

*River Road
Unitarian Universalist
Congregation
2020-2021
Annual Report*



Community, Spirit, Service

SENIOR MINISTER'S OPENING REPORT REV. NANCY MCDONALD LADD

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



This has been a year of constant learning and adaptation. A humbling year – when what we thought we knew gave way to what we could only learn as we went along.

It's been an exhausting year at times – with crises that demanded immediate response and decision fatigue that sometimes set in just as we made our way through each new challenge.

It's also been a year of remarkable leadership on the part of so many. In a way, the boundaries of ministry itself have shifted this year. Nothing we've accomplished could be held by the staff and ministers alone. Nor could it be achieved by lay leadership without the support of your dedicated professional team. It truly took all of us.

In the words of my colleague Rev. Teresa Ines Soto, “all of us need all of us to make it.” We have needed all of us in the last twelve months – to a degree I will always look back on with gratitude.

Worship and Celebration

I cannot say enough about what this team has accomplished in the last twelve months. When we last came together at the Annual Meeting in June of 2020, we were operating with a pre-recorded, pre-edited worship experience brought to you through Zoom each Sunday. It was a beautiful and workable solution, but lacked the sense of immediacy and interaction that so many craved in our Sunday morning experience.

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So - this team stepped up – led by Marcia and Dave Leonard, supported by Jeff Hollingsworth and joined mid-year by our amazing professional sound technician Danny Turner – this team turned our sanctuary, fireside room and fellowship hall into a fully functioning studio for the live television. What we achieved is nothing less than that - a huge undertaking requiring a fundamental shift in our entire schedule, procedure and creative process for worship design.

The remarkable thing about our live system is the fact that it sets us up perfectly for the re-entry into the building we anticipate in September. Since our systems are fully functional for live streaming already, we are well positioned to continue high-quality online content into the future. I can think of no other congregation more ideally poised to jump right into multi-platform worship online and in person than this ours. This is entirely due to the dedication of these leaders.

I also want to give a shout-out to the remarkable adaptability of our worship staff – from Rev. Amanda, who never stopped believing that we could do this hard thing, to Jessie Delaplaine, who just kept asking what we needed to do next; Laura Piervencenzi, who joined the team midstream and made it seem like she was always there to Clif Hardin, demonstrating more creativity and sheer can-do spirit than you can imagine. These were, and are, the right people at the right time.

Building

This year, your Board came together with leaders from our finance team and the Building Committee to address long-term plans for capital improvements. This is work that has been long-needed and long-planned, initiated by last year's Board President Ken Button.

The team's first objective was to ensure the stability of our roof on the original building, necessitating a quick and significant investment in both new roofing and a new gutter system. Working with leadership from the Financial Stewardship Team and the Board, I was glad to help organize a roof-and-gutters campaign during the fall that resulted in astonishing congregational generosity. Due to that campaign, our new roof is fully funded and will be installed after the bidding process is completed in the coming months.

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History and Land Acknowledgement

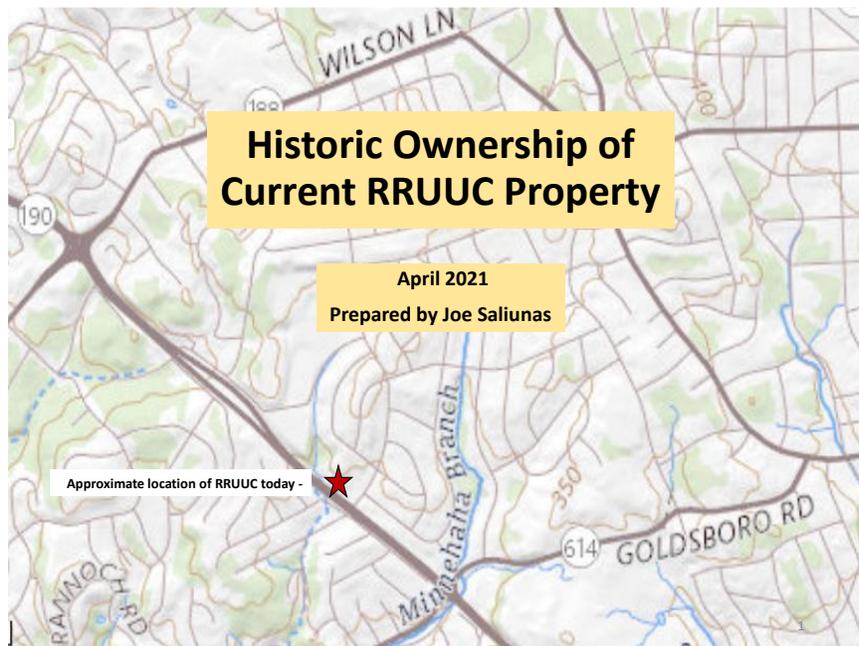
Many of you have expressed deep gratitude for Joe Saliunas and his remarkable stewardship of our grounds during this pandemic time. The grounds themselves have become a sanctuary for many of us – a place to find comfort and peace in the midst of so much.

Joe loves this land – enough to take seriously the deeper history and questions that arise from it. Led by this devotion, Joe worked with Joan Zenzen, a River Roader and professional historian, to dive more deeply into the history of River Road’s property, especially as it applies to the Maryland Colony’s slaveholding past.

What he found is both remarkable and deeply saddening. The opportunity to respond to it with commitment will be a defining moment in our congregation’s contemporary history. We will be presenting the findings in more detail on June 13th - beginning what we imagine will be a longer exploration of commemoration, truth-telling and a financial and spiritual commitment to addressing the troubling legacy of this space we love. A few key findings are included here – knowing we are only at the beginning of a much longer journey.

After the civil war, some of those who had been enslaved on nearby properties and other free black people from the region settled about a mile from the DC border along what was then called “the River Road.” This settlement, or the remains thereof, was located near the Whole Foods supermarket just up the road from our building.

There is solid evidence that RRUUC is on the former property of Allison Nailor, who was a slave holder. The 1860 Census shows Mr. Nailor holding 12 people in slavery.



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A history commissioned by DC's black Freemasons names Mr. Nailor not just as a slaveholder, but one among DC's more notorious slave traders. Evidence from a recently published book states that, "for decades, he had bought and sold land, kept his livery stable and farmed. But the façade of prosperity cloaked seedy business practices and a scandalous personal life."

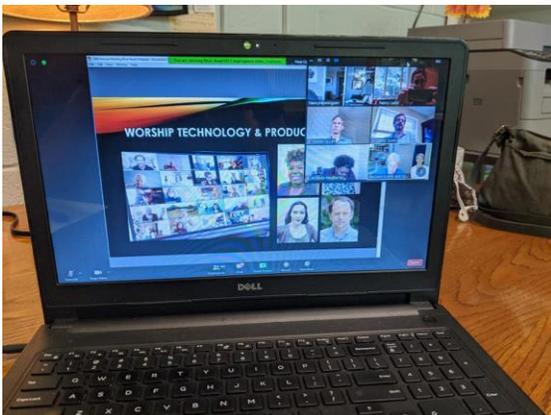
Hannah Stewart, a freedwoman held illegally by Mr. Nailor petitioned the DC Circuit court for her freedom. Ms. Stewart was refused permission by Mr. Nailor to attend the hearing of her case or to testify before the court. The trial ended in a hung jury and Ms. Stewart was not granted her freedom.

Although all enslaved people in the District of Columbia were to be freed by April of 1862, documents show that Mr. Nailor continued to hold Mr. Lewis Ferguson illegally, working for his business interests in the District. After affecting his escape, Mr. Ferguson enlisted in the US Colored Infantry, serving as a cook in the 1st Regiment until returning to the region as a free man in 1865.

