



Annual Report 2019 – 2020

...not your normal Annual Report...it's been a bit of a different time.



June 7, 2020 - Don't forget to join us for our Zoom Worship Service at 10:30 a.m. followed right after by our Annual Meeting. VUU Members will be electing new leaders and voting on the 2020 – 2021 Budget. If you are not a member, please know you are welcome to stick around for the meeting to learn more about VUU and why you might want to become a member! The link to the Zoom Service and Annual Meeting is: <https://zoom.us/j/92747785894?pwd=V01TR0h3dzJoZTZhcjZqL1BiRWWhXZz09>

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Presented by Susan Keen, Ph.D.

- The new Board attended a retreat/leadership workshop last August.
- Three goals for the Board were determined
 1. Develop a plan to include youth participation on the Board. An addition to the Board's policies provided for the appointment of up to two persons between the ages of 16 and 24 to serve ex officio on the board for two year terms.
 2. The Board will provide a more public voice to VUU's social justice beliefs. To do this, we wrote a letter to several publications in support of transgender rights and another to the UUA Board in support of Rev. Todd Eklof who self-published and distributed a book of essays critical of some UU practices at last year's General Assembly and was censured by the UU Minister's Association.
 3. Each Board member will attend a minimum of two interfaith events. Some members met this goal and some could not because of COVID restrictions.
- Each Board member agreed to serve as liaison with another committee: Finance, Capital Planning, Capital Campaign (which morphed into Stewardship), and Policy.
- After a lot of preliminary work and discussion, it was decided not to do a congregational survey this year.
- The Board lost two members this year, one to resignation and one to transfer to Denver. Susan Keen was elected acting President and the other position was left open as, having contacted eight potential Board members, no one agreed to serve.
- We held two congregational conversations and the meeting on Sunday will be our second congregational meeting. At the February congregational meeting, the congregation voted to accept by-laws changes that clarified term limits for those who were appointed to complete the term of someone who resigned. Anne Schneider clearly described the budget process.
- Then the COVID virus hit. All Board meetings became virtual and we had to think through issues of contributions reduced by 30% and give input and feedback to a persistent team putting together a budget for the 2020-2021 year.

Senior Minister Annual Report 2019-20

I think it's safe to say the 2019-20 congregational year was unlike any other.

Our work on social justice has been strong this fiscal year. We have focused on environmental preservation, with a specific emphasis on how our eating affects the climate. We have gathered more signatures than any other Valley Interfaith Project congregation for the Invest in Ed initiative, work that continues now. When COVID struck, we offered our sanctuary up to the Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program, and I am proud to say that they are still there, running a program of case work and basic care for our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

We have reflected together on racial justice and how to go about the work. The continued deaths of black Americans at the hands of police remind us that we cannot look away, that we must work as hard as we can to pursue the path of love in our communities. There will be new opportunities to do that work together in the coming months.

For the staff, this has been a congregational year of transition. We said goodbye to Kellie Walker Hart after 28 years of service and welcomed our new Director of Music Ministries, Katie Seiferth. We are now saying goodbye to our administrator Sue Ringler, who has done a wonderful job of helping us focus on mission even in our financial dealings. She will be greatly missed. Her last day in the office is June 26th. We can't let any moss grow under our feet, so we will be posting the administrator position tomorrow, hoping to make a hire in the next couple of weeks.

As always, VUU members and friends did amazing work this year. You worked for justice. You taught one another, and me. You cared for each other. It is inspiring to be a part of this incredible congregation.

But it wasn't all great news. Our combined worship and faith formation attendance was down in 2019, down about 10 percent from the previous year to the same levels as 2014. Membership is stable, neither growing much nor decreasing much, as it has been for several years. We at VUU are seeing the leading edge of trends that have many people moving away from communities of faith. COVID-19 may have shown us why.

The pandemic has accelerated the trend of using social media and video connection technologies like Zoom, a trend that was present before the pandemic. In faith communities, we were in the mode of doing religion as we had always known it, relying too much on people coming to our building. We have not taken our mission to new media as much as we need to to connect with a rising generation of people who, their entire lives, have engaged everything from education to entertainment to family connections largely via online video. We can

rail against this new world, and some days I do, but if that is our main message we will decline into irrelevance.

