hopeful that our next season will be as replete. New speaker ideas are always welcome.



Reflection: Peggy Bourg

Last fall, Bob and I happily returned to this area after six years away. It was very much a homecoming, and River Road is a big part of what makes it home. We've been members of other UU congregations and we have grown and learned from all of those experiences. But no other has matched the warmth and sense of community that we feel here. It is very natural to want to care for one's home and the people in it, so that is why I am happy to take up the responsibility and joy of helping to coordinate the work of pastoral care's Ministry of Action team. It's a golden opportunity to get to know fellow River Roaders better, and to spread the warmth and caring that has so impressed me here in this vibrant spiritual community.

Fine Arts

The Fine Arts committee had another successful year. We curated six varied art shows by local artists, including both members and non members of RRUUC. In addition, we put on a Members and Friends show in July and August. Almost all our shows had sales, showing again that we are filling a need for the artists as well as providing enjoyment to the congregation. A new glass display case allows us to add some three dimensional artworks, such as glass and pottery. This has been well received.



Reflection: Mariel Penberthy

My children and I began coming to RRUUC at the urging of good friends some time after my husband passed away. In truth, at first I was very content to bring my son to choir practice with the wonderful Mr. Clif and let the rest be. But I found myself wanting to see more—what I found was an unbelievably caring, compelling and diverse community that is the closest thing I’ve ever found to a true spiritual home. We love how the Reverends Nancy and Amanda toggle effortlessly between fun and heartbreaking depths, how people share their stories in the SPARK program, and, of course, the cookies after service!

I’ve gone from sitting quietly in the back of the sanctuary observing, to participating in more ways than I’d ever thought we would—including sometimes inhabiting the delightful position of DoorKeeper (helper) with some of RRUUC’s youngest members in Spirit Play, helping set up the awesome Bazaar, attending the Spiritual Parenting Group, and many other terrific events. In essence, RRUUC has become an integral part of our “new normal,” and we all look forward to continuing to grow here.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Action in Montgomery (AIM)

AIM is a nonpartisan, interfaith, multi-racial community power organization of 25 religious communities and PTAs working for affordable housing, immigration justice and comprehensive after-school programs. RRUUC's AIM Core Team:

- Generated interest to bring more than 50 people from RRUUC to a 1200-person action with county executive candidates during the 2018 election
- Hosted one of three actions with the 50-plus county council candidates at RRUUC
- Supported AIM's Get Out The Vote effort, signing up 10,000 people to vote with AIM's agenda in the primary.
- Helped put AIM's "People's Agenda" front and center in the greatest turnover of county political leadership in a generation and generated significant commitments from them



Social Justice Ministry Team

Established in 2015, the Social Justice Ministry Team's (SJMT) purpose is to work with RRUUC ministers to support and sustain a social justice program that reflects RRUUC's vision and values.

This year, the SJMT welcomed the presence and participation of the newly-installed Minister for Justice & Community Building, the Rev. Amanda Weatherspoon. Highlights as follows:

- In Fall 2018, SJMT gathered our social justice groups to introduce the Minister for Justice & Community Building, update results of the Extend the Offering initiative, and share news;
- In Spring 2019, SJMT sponsored the annual Social Justice Fair as an additional platform for all social justice activities, groups, and partners in order to inform and engage the congregation;
- Within SJMT, we reconnected with the values that underpin the SJMT, for the individuals and team alike;
- Explored the Extend the Offering initiative, with an emphasis on supporting the congregation's continuing desire to forge relationships reflecting evolving issues and energy in social justice; and
- Maintained the social justice bulletin board and calendar.