It must be said that when RRUUC bought the property in 1961, it was only 10 years removed from the ownership of Mr. Nailor's direct descendants. This is legacy. It's history that is ours to contend with, to respond to, and to speak aloud. It's alive for us today.

In this way, it is our great honor to carry forward the stories and the commitments of those who moved in this space before us. While the work may be hard, it is worthwhile – and I believe this moment in history will change us just as we are implicated and called-forth by the history that happened here before.

Administration, Finance, and Stewardship



Truth be told, I have spent a significant amount of my time this year attending to the institutional and fiscal health of our congregation here. In order to hold up the commitments we make in spirituality, social justice and community life, the nuts and bolts of the whole thing have to fit together. Much of my role as Senior Minister involves support and partnership with our finance leadership.

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At the end of the day – I cannot say enough about how remarkable our Finance Committee, Budget Team and Financial Stewardship Committee have been this year. Along with the remarkable generosity of the congregation, they have truly made a way out of no way during this congregational year.

When Covid came, we lost our entire rental income for the building, which is unusually large for a congregation our size. When that happened, we needed to move quickly to secure federal support funding, operate a successful stewardship campaign, and to design a budget that took the fiscal realities seriously while investing in the staffing needs that can carry us out of this pandemic period.

We have done all of that – with some bumps along the way – because our leaders have been tireless in their efforts. I am so grateful.

Collaboration and Potomac Partnership

As always, my work at River Road is really about relationship and collaboration across every level of congregational life – with lay leadership, denominational structures, and most of all – with staff and colleagues.



Everything we do in congregational life is done as a part of a team. The team at the center of my ministry continues to be the staff and clergy partnership we've built here.

Growing from that, I'm delighted to announce that I've signed a contract to begin editing a new book "Building A New Way: From Tokenism to Diverse Religious Leadership," alongside my colleague Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti. We're bringing together colleagues across the country to reflect on how to lead and learn as diverse teams and I'll be working on that book throughout the 2021-22 congregational year.

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Part of the inspiration for that work is the remarkable collaboration we now know as the Potomac Partnership – which has brought together Fairfax UU, Cedar Lane, and River Road. From committee training to Board leadership, Covid-planning and staff structure, we've made a decision to collaborate instead of following a worn-out old script about competing. I anticipate that this collaboration will deepen in the years to come and we'll remember that it began right here, in 2020-21, when we needed each other most.



Finally, I want to lift up our planning for next fall and beyond. As most of you know by now, we anticipate being back in the building starting on September 12th, 2021. We'll continue upgrading our tech infrastructure throughout the summer, installing new air purification and cleaning equipment, and setting the stage for early-fall outdoor Religious Education while we wait for the next steps in vaccine availability. Mark your calendars for both the River Road Retreat on July 24th and 25th and our welcome-back open house event on August 29th.

We make this way forward together.

Gratefully,

Nancy

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ASSOCIATE MINISTER'S REPORT REV. AMANDA WEATHERSPOON

The pandemic has been harrowing for us all, and yet still we have found spaces for joy, resilience, creativity, and community. It has been dynamic, indeed.

Social Justice

At the end of 2020, in the midst of the beginning phase of the pandemic, our SJ Leaders jumped right into the fray, pivoting to address the changing and growing needs of our partner communities. Additionally, each group faced the task of navigating how to connect with one another, how to continue their work in the congregation, and how to support affiliated communities. During this virtual year, many groups continued to meet online on a monthly basis. Some groups continued to provide opportunities for the congregation to connect with their work. For example, the Educating for Change racial justice pathway provided such opportunities throughout the year, including their ongoing book discussions, as well as times to connect around our Racial Justice Resolution. Most groups continued activities with their partner communities whether this was “on-sight” or virtually. Once conditions were safe to do so, our Food Justice based groups continued providing and packing meals for the community (To Be Well Fed and the projects at Clifton and Langley Park), serving meals monthly (Shepard’s Table).

Other activities from our Social Justice groups include:

- Multiple letter writing campaigns
- GOTV efforts
- Community advocacy
- Fundraising efforts, including Partner Church and College Access Fundraiser
- Several collections drives for supplies and food
- Community gardening projects
- Political action

Now we face the task of coming back together for more in-person events and meetings. Each group is working on what that will look like in this coming year.

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There has been increased social justice collaboration with the Potomac Partnership congregations including food drives and relational work. For our “Better Angels Collection Drive” in December we raised funds, supplies, and food for multiple community partners and were able to utilize the Potomac Partnership in the process.

Social Justice Ministry Team

The Social Justice Ministry Team has been essential over the years since its inception. This group helped bridge the gap and bring a new era of social justice ministry to River Road. After much discernment and collaboration, the SJMT will be sunsetting. River Road has an expansive and active social justice ministry that has evolved beyond the need for a coordinating type of team. However, collaboration, partnership, and community are more important than ever! This year we began holding Social Justice Leadership Circles. These are times for the leaders of the various social justice groups to gather, support, and build relationship with one another. Although this is not an oversight committee or council, we work together as a team to tackle issues that affect each of our groups and the congregation as a whole. The hope is for this gathering to take place quarterly.

River Road’s Racial Justice Resolution

In June of 2020 our congregation unanimously passed the Racial Justice Resolution and faced anti-racism, multiculturalism, and the Beloved Community as a unified whole. The task this year has been to operationalize our resolution. Although this work exists throughout our congregation in a myriad of ways, the following two areas are of particular note:

1. The 8th Principle Project
2. Widening the Circle of Concern

The 8th Principle Project has come to life at River Road this year. We hold monthly meetings with the Potomac Partnership which allows us to work together to tackle concerns, issues, and roadblock. Additionally there have been several Town Halls and listening circles coordinated by both the BoT and our Racial Justice pathway - Educating for Change. Early in 2021, Paula Cole Jones lead the annual Board Retreat which was focused on the 8th principle, which engaged many of our SJ leaders as well as the Board.

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Widening the Circle of Concern is an action oriented study guide which focuses on institutional racism at various levels. Our group is coordinated by Beth Irikura and meets monthly. This is a rather extensive study and the group will continue for at least a year. The actions pinpoint ways to disrupt the systems of oppression present in our day-to-day operations as a community.

Adult Small Groups

Small groups have been active at River Road for many years, many groups having met for 20+ years. After the departure of our former Lifespan Religious Educator, we had the opportunity to revitalize the adult small groups offerings. Although previously established groups have continued to meet, new groups have formed throughout the year. These groups primarily use the Soul Matters curriculum and are self led. In the upcoming year, I will be tweaking the process I used this year for clarity and easier access.

Worship

The way we do worship has shifted and evolved in the most beautiful way during this virtual time. Although our process for planning worship has changed very little, our process of doing worship has been dynamic, creative, and ever-changing. As we move into a period of reopening we find ourselves pivoting once more.

Moving Forward

It is likely that this year will stand out forever more as a time when we rose to the occasion, managing to stay connected and thriving through it all. My deepest hope is that we allow this time to deeply stir our hearts - that we remember at the center of it all is connection and faith. Through all the frustrations and changes we have learned so much! I feel we are equipped to integrate this learning into how we do community moving forward - that we allow for technology to support us, that we increase our inclusivity, that we honor the ways that faith and worship are shifting, and that we stay in the game.

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FROM OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dear River Road Members and Friends:

A year ago, your Board of Trustees expressed confidence that our faith community was well equipped to weather the on-going COVID-19 storm with all of its challenges and uncertainty. At that time, we did not expect the Pandemic would extend through the entirety of this 2020-2021 fiscal year, but this congregation was already taking early and decisive steps to address our most compelling and pressing priorities:

- (1) closing our buildings to in-person services and meetings, and committing to virtual services, and realigning staff roles;
- (2) passing a resolution supporting Black Lives Matter immediately following the murder of George Floyd;
- (3) setting up our COVID-19 Advisory Committee; and,
- (4) setting up the Capital Budget Planning Working Group to comprehensively address our roof and ongoing maintenance questions.