That's why the VUU staff and DeeAnne McClenahan, one of our key members working on our Zoom services, are taking video ministry training now. We are leveling up in our ability to take our values and our faith tradition onto new media in more effective ways. COVID-19 is doing what large-scale crises do. It is accelerating trends that were already present. If we do not adapt to the rapid rise in use of video media, we will be less relevant when COVID-19 finally recedes. And so, we are working to improve.

The pandemic has also put stress on the fissures already present in our hyper-capitalist system. Too many are without healthcare, and it puts us all at risk. The gap between rich and poor runs along lines of race and social class. Along with adopting new technology, we will need to think together about what our mission calls us to work on in this emerging national landscape.

We all need to begin thinking in new ways about the future of the congregation we all co-create. Here's a little video I put together to encourage innovative thinking right now. Don't worry about catching all the question. I'll get them to you in the weeks to come. The video is meant to spark creative thinking. Here goes.

[VIDEO](#)

One day, we will gather in person again. We will sing together, shoulder to shoulder, again. But in important ways, things will never be quite the same as they were. If we are unprepared to adapt, our new reality will be frightening. But if we learn and innovate and do some good thinking together now, the post-COVID liberal religious landscape will be an exciting place, full of new opportunities for mission related work.

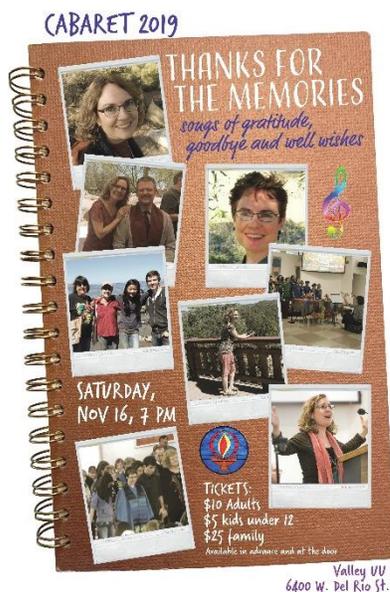
Unitarian theologian James Luther Adams said, "(Religious) [L]iberalism holds that the resources (divine and human) that are available for the achievement of meaningful change justify an attitude of ultimate optimism." In other words, all the resources we need to carry out our mission of love, service, and justice, are available to us. In fact, we make up a big part of those resources ourselves. Let's work now to lay the foundation for a VUU that is still doing great work at the turn of the next century.



With love, Rev. Andy

Music Ministry Annual Report

What a year of big transitions! We said good-bye to our beloved Kellie Walker Hart, welcomed me, Katie Seiferth as the new Acting Director of Music Ministries and transitioned our entire music ministry to virtual platforms due to COVID-19. Thank you for being welcoming, flexible, patient and understanding through these transitions.



Kellie blessed us with 28 plus years of diverse, meaningful music. We are thankful for her ministry and wish her the best on her new endeavors. The cabaret this year was especially sweet as we dedicated the entire cabaret as a thank you and farewell to Kellie. Thank you to everyone involved. I was touched to see the amount of love and diversity of talents. I respect Kellie and the ministry she built; she is deeply missed and valued.

In January, I started as the Acting Director of Music Ministries. My intention was to first honor Kellie and allow a safe space to grieve her transition; second, learn the music you know and love; third, support the systems that were already in place and fourth, begin to introduce new music while adding my own unique flavor. I quickly learned how much this congregation contributes through volunteering and sharing of their passions, talents, and ideas—a truly wonderful component of a strong community. I am grateful to be a part of you.

When I started my interim position, I would have never imagined that I would soon be pregnant, having to move and find a new home nor dealing with the challenges of COVID-19. However, these challenges have allowed me to see how compassionate, supportive, gracious, innovative and creative you all are. I am impressed by the generosity of this community and am especially thankful for your assistance in helping me learn the "VUU ropes." I already feel at home and I am excited to become full-time in July. My husband Andrew, daughter Lucy (8), son Stone (4), and baby boy, number 3, (coming Sept./Oct.) are also excited to get to know and love you more.