Immigration and Refugee Justice Committee

RRUUC members supported immigrants and refugees by accomplishing the following:

- Signed letters to Congress in support of immigration legislation and visited Congressional offices to advocate for that legislation
- Provided accompaniment to Cedar Lane UU for the immigrant in sanctuary there and attended public advocacy events for her
- Accompanied/drove other immigrants to check-ins with immigration enforcement
- Provided logistical and financial support to asylum-seeking individuals
- Aided and supported the Immigration Film Fest in October
- Monitored federal and state actions that appeared to harm or harass immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees and shared this information within RRUUC to encourage protests and signing of multi-faith letters to relevant officials
- Monitored UUA and UUSC actions related to immigration and shared this information
- Collected winter coats for refugees sponsored by Lutheran Social Services
- Collected holiday gifts for immigrant families of La Clinica del Pueblo
- Organized Contemporary Issues Forum (CC&C) presentations on timely immigration topics



LATN – Latin American Taskforce Network

This year, LATN:

- Earned enough from selling Fair Trade products to provide a second year of college assistance to a needy student
- Sponsored the RRUUC/LATN Spring FIESTA that benefits scholarships for El Salvador students. The Santa Marta Hometown Association assisted with presenting the Fiesta.
- Gave LATN Humanitarian of the Year Award to Cedar Lane UU Church for their physical sanctuary of Rosa Gutierrez
- Supported COTSA (Comunidades Transnacionales Salvadoreñas Americanas) to hold their annual meeting with 19 Salvadorian Hometown Associations and two fundraising events.
- With help from the Dollison Fund Global Doctors, supported a one-year salary for a nurse in Chiapas, Mexico
- Sponsored three Contemporary Issues Forum (CC&C) programs featuring Latino scholars and activists
- Supported the DMV Detention Visitation program, holding their funds for making visitations
- Sponsored an Extend the Offering for the work of La Clinica del Pueblo.



Cedar Lane UU Church receiving the LATN Humanitarian Award.



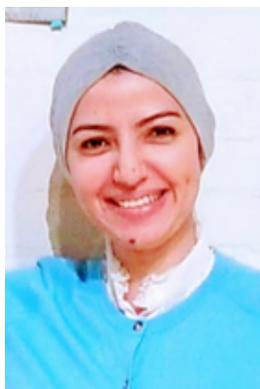
Maria Lila Alvarenga, Beneficiary of the Cabanas University scholarship program; Graduate of University of El Salvador and now member of the Victoria Municipal Council.

Partner Church Committee

The Partner Church Committee's role is to serve as the steward of RRUUC's relationships with its two partner congregations – in Fiatfalva, Transylvania (for 27 years) and Mawblang, N.E. India (for 12 years) – with which our congregation has entered into covenant relationships.

The committee's key accomplishments for this congregational year were:

- Send a delegation of two RRUUC members to celebrate the 450th anniversary of the founding of the Unitarian faith with our partners in Transylvania, to whom they presented a gift of a special handmade chalice crafted by committee member and ceramicist Sara Adams
- Fund an after-school program in Fiatfalva for Roma children who suffer from discrimination and limited opportunities
- Fund teacher salaries at the Unitarian school of our partner in Mawblang, which the local congregation



Reflection: Sara Ahmed

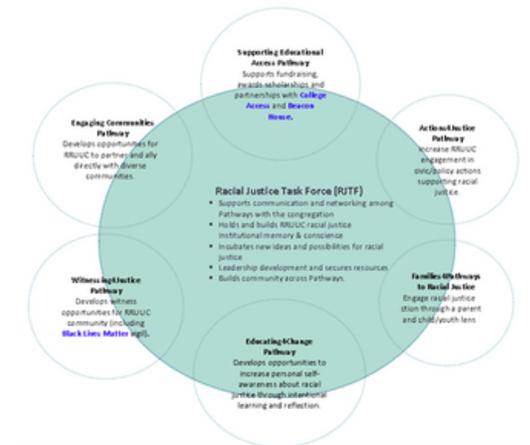
I first heard about RRUUC through a friend, Mimi Mattis. I have been a regular visitor for about a year and a half before I committed to becoming a member. The one thing that drew me in was the warmth of the congregation. I never felt like I was a stranger or a foreigner, there was a genuine warmth, RRUUC is like family. The thing I appreciate the most about the community is their genuine ethical approaches and the friendly attitude. In my experience, RRUUC offers a healthy balance between spiritual enrichment and social issues. To anyone looking to explore, there is a lot to offer, depending on what one's pursuit is, but I would highlight the social justice and humanitarian support. I see myself remaining a part of the RRUUC community for the long term.

Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) Expanded via Pathways

Based on the results of the 2017 congregational survey and follow-up workshops, six Pathways to Racial Justice groups were formed. This resulted in a large increase in racial justice actions, participation and partnering.

Other major actions of the RJTF were to:

- Support the new Pathways and helped them become established
- Began planning for a Summer 2019 Ferguson Commemoration, on the fifth anniversary of Michael Brown's murder



RJTF Framework can be found at rruuc.org/take-action/action-teams

Actions for Justice Pathway

- Worked in weekly phone banking sessions in May-June 2018 in support of the Poor Peoples' Campaign to support 40 days of moral action
- Supported the Poor Peoples' Campaign Global Day of Solidarity and Sending Forth Call to Action mass rally on the National Mall and Annapolis Lawyer's Mall in June
- Developed and conducted Democracy Boot Camp in partnership with DoTheMostGood in Montgomery County and the Poor Peoples' Campaign, with speakers and representatives from UUSJ and the League of Women Voters, drawing 225 attendees in September
- Participated in a voter registration phone bank in partnership with the REEB Project at All Souls in October
- Participated in an anti-gerrymandering rally in partnership with the League of Women Voters in March
- Participated in the Poor Peoples' Campaign Direct Action and Legal Observer Training in May

Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) Expanded via Pathways

Educating4Change Pathway

Conducted monthly reflections on race in America including these events:

- *A Ripple of Hope* – presented documentary on an inspiring RFK speech the night MLK was killed
- Frederick Douglass National Historic Site – visited this site to explore the powerful legacy of this abolitionist leader
- *Hamilton* – moderated discussion of this musical’s treatment of race and misappropriation
- *Deconstructing White Privilege* – presented this video offering insights on white narratives and systemic racism
- *I am Not Your Negro* – presented a documentary on James Baldwin and racial justice
- UU Common Read *Justice on Earth* – offered book discussion with RRUUC Earth Ministry
- Following the National Antiracist Book Festival at American University, gathered to share reactions to authors and writings
- Began planning for viewing a documentary in June-July about the Ferguson uprising to increase awareness and support for August commemoration on fifth anniversary of that tragedy



Reflection: Jenny Sour

We are lucky that we are part of a community that cares so deeply about social justice. We have the chance to learn and grow together and give back to the world around us. I am inspired by the wisdom of Maya Angelou: “Nothing will work unless you do.” We all need to do the work and we need to do it in relationship with each other, calling to mind our second principle— justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. I came to River Road because I was seeking a spiritual community. Along the way I learned that the more I engage in social justice work, the more I grow spiritually.

What does social justice really mean? What is equity? In *Beloved Conversations* I learned to challenge my values and assumptions and to recognize some of the things we need to do in order to achieve a world that is just for all of us. Not for a second do I think I have mastered how to bring about effective social change. But every moment I try, I am glad I am here, at this congregation, striving to make the world a better place. We teach our children that their choices matter. Ours do too.

Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) Expanded via Pathways

Engaging Communities Pathway

- Researched three possible directions for this Pathway: 1. Using RRUUC resources to support art/literacy/social justice work for/by marginalized people; 2. Establish an English as a Second Language (ESL) program at RRUUC; 3. Reach out to Beth Chai & Insight Meditation Community of Washington (IMCW) to open a dialogue on racial and social justice issues.
- Four members attended the first of three Multicultural Dialogues on Racism and Bias, sponsored by Montgomery County's Faith Community Working Group (see <https://bit.ly/2Z1Evmh>).
- Members participated in a social gathering in May with the "violence interrupters" from Baltimore's Safe Streets, partnering with RRUUC Prevent Gun Violence Task Force. More on Safe Streets: https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-prevention-of-youth-violence/field_reports/Safe_Streets.html
- Began developing partnership with FreeMinds Book Club to sponsor workshops next year at RRUUC for children, young adults and adults. More on FreeMinds Book Club: <https://freemindsbookclub.org/>