In this time of extended crisis, the entire River Road community has delved deeply, both spiritually and financially. In a time of distancing and virtual connections, our community has demonstrated our commitments to each other, to our shared spaces, and to the key challenges of our time.

Black Lives Matter

Following the May 25th murder of George Floyd, and the dramatic video of his death, a significant majority of Americans awoke to the normalized racist violence in our communities of color. Outrage surged and with it surged RRUUC's participation in protests at the White House, on our weekly BLM Whittier Ave street corner vigils, and across the region. At the same time, our country's political leadership encouraged White Supremacist violence, and federal law enforcement violently engaged what were largely peaceful protests.

Later, as the national election approached, we mobilized around get-out-the-vote efforts, including a grant to the GOVOTE Team – RRUUC was busy, writing postcards and making phone calls. After election day, when the White House threatened to overturn the results of the election, Rev. Amanda Weatherspoon and your Board organized a Rapid Response effort. Then, on January 6th, a mob of white supremacists violently attacked the U.S. Capitol.

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In the wake of these events, Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd and Rev. Weatherspoon together with your Board convened a 50-person leadership retreat to learn more about the UU 8th Principle, so that we all might be better equipped and more effective in combatting white supremacy and support multiculturalism. This discussion has led to listening sessions, town halls, and now our congregational vote to adopt the 8th Principle.

Roof Replacement and Solar

The chronic problem of roof leaks led the Board to establish a Capital Budget Planning Working Group composed of members from the Finance, Building, Earth Ministry, and Financial Stewardship Committees and chaired by a member of the Board. This kind of “Whole-of-Congregation” effort to determine the scope of the roof issue and chart a path forward was the first of its kind in recent memory, and reflected the importance of the challenge.

This fall, based on the recommendation of the Working Group, Rev. Ladd and the Financial Stewardship Committee led a limited and targeted capital giving campaign over several weeks. The result was over \$400,000 in capital improvement pledges, a testament to our enormous generosity and to the importance of RRUUC building as a place to gather for our congregation.

The Working Group also explored the viability of adding solar panels to our building. Over 100 religious organizations have already installed solar panels in the DC region, and this is an opportunity for River Road to do the same, through an agreement that requires no additional funding from our congregation. This is a way for RRUUC to live our values by adding to the pool of renewable energy in our county.

COVID-19

COVID has led us to relearn what it means to be part of the RRUUC community. From the beginning of the Pandemic, Rev. Ladd emphasized the importance of COVID safety measures. The COVID-19 Advisory Committee tapped into the experience of health professionals from the RRUUC congregation, to provide Rev. Ladd with up-to-date and informed recommendations. As one of the only congregations with an internal advisory group, RRUUC has been consulted by other UU congregations, and has provided a model for congregations around the United States. The Advisory Committee has been a stabilizing voice for all RRUUC members, bringing real expertise to address concerns of the congregation in this uncertain time.

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Then, as RRUUC members and friends became frustrated with the pace of the vaccine rollout, Rev. Ladd and the Pastoral Care Committee recruited our own RRUUC Vaccine Hunter. Many of us in the congregation were helped when we needed assistance in scheduling vaccination appointments. This effort has directly benefited our congregation and has been especially needed and appreciated.

Innovations

Reverends Ladd and Weatherspoon were one of the first UU ministerial teams in the region to move to virtual Sunday services. The evolution of our online services, from the short pre-recordings to our current model of live on-site services has been profound. River Road moved forward quickly to purchase the new equipment we needed and to upgrade our Zoom contract, so that not only our Sunday services were more professional, but also to support Clif Hardin and the Choir's music, and the ongoing work of our many committees. All of these changes were supported every step of the way by a dedicated group of RRUUC members and staff. More recent budget commitments to technology promise to permanently transform the way our members and friends can participate in services. When we restart in-person services, we will continue to include a virtual option as well, forever increasing access and meaningful participation in our congregational life.

The Pandemic also accelerated River Road's engagement and partnership with sibling congregations in our region. The Potomac Partnership has enriched our lives over the past year, through shared services, shared music, a combined Board and Ministerial retreat, and through the shared stories project, which included interviews and visioning across three congregations. The congregations have considered ways to share key staff roles, and the Board Chairs and Treasurers have met to share information and consider areas of mutual interest and efficiencies. The desire to connect, especially during the Pandemic, has energized the Potomac Partnership.

When we had to cancel this year's Bazaar, due to the Pandemic, River Road redirected much of that same energy into supporting a series of food, clothing, book and toy drives. While we have all suffered due to COVID-19, many in our larger community have lost their jobs, experienced hunger, and faced possible eviction. This spring, we repurposed our Bazaar expertise, and instead of a fund raiser for River Road, we donated resources so that people in need might be able to help make ends meet.

RRUUC Staffing

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Our staff have been phenomenal during the Pandemic. When Rev. Ladd made the early commitment to virtual services, she knew she would need to reimagine staff roles as well, in order to support the new virtual working environment and technical requirements. Staff have stepped up to get work done in new ways. At the same time, RRUUC lay-leaders have stepped forward to handle outreach and membership, to fill in on communications, and to handle key technical roles for Sunday services.

This year has seen unusual staff turnover and transition. The congregation marked the retirements of three long-term staff stalwarts: (1) our Director of Religious Education; (2) our Bookkeeper; and (3) our Communications Director, as well as two other shorter tenured staff. The pressures of COVID have played a part in the retirements and departures, but while we have been sad to see staff leave, this is normal and largely expected. Rev. Ladd has acted quickly and strategically to hire our new Bookkeeper. We are blessed to now have Beth Irikura as our new Director of Religious Education, and recently Laura Piervincenzi joined the staff team as our Family Ministry Coordinator.

Finances

We entered this year with a solid financial base, but with uncertainties due to COVID-19. RRUUC typically has relied on rental income for approximately \$165,000 of our annual operating budget. Because of COVID, by October rental income had dried up, and our annual November Bazaar was cancelled, removing another \$60,000 in revenue. Thankfully, Rev. Ladd and the Finance Committee secured \$155,000 in PPP funding from the federal government in the spring of last year, which together with our annual capital campaign pledges, provided a measure of financial stability through much of the year.

Recognizing that rental income is unlikely to rebound in the coming fiscal year, the Finance Committee worked closely with Rev. Ladd to submit a successful application for an additional \$155,000 in PPP funding this spring. This spring, River Road members have also generously gifted the RRUUC endowment. With our finances in solid shape, it is time to consider how this congregation will support our principles, and our commitment to racial justice. We are blessed with much. Our responsibility is great.

What's Next

As of June 1st, the Stewardship Campaign has resulted in a pledge total of \$936,714 from 305 households. Your generosity and commitment to our shared community is as strong as ever. Together, we are meeting this COVID-19 challenge.



Community, Spirit, Service

Next month's retreat will be our first large in-person RRUUC event. At the end of June, a large group of us will be going to a Nationals baseball game together. We are moving towards more in-person activities. We don't know what will happen with coronavirus variants, but can count on our COVID-19 Advisory Committee to follow the science, stay vigilant, and keep us informed.

With kids spending most of their day in Zoom learning for school, participation in RRUUC's RE programs has declined. We look forward to greater family engagement as Montgomery County and the State of Maryland continue to open, and are planning for a resurgence of RE activities this fall.

This July we expect the Request for Proposals for the roof replacement, and hope to have the roof work completed by the end of summer. In turn, a solar installation would be able to take place soon after the roof replacement.