Choir:

The few months we had together before COVID-19, the choir performed "The Contemplation Chant," "Draw the Circle Wide," and "Ready to Receive." These were beautiful gifts of music. The choir has deeply felt the grief from no longer being able to sing together and have been meeting via zoom to stay connected virtually. Although zoom does not allow a pleasant singing experience, we do get to support and hear one another. Since the choir is on hold, we have been using past choir

performances in our zoom worship services. I want to thank and highlight Jim Nielson who created and has maintained a well-organized library of past choir recordings that has made it easy to draw from. Thank you, Jim. All this work over the years is a huge resource to us during these times.

Virtual:

The Facebook Live Music Devotions, Zoom Meditative Services and Zoom Sunday Worship Services have taught us a lot about the technology involved in having a virtual music ministry. We are now fully licensed to stream and perform copyrighted music with EmPower Music Rights and Christian Copyright Solutions, CSS (which includes licenses with ASCAP, BMI and SESAC). Thank you to those who have participated in these platforms. I am loving their ability to allow us to worship together and stay connected.

Overall, the music ministry is strong and resilient. We will continue to be creative in how we connect through music. Thank you to the Song Leaders, Adult Choir, Chalice Ringers, Rebecca Riggs, Barbara Metz and Beth Wyman for your assistance with the choir, David Berry our collaborative pianist, the band and our tech crew for your support and talent.

Katie Seiferth, Music Ministry

Faith Formation Annual Report

There are 120 children and youth registered for the Sunday morning faith formation classes this year. Attendance in classes, while meeting in person, averaged 22% of the number of people in the worship service. We offered 3 levels of Our Whole Lives, Human Sexuality this program year, 11th & 12th graders were able to finish their program but kindergarten & 1st grade and 8th & 9th graders classes were interrupted by the Corona Virus. We held Zoom calls to wrap up the K/1st class but the 8/9 class has several sessions remaining...we are still hoping to find a way give those youth closure.

Many of our adult faith formation programs continue to meet via Zoom meetings.

Marci Beaudoin, Faith Formation

Administration and Social Action Annual Report



Rev. Andy did a great job summarizing our involvement in Social Action this past year. One group doing such good work for the community is **EAT – our Environmental Action Team!** This includes the VUU/CCL (Citizens' Climate Lobby) group and the VUU FLP Team, born this year!

Sandy Whitley, Jeff Grout and Denise McLeod have been key leaders this year.

“As part of VUU’s Environmental Action Team (EAT), a new committee has been established to explore a more compassionate, healthy and sustainable approach to eating. **Food for Life and The Planet** or **FLP** (pronounced “flip”) will provide educational and social activities for our entire congregation as we explore food choices together, without judgment or bias! These get-togethers will be for all—the newly curious carnivore as well as the 15-year vegan veteran.” – Denise McLeod

FLP “meets” every Friday morning. To connect with them, check out their weekly offering in The Happenings – VUU’s newsletter.

Several members of EAT are also tending the VUU garden and have done a wonderful job of making it beautiful and harvesting crops for VUU folks and our guests in the Sanctuary (more on this later).

Another very active team during this COVID crisis has been our awesome folks who are carrying petitions to get Invest in Ed on the November ballot. We have had drive-through sign-ups at VUU, members have put petitions out in front of their houses, we’ve given people face masks as a reward for signing, we’ve sponsored civic academies for those who want to carrying petitions and recruit signers (big thanks to Bill Elliot for doing these virtual classes and to Denise McLeod and Barb Quijada for their work on this awesome, mighty team of 3!)



