

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



## THE MISSION OF JEFFERSON UNITARIAN CHURCH

Guided by Unitarian Universalist principles and powered by the energy and resources of its members, Jefferson Unitarian Church acts to nurture our spiritual community, grow Unitarian Universalism, and transform the world outside our church walls.

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It is JUC tradition/practice to do an annual report to the congregation each spring and present it at the spring meeting. It is usually full of statistics and write-ups of programming and gratitude for the many volunteers who do a myriad of tasks at church. This year is different. Our physical campus has been largely closed due to the global pandemic, COVID-19, for the entire fiscal year. Our statistics don't work in comparison to any previous year. And the standard report just doesn't fit.

What we'd like to report is that we persisted and managed over this long and difficult year. Here are some of the many things we did together, almost all online:

## DEEPEN to our truest selves

- **Worship**
  - Worship was streamed every Sunday with an average of 250 connected devices (maximum 330 and minimum 194).
  - Weekly Evensong services live (online) on Tuesdays and rebroadcast on Wednesdays.
  - Growing Resilience services twice per month at two times of the day.
  - We began financially supporting (along with other churches), Jen Simon, Minister to Colorado's community for UUs who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
  - Seasonal December services were held including Blue Christmas, Winter Solstice, five Christmas Eve services, and Christmas in Colorado.
  - September Drive-Through Blessing
  - August Parking Lot FM broadcast service.
- **Music**
  - The Music Ministry staff went into creativity and high-tech mode to provide music for worship services. Musicians/singers created alone and were joined with technology to form a cohesive end product.
  - Youth and Children's Choir met online.
- **Small Groups: Going Deeper** groups were all online this year. Groups were formed in September/October and met through May.
- **Adult Faith Development**
  - Reflections on Race white caucus group meetings were held monthly.
  - Heart of Social Justice, anti-racism curriculum was developed, piloted, and began rolling out to targeted congregants.
  - UU Wellspring, a heart-opening small-group experience grounded in deep listening was offered to targeted congregants.
  - UU Pocket Guide classes were held.
  - Embracing the Journey: A Coming of Age Experience for Adults DID THIS HAPPEN?

## CONNECT authentically with others

- Children, Youth and Family Ministries
  - Religious Education (RE) classes were held online with priceless volunteer teachers. We were one of the few churches to successfully implement RE online.
  - This spring, 7th Grade Our Whole Lives (OWL) began in-person, outdoor classes on the JUC patio. OWL is considered a life-saving curriculum for this age-group, and is not appropriate for online delivery. This was one of the highest priority in-person needs for programming.
  - Families of Color monthly gatherings
  - Special events: Stuffie Sleepover, Reading for Relief fundraiser, talent show, traveling chalice, game night, movie night, Valentine Drive-Through, Halloween Drive-Through
  - Couples Reboot Workshop
  - SOUPs (Support of Unitarian Parents) continues to meet twice per week for activities and connection.
- Pastoral Care
  - Online memorial services were held, as well as a few small, outdoor services.
  - The By Your Side Singers worked with the Pastoral Care Team to identify and sing for JUCers who needed support.
  - Congregant check-ins were mounted by phone, email and snail mail.
  - A workshop about planning a memorial service (for yourself or another) was held.
  - Direct meal support was provided for several congregants.
  - A short-term grief group was held in the fall.
  - A three-part listening circle for anxious times was held last summer.
- Belonging and Connection: the Virtual Commons Facebook page was launched.
- Membership - regular New Here classes were held and 22 people joined, with 17 more in the pipeline..

## ENGAGE with needs beyond our own

- Social Justice
  - The JUC CAN team, as well as the Housing and Poverty team, continue to be deeply involved in local legislative efforts.
  - UU the Vote worked very hard over the election season and continue with three priorities: fighting voter suppression efforts, local elections and rank choice voting.
  - Food and Nourishment cook teams were our only regular, on-campus activity providing weekly meals to 20-40 people.
  - Guatemala Scholarship program continued with additional financial support due to COVID technology challenges. The I Heart Christmas sing-along was an online success in both community building and fundraising.

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- Habitat for Humanity held the usual pumpkin patch fundraiser, and had some limited in-person volunteer opportunities.
- Family Promise was not hosted at the church campus, but the congregation provided significant financial support as well as some volunteer opportunities to provide meals and groceries.
- Family Tree Holiday gifting was completely online.
- The Together Colorado team worked to educate manufactured home tenants on their rights.
- Teaching Congregation: Jenny McCready completed her second year as our intern minister.

## FINANCE

Thanks to all of you we maintained our financial stability even with the great uncertainty of the year. Our average monthly pledge increased almost 7%. Our auction, COVID Follies was fun and fundraising with our highest ever Special Appeal giving totalling \$29,000 for the Mountain Top BIPOC minister. We received a Paycheck Protection Program loan of \$140,000 that was forgiven. We held a very successful end-of-year matching gift fundraiser. We also collected over \$31,000 in Special Plate dollars (with two more months to go).

## CONCLUSION

We did all of the normal work, but the work was not normal. It was hard. It was hard for everyone. But we did it.

Now our hopes are high for gathering in person, maybe this year. Nothing would be better than a packed sanctuary and running out of coffee and parking spaces. We must be patient, and do everything we can so that when we come back, everyone who feels comfortable can do so. Get your vaccinations! Help your friends and family get vaccinated. Avoid situations where the virus might spread. When we can, we will joyfully come together again.

We are grateful for each and every one of you.