Our ability to set up new rental agreements will be a key indicator of the region's recovering from COVID-19, and RRUUC's longer term financial health. With our recently renovated kitchen, and a new roof, RRUUC will be ready to consider new long-term and short-term rental agreements.

The Board supports Rev. Ladd's decision to hire a new communications professional. Given the dramatically improved equipment for virtual services and remote meetings, a new communications leader will have many more tools and avenues for reaching out and making connections, both within our congregation and with the larger Beloved Community.

RRUUC's commitment to opposing racism will challenge each of us to consider how we will be active and impactful members of the wider Beloved Community. We have a superb ministerial leadership team, dedicated lay leaders, and the resources to be stay true to our UU values and to help us find deeper meaning in our RRUUC mission of Community, Spirit, and Service.

Martin Dieu

Chair RRUUC Board of Trustees



Community

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

Activity Groups

Morning Book Group

All are welcome to participate in our book discussions on the third Friday morning of the month, September through May. The group, together, selects fiction and non-fiction titles to discuss, building a special camaraderie of shared ideas, humor, and warmth. Chosen books may reflect RRUUC's focus on social justice and racial issues, but that focus is not our main goal.

Pre-Covid, we met at the church Fiatfalva room at 9:45. During Covid, we have been meeting via Zoom on Fridays at 10 am. We hope to return to meeting at the church at 9:45. Discussions usually last about an hour and a half. Check the church bulletins for details or contact the office for more information.

Widows or Widowers (WoW)

Since Covid, we meet via zoom and we increased our meetings to twice a week. Our meetings, besides being social, allow us an opportunity to discuss problems we are facing or things that concern us. We encouraged each other about how to deal with Covid, isolation, where to get the vaccination shot, etc. During good weather some of us occasionally ate lunch at a restaurant. This spring, we got brave (after vaccinations) and resumed having a few waffle brunches at the home of a member on the patio. A new member got us to walking and a few of us began weekly walks in local parks. We encouraged each other to participate in activities at RRUUC. All these activities allow members to engage in life. We added several new members. The listserv is used to share public service information like voting information, current scams, covid safety info, vaccinations, besides announcements of RRUUC & WoW activities. We look forward to meeting more in person.

Community

Bazaar 2020

Despite our initial hopes in the spring of 2020 that the pandemic restrictions would have been lifted by the fall, we soon realized that was not to be. By the early summer, we cancelled the fall 2020 Bazaar and put a tentative date on the calendar for May 8, 2021. Unfortunately, it became clear by very early winter that even with vaccine rollout beginning in January, there was still no way to safely hold the event. We made the decision to cancel the Bazaar entirely for fiscal 2020. It will next be held on November 6, 2021, a full two years after the last Bazaar in 2019.



However, Rev. Ladd had the wonderful suggestion to harness some of the positive energy of the Bazaar and turn it outward toward communities in need. On May 8, 2021, RRUUC hosted the *Spread the Love* event which was held outdoors and provided an opportunity for safe fellowship and dropping off much-needed donations to our community partners. We give thanks to all who donated items or cash for our partners Beacon House, McElderry Park and Clifton Park Baptist (part of our Pathways to Racial Justice), To Be Well Fed, and our animal ministry groups (Montgomery County Cat Coalition/McPAW, Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary, Second Chance Wildlife Center, and Worthy Dog Rescue). Despite the on-and-off drizzle, a group of stalwart volunteers came to collect



donations (and staff the Welcome Table) and many River Roaders swung by to drop off their items. We collected more than \$2,000 worth of gift cards to Giant and Safeway, two carloads full of clothing, and 380 face masks, and several carloads of needed items for animal friends!

Community

Retreat

The work of the **Retreat Committee** this year has been an exercise in flexibility, creativity, and keeping a positive attitude. A year into the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee cancelled the April 2021 All-Congregation Retreat at West River Conference Center. We then planned to hold a more local retreat day at Carderock Recreation Area in June, only to have our reservation cancelled by the National Park Service in mid-May



We're now planning a two-day Retreat for July 24-25, with Saturday's activities at Seneca Creek State Park and Sunday's via Zoom.

The Saturday program will feature family-friendly outdoor activities, workshops, a closing vespers service, and plenty of time to enjoy just being together. Sunday's virtual sessions will include an exploration of our creative pursuits during the pandemic, a session on climate change, and a discussion of politics and current events led by Tim Phelps and Jonathan Ladd.

We will open registration in June.



Buck Pavilion and playground



Close up of playground



Buck Pavilion from below

Community



Path from Buck Pavilion to lake



Clopper Lake with boat dock in distance

Our 2022 All-Congregation Retreat will be held on April 22nd through 24th at the West River Retreat Center, which is located south of Annapolis, on the West River near the Chesapeake Bay.

Spring Services Auction

After a one-year hiatus, the May 2021 Auction was a surprising success, as congregants found ways to share and connect in a gradually re-opening and safer world. The usual “Service Auction” concept was expanded to include items from donors that may have gone to the Silent Auction at the Bazaar in a different year and were well-received. The all-online auction catalog included 91 offerings and RRUUC received over \$14,000 in bids for those items, including dinners and other food offerings, classes, personal services, outdoor get-togethers, baskets, and two sermon topics this year on which Rev. Nancy will preach.

Community

The Auctria software worked well for the second time, with a few glitches. It was easy to peruse the catalog and bid, and easy to send out notices to the winners. Rita Parks provided much technical support and her work was invaluable to the Auction this year.



The Auction wrapped up with a live event from the Sanctuary, which included music from Clif, Shuai, and Brock Holmes, and was co-hosted by Dave and Marcia Leonard, with technical support from Danny Turner and Jeff Hollingsworth. It was silly and fun and mercifully short!

Spring Auction 2022 will likely be a hybrid of the old way and the new ways of how we do an auction. Volunteers to help with next year's auction are very welcome; contact auction@rruuc.org to join the Auction Team.

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.

Religious Education (RE) Report Beth Irikura, Director of Religious Education

Religious Education for Children and Youth

Covid took us online for the entire year. Families were particularly hit hard juggling online school and work with little or no respite.

Chris McCann served from July-December as Children's Religious Educator. She offered a few meetings for parents and created boxes of activities for kids that families could pick up during congregational outdoor activities in the fall.



Laura Piervincenzi started in January as Family Ministry Coordinator. Her focus has been on family programming. She sent monthly mailings to families. She also coordinated outdoor family activities including a March trash pick up, a family Easter event, and a concurrent event with Share the Love. She's also worked with Spirit Play teachers and others to create a Family Ministry playlist on our YouTube channel.

The middle and high school participated in Theology of Miyazaki on Zoom over the summer, talking about spiritual themes in the movies.

Middle school met virtually Sundays at 11 am and used the curriculum *Heeding the Call: Qualities of a Justice Maker*. High School youth group met virtually Sundays at 4 pm. Their main focus was the book "This Book is Anti-Racist" by Tiffany Jewell. OWL couldn't happen virtually, so there were two Coming of Age classes, one for 9th/10th grade and one for 8th grade. They met alternating Wednesday evenings.



A big success during the pandemic was Wednesday Game Nights. Cedar Lane and UU Fairfax youth were also invited to join in. Another fun social event was a middle/high school Halloween party.

We had 4 middle school youth participate in a national UU one-day retreat.

In January, I stepped into the DRE role with increased hours. In addition to my responsibilities here at RRUUC, I also serve as President to the local religious educators chapter (GWAREC,) as a Good Officer for the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA,) and Chair of the UU Wellspring Board. I also began a two-year program to be a spiritual director.



Spirit

Music at River Road

The musical year from June 2020 to June 2021 at River Road has existed totally within the span of the pandemic. In this time, we have experienced losses and challenges, but also opportunities and growth.