I know it seems like a LONG time ago now, but in late Spring, early Summer of 2019 we hosted refugees being released for ICE. The names of those of you here at VUU are too many to mention...this was truly the WHOLE community helping out in some way – interviewing our guests to hook them up with family, arranging transportation, doing that transporting, arranging and supplying meals, helping with the shower trailer and washing towels, all the clothes donated, sorted and distributed, our medical professionals stepping up to help babies –> adults with health/medical issues, set-up & clean-up

teams, staying overnight, and I’m sure I’ve forgotten all the rest of the big and little ways VUU folks stepped up to help. I will take this opportunity to name our co-leaders, Craig Campbell and Alexandra Escobar. They, really joyfully, did all the coordinating and problem solving work that came with this commitment. We couldn’t have done it without them. We are forever grateful to everyone who did their part in making VUU a temporary home for these sisters and brothers of ours.

And finally, our latest 'housing' project. On March 16 we found out that many of the congregations hosting guests for Chandler I-HELP were closing down their facilities and would not be available for their normal hosting days. We had already made the decision to close the Sanctuary down for in-person worship here at VUU so that building, a stand-alone space was perfect for use as a 'shelter in place' spot. Our awesome Board gave the OK and we have hosted the guests of AZCEND's I-HELP program ever since. If we had



not stepped up, these folks would have been back out on the streets as many programs that help people experiencing homelessness stopped taking new people when the COVID shut-down happened. Our guests are doing well and we have seen some "graduates" who have secured jobs and housing and have moved on. We are still in charge of washing sheets (which we did even when we were only hosting Monday nights) as they have a routine now of washing the sheets once a week. A BIG thank-you to our sheet washers and some of our guests have even learned our routine and have the sheets bagged and ready to go every Monday. VUU also provide one meal a month, while other faith communities in Chandler cover the other meals. We continue to host and the decision to continue to host in the future will be made by the Board and Rev. Andy. Thank you, VUU, for your awesome hospitality.

We were able to pull together a thank-you party for VUU Volunteers last August. We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Woodstock. Music and dancing and singing and prizes! What fun we had!



The rest of my job is as your Administrator...communications (mostly through The Happenings), keeping track of your giving records, working with the Finance Committee and our awesome bookkeeper, paying our bills, working with our committed renters. I know others have said this but all of YOU are amazing in your commitment to this community and your giving. And not only the giving you have pledged to make but many of you have given extra to cover for our friends who are struggling right now. You will come through these challenges we are facing...stronger and better than before...mightily committed to Love, Service and Justice!

Sue Ringler, Administrator,
Social Action Coordinator

Finance Committee Annual Report 2019–20 submitted by David Sheh

The primary role of the Finance committee is to:

1. Monitor VUU finances, discuss and analyze pertinent financial matters and to perform a thorough review of the congregation's finances for the prior month and year-to-date.
2. Recommend a budget for the next Fiscal year to the Board of Trustees.
3. Update financial policies and recommend to the Board of Trustees.

To achieve these goals we met and reported to the Board monthly.

While most Finance deliberations are done out of sight of the congregation, the committee's role is critical to the continuing success of VUU. The accuracy of the congregation's actual results to budget reflect the dedication of the members of the Finance team, the thorough application of sound budgeting principles and practices, and the consistency of our congregation's historical fundraising, spending, and giving habits.

The Finance Committee was chaired in 2019-20 by David Sheh.

Committee members included DeeAnne McClenahan (Financial Analyst), Bob Fabre (Board Representative), Linda Horton (Recording Secretary), Anne Schneider (Budget Compiler), Richard Bitner, Garry Klepser, Sue Ringler, (Congregational Administrator ex officio), Rev. Dr. Andy Burnette (ex officio). Brenda Patton of JDP Accounting is our part time bookkeeper.

Special thanks go to DeeAnne McClenahan for all her dedicated work in maintaining detailed income projections and to Anne Schneider for serving as budget compiler, allowing this committee to have a clear and detailed analysis of accounts receivable and the budget details as they changed radically as COVID-19 made its impacts at VUU and across the world.

Finance reviewed how our operating reserves are invested and recommended that most of them be transferred to a money market where they will earn better interest.

An Audit subcommittee convened and consisted of Bob Fabre, Anne Schneider and DeeAnne McClenahan. The audit was performed over the winter and the results were communicated to the Board of Trustees. No serious findings were noted; