

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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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As was the case last year, this year's annual report is different than in pre-pandemic times. Our graphs and statistics comparing year-to-year just don't work. We can say that we are moving in the right direction.

COVID-19

Who would have expected the length of time we would need to stay closed and operate almost completely online due to COVID-19? There were no in-person worship services from Sunday, March 15, 2020 until opening again (with masking and vaccination requirements) on Sunday, October 10, 2021. Because of the rapid rise of the Omicron variant we closed again temporarily on Sunday, January 9, 2022 and reopened to in-person worship on Sunday, February 20, 2022. As pandemic conditions improved, we removed the masking and vaccination requirements. We continue to monitor the pandemic and will keep you informed if we need to change any safety guidelines.

FOLLOWING OUR SPIRIT OF LOVE

The Board of Trustees engaged in an appreciative inquiry process they called Following Our Spirit of Love to begin a renewal of the values, mission and ends for JUC. Conversations were held with congregants during November, December and January. Data gathered was distilled and massaged by the Board, in conversation with Rev. Wendy, with the help of Unity Unitarian consultant, Laura Park. Rollout to the congregation will begin next fall.

HIGHLIGHTS

Below are some of the year's programmatic highlights divided into categories based on our mission to deepen to our truest selves, connect authentically with others and engage with needs beyond our own.

DEEPEN to our truest selves

- Music and Worship
 - Summer 2021 worship on the theme of Blessing featured a weekly reflection from a congregant and responsive reflection from Rev. Wendy.
 - Worship effectively transitioned from online-only to in-person with livestreaming.
 - The JUC choir resumed in-person rehearsals in late August.
 - Evensong services were offered once per month from October through May with in-person and online options.
 - The Time for All Ages has been integrated as a regular feature of Sunday worship.
 - COVID had a major last-minute impact on our Christmas Eve services due to musicians and the A/V tech getting ill.
 - A special concert with music by Keith Arnold and David Burrows for choirs and orchestra was planned for January, but rescheduled for May due to COVID. It

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was held at Lakewood Church of the Nazarene as a fundraiser for the Second Wind Fund.

- Small Groups: The Going Deeper program was replaced with Circles of Connection with the goal of a more multicultural curriculum. Groups were formed in September/October and met through May. Each small group engaged in a justice project in the spring. The opportunity to join a group was also offered in January to new participants.
- Adult Faith Exploration
 - Reflections on Race white caucus group meetings were held monthly and now include participants from five Colorado UU congregations. A mid-month drop-in discussion space was added in the new year.
 - UU Wellspring, a heart-opening small-group experience grounded in deep listening was offered to targeted congregants.
 - Online UU Pocket Guide classes were held last summer.

CONNECT authentically with others

- Children, Youth and Family Ministries
 - Religious Education (RE) classes continued online with priceless volunteer teachers. We were one of the few churches to successfully implement RE online. Packets were mailed to households and those were integrated into the in-person children's chapel when it started..
 - Some RE classes for older kids started before in-person worship. In particular, the 7th Grade Our Whole Lives (OWL) because it 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.
 - Once JUC opened for in-person activities RE programming was only offered at 11 a.m. and the online programming was eliminated.
 - A very fun Trunk or Treat was held for families to celebrate Halloween with support from the High School Youth Group. About 150 children, teens and adults attended.
 - An Endowment and Memorial Gift Trust grant provided funds to hold two retreats for parents, one for Dads in January, and one for Moms in April
- Pastoral Care
 - A backlog of memorial services was addressed. This year JUC members Chris Gallup, Barb Bailey, Anne Farrar, Verne Thomas, Craig Williamson, Jim Root, Dave Petiya, Lyn Barber, Nancy White, Don Bishop, Christine Burry, Bruce Douglass, Lev Ropes, Ron Smith, Susan Miller, Lu Moss, Linda Cobb-Reiley, and Marc Goodbody passed to the community of blessed memory this year.
 - We welcomed to our community new children born to Ashley Armstrong & Cory Westerfield, Elizabeth Stamberger & Matt Coffey, Jessica & Eric Leeker and an adoption by Heather Kubert & Will Cheever.
 - The By Your Side Singers worked with the Pastoral Care Team to identify and sing for JUCers who needed support with both in-person and online visits.

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- Direct meal support, and durable medical equipment was provided for several congregants.
- A grief support group was offered in November and December.
- A series of three caregiver workshops was offered in the spring and a new caregiver support group was formed.
- The memorial receptions team was reactivated after a two-year pause.
- Belonging and Connection:
 - A Belonging and Connection Committee was created with the first task to plan a JUC Church picnic for this summer.
 - We started serving coffee again in April!
- Membership - regular New Here classes were held (online most of the year with in-person in April). 10 people joined, with 39 more in the pipeline.

ENGAGE with needs beyond our own

- Social Justice
 - UU the Vote held extensive outreach to get members engaged in the off-year election cycle.
 - Food and Nourishment cook teams continued providing weekly meals to an increasing number of people, 50 to 60, which is a large increase from last year when they were seeing 20 to 40 people.
 - Guatemala Scholarship program continued with a virtual fiesta in the fall and The I Heart Christmas sing-along was an online success in both community building and fundraising. An in-person fiesta is scheduled for Sunday, June 12 and hopefully a representative from Rabinal will be able to attend. This year 6 students graduated, and six new students entered the program.
 - Housing and poverty supported the Habitat for Humanity pumpkin patch fundraiser, and had some limited in-person volunteer opportunities. The holiday support of Family Tree provided food and presents.
 - JUC CAN has finished up the mobile home park organizing grant and continues to work on affordable housing issues in Jeffco and statewide through the Legislature.
 - Family Promise was hosted at JUC again beginning in March 2022. JUC also provided support at their static site.
 - Green Task Force resumed monthly speakers.
- Teaching Congregation:
 - Intern Melinda McGucken started at JUC in September. Ultimately, she decided to leave her pursuit of ministry and left JUC in April, 2022
 - JUC jointly ordained our former intern, Jenny Amstutz (McCready) in May with Columbine UU and First Universalist.

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STAFFING CHANGES

Sadly, Jules Jaramillo resigned her position as Director of Faith Exploration due to her husband's medical needs. His treatment was unaffordable here and they moved to Colombia where he can receive the care he needs.

Rev. Eric was called to be the Senior Minister at First Universalist Church of Denver. This is great news for First Universalist and the Front Range UU community, but a loss for JUC. His last day at JUC will be Sunday, June 19.

Rev. Wendy is currently leading the effort to find replacements for these two positions.

FINANCE and ADMINISTRATION

Last summer we transitioned from a church management database that had been in place almost ten years to Breeze. It provides an online directory available to members.

Thanks to all of you we maintained our financial stability even with the continuing uncertainty of the year. Our auction, Mask'erade was fun and fundraising. We held a very successful end-of-year matching gift fundraiser for the second year in a row. We filed for the Employee Retention Credit (COVID relief funds for organizations that were fully or partially shut down) and expect to receive \$124,000 in the next few months. We also collected over \$29,000 in Special Plate dollars (with two more months to go).

CONCLUSION

We are so grateful to be back in-person and to have attendance working its way back up to pre-pandemic levels. We have visitors and coffee and chatting on the patio. We also have a steady livestreaming audience that is much larger than it was before COVID-19 hit.

Obviously the pandemic has had, and will continue to have a huge impact on us as a congregation and as individuals. JUC has survived and we have done our best to support the community as much as we can.

Despite all of the troubles in our world today, we have this church. We can be loved and love others here and help spread that love wherever we go. We are grateful for each and every one of you.