First, about the losses: because in-person choral singing is one of the most dangerous activities without mass vaccination, there have been no in-person gatherings of the adult or youth choirs this congregational year. And, I am sorry to say that in the fall, all youth choir activities came to a halt.

In the months of August and September of 2020, the youth choirs did two virtual choir projects, one with young singers from the Chalice Lighters Choir and the River Road Youth Choir (*Peace Like a River*), and another with singers from the River Road Teen Choir (*Meditation on Breathing*). Though the videos of those two efforts are rewarding to see, it was quite apparent that the whole process was not a positive one for many of the young singers, and only a small number from each group participated. Rather than try to push for something that seemed to cause pressure and anxiety for young people who had enough to deal with already, I decided that we needed to just wait until the time when we could be in-person again. I am hoping to start some outdoor gatherings of the youth choirs towards the end of this summer.

As for the adult choir, we continued Thursday night choir rehearsals by having Thursday night Zoom meetings throughout the year. The format for those gatherings was to do some singing just for fun (with everyone muted because of the limitations of Zoom) and to review any upcoming virtual choir project. This was followed by a check-in and social time. Even though there were a good number of people who did not participate regularly, I believe that the sense of community among many of the members of the choir was sustained in this way throughout the year.

As we made our way, those in the choir who participated in making recordings and the folks that did the technical work became more and more proficient at making those videos (seven, in all). I am so thankful for the courage and heart of those singers who participated. It is a very difficult process to make a vocal recording all by oneself, listening to a track through earbuds while singing to a camera, without the sound and presence of other singers nearby. We are all also very, very grateful to Brock Holmes (audio editing), Walt Scott (video editing) and Dave Leonard (mastering) for all the time, expertise, and artistry they brought to these projects.



Spirit

As for other musical programming for Sunday services, it was also greatly influenced by what we could do with the available technology. From the summer through the beginning of the fall of 2020, then, we mostly produced recorded videos of solo and small ensembles. We broadcast those videos through zoom, and most of the live music was piano music coming from Shuai Wang or me from our respective homes.

In the fall of 2020, we began to make the big leap to having services streamed live from our congregation's sanctuary. I am so thankful that our leadership had the vision to invest in the technical equipment necessary to make that possible. I am also deeply grateful and simply amazed by all the time and expertise and care given by Dave Leonard, Marcia Leonard and Jeff Hollingsworth to make it all happen. A whole chapter could be written about what they did and how they did it. Suffice it to say that their work has been a massive and still ongoing undertaking. At this point, the audio and video quality is top notch. We are now poised to be capable of holding in-person services while also providing on-line accessibility for those who cannot or do not feel comfortable being in the building.

And now, we are entering into another period of transition, with high hopes that sometime in the coming year, we can all safely be together again and make music in our beautiful building. We have travelled to this point by way of much resilience, faith, generosity and the love of many, many people. These things, I will never forget.

Dr. Clifton Hardin
Director of Music

Earth Ministry (EM)

As part of Green Sanctuary re-accreditation, RRUUC started a building energy tune up through Pepco and EmPower Maryland. Phase 1 was completed in the spring of 2021, and phase 2 has been approved and will start in the summer. Phases 1 and 2 analyze the energy use at RRUUC, and remediation steps will be presented for consideration in Phase 3.

EM members continued to be active in the Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, a multifaith group advocating with County government to reduce greenhouse gases.

Spirit

EM Communications Chair Heidi Mordhorst, with support from other EM members, prepared an interactive graphical classroom about environmental issues. It was presented to congregation members in support of the April 17 Earth Day service.

The Earth Ministry's Solar Team obtained a proposal from Mission Energy for a solar electric system that would supply approximately 56% of RRUUC's electricity needs. The system, to be located on RRUUC's main building roof, would be financed by a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). Under the PPA Mission would build, own, and operate the system, and RRUUC would purchase the electricity generated from the system. After consulting with the Building and Finance Committees, the Solar Team will soon present a proposed PPA to Rev. Nancy and the Board for consideration.

Fine Arts



The Fine Arts Committee did not have any "live" shows due to the pandemic. We did have a "Members and Friends" virtual show - and although we got a lot of nice feedback we only had one sale. If there is a next time we will try to use a platform that allows us to track how much traffic a virtual show gets. We are planning one other virtual show in June and July 2021 featuring a community photographer. He will be providing the show to RRUUC. He has had others virtual shows that were well received in the community.

We have completed upgrading the lighting in the Fellowship Hall. We extended the lighting tracks to allow us to hang and light artwork all of the way to the windows. All of the tracks have been repaired and all of the bulbs have been replaced by LED bulbs that will have lenses to provide a nice, bright, even lighting to the walls. The system is a very delicate one and to avoid any more repairs we will be revising our artist contracts to ask that only a trained member of the Fine Arts Committee will be allowed to make any adjustments to the placement of the lights for a show!

Once the building has reopened and we start having some sort of "coffee hour" and other events we can start holding shows again and have a nice backlog so that we are all set for the next year and a half.





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.

Immigration and Refugee Justice Committee

While activities were fewer this fiscal year, owing to no in-person meetings or actions, the Immigration and Refugee Justice Committee did conduct a number of virtual meetings. A book discussion (*American Dirt*, by Jeanine Cummins) enlarged our understanding of why people flee violence in their home country and show up at the US Southern border. A number of committee members participated in the UUSJ advocacy meetings with Congress, especially one on reduced federal appropriations for ICE and Border Patrol last September. Members also joined a zoom meeting on President Biden's first steps toward immigration reform and a UUSJ webinar on the history of US immigration law. RRUUC joined UULM-MD to advocate via emails to delegates for certain Maryland-state laws to reduce cooperation with ICE's efforts to track, detain or deport immigrants. We continued informally our support of the Wafas, the Afghan family we helped resettle in 2017. With changes in the political climate, committee members have been engaged in discussions about initiatives that may be taken now to ameliorate immigration concerns

La Clinica del Pueblo (LCDP)

In January 2021, LCDP was again the beneficiary of RRUUC's Extend the Offering collection. This together with other contributions from longstanding generous RRUUC donors resulted in over \$7000 sent this spring, which helped the clinic to cover some of its basic operating costs. La Clinica has found creative ways to provide services during the pandemic. Instead of the toy collection we usually do for children in December, LCDP offered an online registry of gifts that supporters could use – and RRUUC did!. They have been able to provide virtual mental health services and group counseling. They have resumed, with all the protocols, limited in person medical services. Since their grant and contract funding sources were based on numbers of persons attended, which dropped, the clinic has had to depend more donations such as ours to see them through.

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Service

Middle East Task Force (METF)

The Middle East Task Force continued to alert members to upcoming speakers and programs designed to educate on the Middle East, particularly as they relate to human rights issues. These included placing in the E-bulletin information about *Voices from the Middle East*, a film program championing dialogue about justice, human rights, and peace in the Holy Land.

Partner Church Committee

The year started with a change of leadership. Our long-serving Chair Joel Schrag was replaced by Ursula Scott as Chair, while Joel stepped into the Vice-Chair role. We continued to communicate with our Unitarian partners in Fiatfalva, Transylvania and Mawblang, N.E. India (in the Khasi Hills) via email, zoom and WhatsApp. RRUUC contributions continue to



support them both with financial resources, with additional funding this year for COVID supplies. We continue our support of 3 teachers' salaries in Mawblang, an after-school program for Roma children in Fiatfalva and programs/salary for the Fiatfalva church. October was ETO (Extend the Offering) month for Partner Church and allows us to continue our work.