Families4Pathways

- Sponsored three *Tea and Talk for Transformation: Family Brunches* and engaged 20-30 families focused on what parents are hoping for their children through racial justice work and learning.
- Developed a listserv for parents interested in further engagement
- Identified ways for work on this pathway to develop beginning in the fall



Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) Expanded via Pathways

Supporting Educational Access Pathway

- Hosted Central Michigan University students at RRUUC overnight for the week they volunteered at Beacon House during their March spring break
- Booked Daryl Davis and Seth Kibel to lecture and perform Jazz: History and Influence in American Music for another successful College Access Fundraiser (CAF) in September 2018; they'll return in September 2019 for CAF with a focus on Rock & Roll



- Selected scholarships recipients from applications provided by College Bound in April for awards presented in May

Witnessing4Justice Pathway

- Black Lives Matter vigils have been conducted regularly (weekly September-June and monthly July-August) since September 2015. The vigils are planned to continue on this basis for the foreseeable future.
- Plans are underway for a larger roadside witness and commemorative ceremony on August 9, 2019, the fifth anniversary of Michael Brown's murder in Ferguson, MO.



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD)

- Kept the congregation informed about Maryland UU legislative issues during the 2019 session
- Sponsored an Extend the Offering for UULM-MD to support staff that prepares alerts and information about Maryland state legislation needing UU support

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Building Committee

This year the Building Committee was busy with many projects big and small. The long-planned renovation of the kitchen will be getting underway in June 2019. We hope to start work on the path from the parking area this summer and have it completed by the Bazaar.

In addition to these two large projects, the Building Committee also worked on several urgent repairs. The largest and most complex of these was remediating mold in classroom 32. This required rebuilding the Fellowship Hall fire escape stairs to stop the rain water intrusion that caused the mold. The roof over the bridge connecting the old and new wings was also replaced.

Finally, the building committee contracted for a comprehensive analysis of the buildings systems to allow creation of a long-term maintenance and rehabilitation plan. This plan is expected to be completed in the first part of the next fiscal year.



Endowment

- Received one gift of \$5,000 from a member's estate
- Funded previously Board approved expenditures of \$24,935
- Achieved desired allocation in investment plan. Next focus will be on encouraging additional bequests to the Endowment Fund.
- The market value of Fund at March 31, 2019 was \$887,962.



GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Finance Committee

- In February, RRUUC used \$100,000 in capital campaign contributions to pay off the second mortgage from BB&T Bank. RRUUC's only remaining debt is BB&T's first mortgage which has a principal balance of approximately \$306,700.
- Received a significant gift from an anonymous donor to be used for the building. RRUUC used part of this money to remediate the water damage in Room 32.
- Assisted the Board in revising and modernizing RRUUC's gift policy.
- Developed guidance for cost of living staff salary increases.
- Created a notional calendar to guide the Committee's work in future years.
- A comprehensive review of RRUUC's insurance policies is in progress.

Grounds

After many years of service, Janet Fernandez has stepped down as the Chair of the Grounds Committee. We are so grateful for her leadership, gardening expertise, and artistic sensibilities in maintaining our grounds and plantings.

Over the past year, we put extra effort into removing the non-native invasive plants on our grounds. In addition, we removed a number of dead or dying trees, including two ash trees that were likely victims of the emerald ash borer. It's sad to lose these large trees.

Looking forward, we are working on improving the naturalized areas in the rear of our building near our two springs. RRUUC youth, Thea Mangum, is planting native plants near our spring areas for her Girl Scout Gold Award project that she calls "Native Plants for Restoration, Meditation, and Education". You are encouraged to take a walk behind our building to discover this wonderful space as these native plants begin to bloom through the year.

Personnel Committee

As a representative of the Personnel Committee, Bob Luke met with Peter Engebretsen, Gail Henry, and Marcia Leonard of the Finance Committee to formulate a recommendation for the administration of staff cost of living allowances which the Finance Committee sent to Senior Minister Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd who approved it and sent it to the Board for informational purposes.

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Financial Stewardship Committee

The 2019 Annual Stewardship Campaign raised \$950,000 from 339 donors by mid May.

The FSC's fundamental premise remains that transparency and visibility in fund-raising, linked to specific goals, increases generosity. To this end:

- **The 2019 campaign's goal was to raise \$1 million in pledges** to help RRUUC maintain our beautiful space; provide fair compensation to our tireless staff; fund our cherished programs; and pay our dues to the UUA. The \$1 million goal was ambitious but in line with the amount eventually raised in 2018.
- **The campaign was linked to RRUUC's 60th anniversary**, with the theme of legacy and bridging the generations.
- **Legacy Sunday** in early March replaced "Story SPARC" of previous years. Rev. Nancy led an engaging conversation with founding members of RRUUC — Joan Breitman, Nancy Ceder, Carol Cramer, Brad Patterson, and Anne Starbird.



Growing Together
Giving Together



GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Financial Stewardship Committee

- **Enhancements in transparency** continued, including a graphic display of RRUUC's operating expenses and the importance of pledges in the congregation's total receipts. Donors were recognized by name (except those that asked to remain anonymous) and by giving category (visionary, sustainer, and supporter). In addition, the "Give" pages on the website were substantially improved.
- **Testimonials** helped personalize the campaign. Our thanks to the Flowers/Hsu family (three generations!); Tally Lach and her daughter Iris (focusing on acceptance); Jana Kirkman and her son, Owen Kirk-Whitman (both members of the choir); John Collinge (providing the perspective of a "friend" of the congregation); and Matthew Proestel, Ana Roig, and Naren Roy (providing the viewpoint of the next generation at the Youth Service).
- **Sinaly, Ronnen, and Naren Roy** were fabulous as campaign co-chairs. Not only did the family provide a perfect example of "bridging the generations," but they also handled all aspects of the campaign with charm and poise, enhancing its prominence and reach.

Although pledges received through mid May 2019 have not yet met the campaign's goal, it is expected that additional pledges will come in over the course of the year as in the past. Encouragingly, there has been a sizable step up in generosity with the average pledge rising to \$2,800, up almost 6 percent from a year ago. The median pledge, however, remains unchanged at \$2,000.

The generosity of the congregation will allow a budget that is well aligned with RRUUC's values and mission of Fellowship, Spirit and Service.



TREASURER'S REPORT: OPERATING REVENUE AND EXPENSES SUMMARY CONSOLOATED BALANCE SHEET MARCH 31, 2019

<u>Assets</u>		
CURRENT ASSETS		
<u>Checking & Money Market Accounts</u>		
Total Checking & MM Accounts		\$492,520
<u>CD's & Other Investments</u>		
Total CD's & Other Investments		\$514,418
<u>Endowment Investment Accounts</u>		
Endowment		\$912,167
Johnson Fund - Minority Scholarship Endowment		\$125,798
Total Endowment Investment Accounts		\$1,037,966
Total Current Assets		\$2,044,904
OTHER ASSETS		
Original Property & Equipment		\$159,477
Property & Equipment beginning 2008		\$2,909,676
Capital Improvement Project 2015		\$2,408,827
Total Other Assets		\$5,477,980
Total Assets		\$7,522,884

TREASURER'S REPORT: OPERATING REVENUE AND EXPENSES SUMMARY CONSOLOATED BALANCE SHEET MARCH 31, 2019

<u>Liabilities & Net Assets</u>	
LIABILITIES	
LIABILITIES & WITHHOLDINGS	
Total Current Liabilities & Withholdings	(\$300)
Loans Payable - BB&T Mortgage	\$309,246
Total Liabilities & Withholdings	\$308,945
NET ASSETS	
<u>Board Designated Funds</u>	
Capital Improvement Fund	\$78,978
Capital Reserve	\$101,561
Operating Reserve	\$225,000
Total Board Designated Funds	\$405,539
<u>Designated Net Assets (Property & Equipment equity)</u>	
Total Building Designated Net Assets	\$4,588,348
Undesignated Net Assets	\$663,619
Total Unrestricted Net Assets	\$5,657,506
<u>Permanently Restricted Funds</u>	
Endowment Fund	\$471,429
Johnson Fund - Minority Scholarship Endowment	\$115,049
Total Endowments	\$586,478
<u>Temporarily Restricted Funds</u>	
Memorial Garden, Mins Discretionary & Other Restricted	\$31,940
Endowment Fund Accumulated Earnings	\$366,180
Building Project 2015	\$378,807
Total Temporarily Restricted Funds	\$776,926
Other Restricted & Designated Funds	\$186,758
Total Restricted Funds	\$1,550,163
YTD Net Surplus/(Deficit)*	\$6,270
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$7,522,884