Our big activity was to continue with the planned 28th PartnerFest on Oct 20, 2020— online and withOUT our usual meal. Shuai Wang (now Dr. Wang) and Dr. Cliff Hardin delighted us with piano duos and solo pieces on dueling pianos. Janice Hazlehurst led the PCC tech interface/planning, while Joel Schrag was master of ceremonies online. It was only possible because of the able and talented work of RRUUC tech: Marcia and Dave Leonard, Jeff Hollingsworth and Janice Hazlehurst (and the College Access concert from which we all learned). We included clips and greetings from our partners within the program. Feel free to watch 28th PartnerFest <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTuwt47kAIg>



Service

Prevent Gun Violence Ministry (PGVM)

Our mission is to keep Americans safe from gun violence, through legislation and especially in service to communities where gun violence is epidemic.

Preventing Violence in Our Communities

- Advocated successfully for legislation to control the use of guns, to support violence interruption and prevention in neighborhoods like Baltimore's McElderry Park, and to hold police accountable and prevent them from shooting people of color.
- Received a \$1,000 grant from a member of our Animal Ministry and used a \$5,000 grant from the Unitarian Universalist Association to extend our work in Baltimore's McElderry Park during the coronavirus epidemic.
- Participated in a community meeting with representatives of the Department of Justice, the McElderry Safe Streets unit, the President of the McElderry Community Association, and the Pastor at the community's Amazing Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church to assess the state of the community.
- Supported Safe Streets' workforce development program through our Extend the Offering collection.
- Honored victims of gun violence each week by listing the names of those killed in Baltimore and Maryland as a whole.



Service

Engage Beloved Communities

Our mission is to build Beloved Communities who tell us what they want from us, and then engage our congregants in working side-by-side with our brothers and sisters to achieve it.

Building Beloved Communities

- Provided opportunities to members of River Road and Cedar Lane to participate in building actual beloved communities between our congregations and poor communities in Montgomery County and Baltimore's McElderry Park.
- Collaborated with Earth Ministry at RRUUC and Earth Justice at Cedar Lane to build aeroponic towers at Clifton Park Baptist Church, to raise produce for the community.
- Packed and distributed produce from Clifton Park BC during the Pandemic to assure food security in the Langley Park community.
- Used a \$1,000 grant from the foundation of a member of RRUUC to work alongside local residents to rebuild the rain garden at the Amazing Port Street Garden behind Amazing Grace Lutheran Church.
- Provided ETO funding from River Road congregants to both Clifton Park and McElderry.
- Delivered two fully packed carloads of gently used clothing from members of River Road to Clifton Park.





Service

Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) Working Together via Pathways

The Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) was restructured in 2018 to create more opportunities for RRUUC members to become engaged in actions aimed at understanding and dismantling systemic racism. The action work of racial justice happens through the independent and collaborating Pathways to Racial Justice.

Actions4Justice Pathway

Thanks to approximately 100 volunteers of the River Road congregation, including a leadership team of seven congregants, the GOVOTE2020 INITIATIVE was able to help activate voters who have not historically been engaged to vote to participate in the general election. These voters were primarily African-American and Hispanic people living in low income areas.

The original plans for the initiative included canvassing neighborhoods in Northern Virginia. This was not possible during the pandemic however the leadership team was able to quickly pivot to new strategies. A major strategy was to partner with UUSJ and Reclaim Our Vote, a component of the NAACP, to send postcards to voters who had not historically been engaged with the voting process. Other activities included collaborating with Vote Forward to write letters, participating in UU The Vote text banks and the UUSJ phone banks.

The GoVote2020 initiative was successful not only because of the many River Road volunteers, but also because of the strength of our partnerships. Because of the pandemic, our original partner, Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement, (VOICE), had to change their focus from voter outreach to helping the communities they served to access food. At the same time, however, UUSJ and All Souls Church hired a community organizer to coordinate get out the vote efforts among Unitarian Universalist congregations on the East Coast. As part of the partnership, River Road received another \$500 from the UUA for a total of \$1000 for the initiative. We were also able to obtain postcards created by Reclaim Our Vote which were focus group tested with our intended audience.

The leadership team coordinated multiple distributions of the postcards to the volunteers. Many members of the congregation contributed stamps for the postcards. Prior to the general election, 4200 postcards were completed and mailed. An additional 2500 postcards were mailed for the Senate runoff race in Georgia for a total of 6700 postcards. Members of the congregation reported that completing the postcards helped them to feel they were making a difference at a time when they had to stay home and could not engage in community activities. In addition to the postcards, volunteers sent 9000 texts and wrote 425 letters to voters.

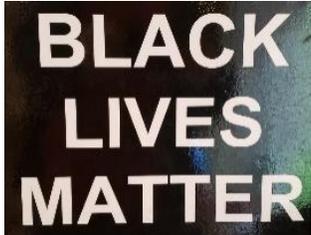
Service

Members of the congregation also reported appreciating the opportunity to come together during the pandemic. Members could drive up to the front of River Rd. and safely greet the leadership team from their cars while getting their postcards. A watch party was held on election night on zoom to provide a sense of community during that important night.

In 2021, the leadership team determined that the next focus will be on voting related issues including voter suppression, voter registration and campaign-finance reform. The first priority has been to educate the congregation and promote S 1., The for the People Act. Specifically, the congregation has been asked to reach out to friends in other states to promote passage of the For the People Act.

Witnessing4Justice Pathway

We are back to weekly roadside witnessing, holding vigils every Friday from 6:30 to 7:30



ever since the stay-at-home order was lifted last summer. We will meet twice in July and twice in August this summer, and weekly every other month. We hold Black Lives Matter signs and signs bearing the names of many Black men, women, and children killed by police. While masked and socially distanced, these vigils are a social and spiritual practice.

Shelter Week



Despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis (second year in a row), RRUUC congregants made Shelter Week (March 21-26) a resounding success. 83 volunteers provided a week's worth of meals and supplies for homeless women at the Interfaith Works Women's Center in Rockville. And despite the masks, it was a joy for volunteers to see each other at the food drop-off table, after being apart for a year.

Governance and Administration

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

Endowment

The River Road Endowment Fund is invested in a diversified mix of securities, including both fixed income and socially responsible equity funds, to provide a long-term source of capital that the congregation may draw on to fund projects that promote liberal religion and to meet extraordinary financial expenses. Gifts to the Endowment Fund, including those from bequests by RRUUC members who have included RRUUC in their estate planning, have totaled approximately \$477,000 over the years. Despite regular withdrawals to fund Board-approved initiatives, the Endowment Fund has grown to more than \$1.1 million as of May 2021.

Financial Stewardship Committee

For the 2021-2022 campaign, the Financial Stewardship Committee faced the challenge of navigating the fundraising needs of the congregation during the health and economic calamity of the past year. And, despite the initial concern, we are pleased to report that the incredible generosity of the River Road congregation has, once again, met the needs of our community.



The entire annual stewardship campaign was conducted online, including two leadership receptions, the “All-In Sunday” campaign kickoff to encourage timely pledging, inspirational videotaped remarks during March services by Lead Stewards, and communications via the e-weekly and social media. New this year, the FSC worked with the other two Potomac Partnership congregations to plan a fundraising concert the same day as “All-In Sunday.” Rev. Nancy recorded an inspirational message for the concert.

We set the campaign goal at \$990,000--the same amount as the previous year--and requested that people consider increasing their pledges by 4%.

Governance and Administration

As of mid-May, we had raised \$936,714 from 305 households. While the amount pledged was almost the same, the number of households pledging was down from the 331 households that pledged by the same time the previous year. This difference was likely the result of the health and economic crisis of the past year, plus the fact that we did not meet as a congregation in person.

We were extremely pleased that so many in our community returned to pledge, and that the average pledge increase of returners was 6%, higher than the 4% we requested. Specific increases and decreases have a range from 400% to -100% and everything in between.

Significantly, we qualified for an additional \$13,000 in challenge matches with more than 25 first-time pledgers. The committee will continue to work to engage new members and friends of RRUUC in stewardship.

Additionally, knowing that the pandemic created great stressors on the traditional sources of income to RRUUC, several donors stepped forward with “pandemic extra” pledges totaling \$124,300. The committee and RRUUC staff tracked these pledges separately since they were one-time gifts to the 21-22 operating budget.

In other FSC activity, Sue Burnett and Ann Bradley participated weekly for six months on the Capital Budget Planning Working Group. The CBPWG was charged in June of 2020 with the immediate need to raise money for a new roof and gutters and with the longer-term goal of recommending ways for RRUUC to tend to ongoing capital needs. Rev. Nancy made targeted personal appeals to a small group of River Roaders, which netted more than \$423,850 for the project.

The members of the FSC (Ann Bradley, Sue Burnett-chair, Sara Ducey, Neele Johnston, Susan Messina and Ron Roy) are extremely thankful for the assistance provided by the RRUUC board and staff, as well as Peter Engebretson and Bob Waser. Our appreciation to the generous people of our congregation cannot be overstated and we are deeply grateful.

Governance and Administration

Grounds

The Grounds Committee made significant progress this year in improving our grounds, despite the limitations of social distancing. Accomplishments include:

- We replanted the Fireside Patio Garden by cutting down the old and sickly holly trees and replacing them with River Birch kindly donated by a neighbor. We also planted Ostrich Ferns and Blue Wood Asters below the Birch.
- We redid the Peace Pole Garden, planting several ornamental plants and ferns and creating a rock sculpture.
- We established a new Pollinator Garden on the left side of our front plaza that is planted with Milkweed and Mountain Mint.
- Several areas in the front of the building were extensively weeded, focusing on removal of non-native, invasive vines and planting of native plants and ferns.
- Three new paths were added to the Conservation area in the back of our building, an area we are now calling “Springsview Garden”, returning a historically used name for this area. We continued extensive weeding and planting of native plants in this area.
- We completed planning and purchasing of new signage for the roads and parking areas. The signs will be installed this summer. The goals of this project are to 1) meet the Handicapped parking needs of the Congregation with clear, consistent markings of existing spaces; 2) meet requirements for Fire Lane marking; 3) Remove un-necessary signs; and, 4) Use industry-standard signage, minimizing the need for “custom” signs.

Our efforts in focusing on native plants are paying off, as there are several areas on our site where you can watch the pollinators and birds (such as Hummingbirds visiting Cardinal Flowers).



We instituted routine Tuesday and Thursday morning workdays, which provides a great opportunity to work with others and learn new skills. We will add weekend workdays if there is interest. Moving forward, we will be actively recruiting new members for the Grounds Committee. While gardening experience is a plus, mentoring in native planting and invasive plant removal will be provided. It is very satisfying to “adopt” a portion of our grounds and watch it change through the seasons.

Governance and Administration

Leadership & Nominations Committee (L&N)

In our prior operating year, FY 2019-2020, the River Road Universalist Unitarian Congregation (RRUUC)'s then Leadership & Nominations Committee (L&N) nominated three members of the congregation to each serve 3-year terms on the Board of Trustees: John Kerner, Tom Purcell, and Kim Weichel. L&N nominated four people to each serve 2-year terms on L&N: Carrie Hutchinson, Alison Serino, Joan Zenzen and Ann Thompson Cook. During RRUUC's June 2020 Annual Meeting, the Congregation voted in all of L&N's identified Board and L&N nominees. The L&N awarded Leadership Fellow Awards to the River Road IT Team (our beloved Rev. Amanda Weatherspoon, Beth Irikura, Joeff Hollingsworth and Jessie Delaplaine), Lisa Moore and Peter Engebretson. Lastly, outgoing L&N Co-Chairs Steve Hartmann and Diana Gilpatrick nominated Diana Ludwick and Kathy Peterson as the incoming Co-Chairs, as formalized in the June 2020 L&N Committee meeting.

Our outgoing FY 2019-20 Committee ended their terms amidst the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, a time of disruption, tragedy, and change.

In our 2020–2021 term, L&N consisted of second year members Diana Ludwick (Co-Chair), Kathy Peterson (Co-Chair), Maryann Krayner and Lacey Morris, along with our new members chosen in June 2020, Carrie Hutchinson, Alison Serino, Joan Zenzen and Ann Thompson Cook. In addition, the Board of Trustees appointed Ken Button, outgoing Board member, to serve a one-year term on L&N as our L&N Board Liaison. In Dec 2020, Carrie Hutchinson resigned from L&N for personal reasons. She was replaced by Tania Kamphaus.

Our incoming 2020-21 L&N met solely through virtual means, employing Zoom accounts generously donated by L&N Committee members, and finding new ways to light the chalice, share readings, create sacred spaces across the screens, and keep up the momentum to forge ahead to support leadership in our RRUUC community. We grew as members and as congregants, and made it our mission to identify nominees for the Board and for our L&N Committee who will help RRUUC “meet the moment,” bring in global new curious ways of approaching today's biggest challenges, and set the tone for a hybrid world. We took our oath seriously as L&N Members, seeking a creative, balanced slate of nominees who will bring new ideas, perspectives, and experiences to the respective groups to which we hope they will serve.

We proudly finished our search for candidates in record time, despite a chaotic landscape of unrest, unknowns and unexpected life changes. We are grateful to our nine members who dedicated hours of their lives to this cause across the months, to continue our leadership pipeline and vision for the Congregation, rendered especially important in these unsettling times.

Governance and Administration

During the 2020-21 fiscal year, L&N successfully recruited and nominated for the Board: three three-year candidates, and one two-year candidate to complete Kim Weichel's term; for the L&N Committee: four two-year term candidates. If approved by vote in June, these candidates would start their terms in September 2021 for the FY 2021-2022.

We are grateful to those who have enthusiastically accepted nominations for the Board and L&N, given the current Covid-19 situation and the unpredictable challenges ahead.

We selected Leadership Fellow Awardees, to be announced at RRUUC's June 6th 2021 annual meeting.

As we write this retrospective - socially distant and through the magic of cloud-based Google Docs - we are accompanied by the choruses of period cicadas in our respective neighborhoods, a tribute to the fact that while so many things change, Earth continues on. May we all find peace and our calling in this wondrous, dynamic, astounding world.

Governance and Administration

Treasurer's Report as of June 1, 2021

The 2020-2021 fiscal year (which runs from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) has been unlike any other in RRUUC's history owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, which kept the building closed all year which in turn prevented in-person worship, in-person events (including the annual Bazaar), and building rentals (both long-term and short-term.) It is therefore remarkable to report that RRUUC remains on a sound financial footing thanks to the incredible generosity of the Congregation's members and friends, the ability to secure two PPP (Payroll Protection Plan) loans to help cover ongoing expenses, and the staff's tireless efforts in the face of unrelenting uncertainty and several retirements that were not filled.

I provide for this Annual Report three documents: the RRUUC Balance Sheet as of March 31, 2021 (two pages); the RRUUC statement of operations for the fiscal year 2021 as of the end of March 2021 (two pages); and a table showing the status of RRUUC's various reserve accounts as of March 31, 2021 (one page).

Particularly noteworthy is the existence of a "roof & gutters" fund of over \$400,000, a result of a fundraising effort led by Senior Minister Rev. Nancy Ladd in 2020 in the midst of the pandemic. This fund will be used later in 2021 to replace the roof and gutters on the original RRUUC building, an improvement long needed. Kudos to Reverend Ladd and the generous members and friends who stepped up to provide the funds sufficient to conduct this critical building improvement.