TREASURER'S REPORT: BUILDING PROJECT 2015 AS OF MARCH 31, 2019

	<u>Current Pledges</u>	<u>Total Received to</u>
<u>Project Income</u>		
Capital Campaign Pledges	\$ 3,131,068	\$ 2,997,117
Gifts		\$ 6,957
Interest Income		\$ 4,299
Memorial & Miscellaneous Gifts		\$ -
Line of Credit draw		
Total Income	\$ 3,131,068	\$ 3,008,373
	<u>Updated Project Budget</u>	<u>Actuals to 3/31/19</u>
<u>Project Costs</u>		
Fundraising Costs*		
Phase One - Group A		
Loan Interest & Fees	\$ 6,271	\$ 9,636
Construction Manager	\$ 213,757	\$ 220,382
Windows	\$ 672,979	\$ 685,131
Asbestos	\$ 186,274	\$ 186,274
Sprinkler	\$ 156,033	\$ 156,033
HVAC - Mechanical	\$ 625,000	\$ 669,920
Building Envelope/Attic Storage	\$ 101,094	\$ 101,679
Fellowship Building Upgrades	\$ 32,739	\$ 13,062
Updates & Finishing	\$ 125,000	\$ 195,613
Permits & General Project Costs	\$ 13,000	\$ 11,141
Contingency	\$ 119,500	
Phase One - Group B		
<u>Property Safety Improvements</u>		
Path Lighting	\$ 50,000	\$ 31,504
Security	\$ 5,500	\$ 6,602
Kitchen Upgrade	\$ 150,000	\$ 4,900
<u>Communications</u>		
Website	\$ 40,000	\$ 28,557
Staff website development		\$ 4,366
Phase Two		
<u>Interior Updates</u>		
Office Area, Class rooms	\$ 40,000	\$ 36,873
Phase Three		
Mortgage paydown (incl prepayment penalty & closing costs)	\$ 300,000	\$ 305,886
Line of Credit payoff 2/7/19		\$ 100,000
Total Expenses	\$ 2,837,147	\$ 2,767,559
Remaining Funds		\$ 240,814

TREASURER'S REPORT: ACCOUNT BALANCES

RRUUC	
Account balances	
3/31/2019	
Fund	TOTAL
Operating	\$ 412,260
Capital reserve	\$ 103,997
General reserve	\$ 250,000
Capital Campaign	\$ 240,681
Johnson Fund	\$ 125,798
Endowment	\$ 912,167
TOTAL at 3/31/19	\$ 2,044,904

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Sound and Technology

The Sound and Tech Committee continued to provide audio and visual support for Sunday services, memorial services, special events, and rental events. Support for Religious Education technology was also included in the committee's work. The Sound and Tech Committee has twelve volunteers who operate in three major areas:

- 1. Sound Team:** operates the sound mixer, video web camera, and projector during the Sunday morning services and for other select worship events, working closely with Clif Hardin.
- 2. Religious Education Team:** works closely with Gabrielle Farrell, Religious Educator. They have been instrumental in keeping the new equipment up to date and functioning. They also assist with a-v needs for Sunday services.
- 3. Computer and Technology Team:** provides high-level computer and technology support for the office.

The major technical effort of the last year, in addition to regular Sunday support, was the purchase and installation of a new wireless microphone system. Aside from the age and inefficiency of the previous system, it operated in a frequency range that the FCC auctioned off to re-purpose, so the replacement was necessary and required by law. The new system is a high-quality digital one that uses rechargeable batteries, saving money and helping with our "green" commitment. The timely purchase of this system allowed for \$4,800 in rebates from the manufacturer. Research continues for a multi-camera system in the Sanctuary to be used for online streaming.