Also noteworthy is that RRUUC was able to weather the uncertainties and difficulties of the 2020-21 fiscal year without reducing the two reserve funds mandated by the RRUUC By-Laws, the Operating Reserve and the Capital Reserve. Both of these reserves were untouched during this fiscal year, and the current expectation is that they will remain untouched in the upcoming fiscal year given the existence of the separate "roof & gutters" fund mentioned above, and the recently created Capital Improvement Fund, which will be used to fund ongoing maintenance and repair on the building's assets.

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy Daniel
RRUUC Treasurer

Governance and Administration

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Balance Sheet as of March 31, 2021

ASSETS

Checking and Money Market Accounts

SunTrust Bank	\$204,602
BB&T Operating	\$328,551
BB&T Money Market	\$71,192
Sandy Spring Checking	\$68,034
BB&T Capital Account (roof & gutters)	\$254,544
TOTAL Checking and MM Accounts	\$926,923

CDs and other investments

Vanguard Federal MM - Operating	\$160,238
Sandy Spring Bank CD	\$111,398
BB&T CD	\$265,416
TOTAL CDs and other investments	\$537,052

TOTAL Endowment Fund Balance \$1,069,073

TOTAL Johnson Fund Balance \$138,101

Other assets

Original Property & Equipment	\$147,871
Post 2008 Property & Equipment	\$2,667,322
Post 2015 Property & Equipment	\$2,787,388
TOTAL Other assets	\$5,602,581

TOTAL ASSETS \$8,273,730

Governance and Administration

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation Balance Sheet as of March 31, 2021

LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS

Liabilities and Withholdings

Current Liabilities and Withholdings	-\$437
SunTrust Mortgage Payable	\$278,061
PPP-I Loan Payable	\$154,995
TOTAL Liabilities and Withholdings	\$432,619

Board Designated Funds

Capital Reserve	\$101,561
Operating Reserve	\$225,000
Capital Improvement Fund	\$83,936
TOTAL Board Designated Funds	\$410,497

TOTAL Undesignated Net Assets \$721,438

Building Net Assets

Unrestricted Bldg Amortization Original Bldg	\$170,807
Building Renovations 2008	\$1,750,165
Building Improvements 2015	\$3,037,485
TOTAL Building Net Assets	\$4,958,457

Permanently Restricted Funds

Endowment Fund Principal	\$476,429
Johnson Fund Principal	\$115,049
TOTAL Permanently Restricted Funds	\$591,478

Temporarily Restricted Funds

Memorial Garden	\$23,609
Minister's Discretionary Fund	\$4,154
Endowment Fund Earnings	\$369,810
Misc. Restricted Gifts	\$7,009
Fall 2020 Roof & Gutters Appeal	\$411,405
TOTAL Temporarily Restricted Funds	\$815,987

TOTAL Other Restricted Funds \$350,089

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$8,280,565

Governance and Administration

Fiscal Year 2020-21 - through March 31, 2021

	Annual Budget 2020-21	YTD Actual (nine months)	% of Annual Budget
REVENUES			
Prepaid pledges (FY22 paid in FY21)	0	120,725	
Current pledges (FY21 paid in FY 21)	888,250	609,969	68.67%
Past year pledges (FY20 paid in FY21)	11,000	8,099	73.63%
Sunday collections	20,000	7,804	39.02%
Gifts	20,000	83,635	418.18%
TOTAL Pledges/collections/gifts	939,250	830,232	88.39%
PPP-I Loan/Grant	0	154,995	
Endowment Income	35,000	35,000	100.00%
Building Rentals Use & Fees	87,886	400	0.46%
Day Care Rental	34,132	6,440	18.87%
TOTAL Rental Income	122,018	6,840	5.61%
Bazaar Income	60,000	5,611	9.35%
Spring Services Auction Income	15,000	65	0.43%
TOTAL Fundraising Income	75,000	5,676	7.57%
Congregation Activities incl. Bookstore	3,000	0	0.00%
Adult Religious Education (ARE)	14,000	2,470	17.64%
Fine Arts	8,000	7	0.09%
Retreat			
TOTAL ARE and Activites Income	25,000	2,477	9.91%
Interest Income	7,400	7,257	98.07%
Misc. Income	0	516	
Estate Gifts	0	0	
TOTAL REVENUES	1,203,668	1,042,993	86.65%

Governance and Administration

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Operating Revenues and Expenses Summary
Fiscal Year 2020-21 - through March 31,
2021

	Annual Budget 2020-21	YTD Actual (nine months)	% of Annual Budget
EXPENSES			
Ministers and Membership	308,380	226,932	73.59%
Religious Education	122,228	99,657	81.53%
Music	117,247	90,043	76.80%
TOTAL Program Staff	547,855	416,632	76.05%
TOTAL Administrative Staff & Health Ins.	261,449	236,039	90.28%
Worship, Education, Community Expenses	66,225	6,431	9.71%
Bazaar Expenses	20,000	2,790	13.95%
Denominational Connections	40,000	26,790	66.98%
Admin and Communications Expenses	79,425	41,612	52.39%
Building and Grounds Expenses	127,000	64,151	50.51%
Mortgage Interest Expense	15,025	10,888	72.47%
Financial Review	10,000	0	0.00%
Other expenses	0	33,130	
TOTAL Non-staff expenses	357,675	185,792	51.94%
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,166,979	838,463	71.85%

Governance and Administration

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Status of Various Reserve Accounts
As of March 31, 2021

Operating Reserve	\$225,000
Capital Reserve	\$101,561
Capital Improvement Fund	\$83,936
Endowment Fund	\$1,069,073
Johnson Minority Scholarship Fund	\$138,101
Roof & Gutters Fund	\$411,405

Sound and Technology

The Audio-Visual and Technology Committee had a busy year with the challenges the pandemic placed upon worship and community building. Virtual worship was quickly put in place via Zoom and planning started in April 2020 for a multi-camera live streaming solution that would enable services and other events to be broadcast live from the Sanctuary to YouTube. Funding was approved, equipment was ordered with delivery, installation and testing taking place in July and August. The new system included a Panasonic Live Production Center and four



Panasonic Pan/Tilt/Zoom robotic cameras. A fifth camera was added in December for the music service, which enabled us to have two remote cameras for vocalists (as per Covid 19 protocol) in the Fireside Room and Fellowship Hall as well as three in the Sanctuary. The existing audio system and digital console was reconfigured for broadcast mixing. YouTube

Governance and Administration

was chosen as the live streaming platform mainly because it provided much better sound and video quality than Zoom.

Bandwidth demands of live streaming HD video along with other collaborative communications necessitated upgrades to the RRUUC network infrastructure and internet access. In September, RRRUC moved to a high-speed Verizon FIOS connection which has proved fast and reliable.

The first live service was streamed to YouTube in September. Through the rest of 2020 we had two live streamed services and two Zoom services per month. Other live streamed events included the College Access Fund fundraising concert in September, PartnerFest in October, and the Auction finale in April. There were also many pre-recordings made of various segments and musical performances for subsequent use. With the start of the new year in 2021, Rev. Nancy planned for three live streamed services per month. Online Zoom gatherings continued before and after these services.

The AVT Committee over the past year has been Jeff Hollingsworth, Dave and Marcia Leonard. In December, Danny Turner was hired as a part time staff member. Danny brings a wealth of audio and network experience and is a great addition to the team to help cover all the demands. The AVT Committee will welcome additional volunteers as the new equipment is installed and the new hybrid services evolve. Staff members Jessie Delaplaine and Beth Irikura along with a cadre of volunteers were Zoom hosts for the Sunday services and also provided extensive worship support.



The anticipated move to a post pandemic multi-platform worship with both an in-person congregation in the Sanctuary as well as a virtual one will require additional technology upgrades for audio, video and displays. Planning for this project and procurement are well under way with the goal to have these new systems in place by September 2021.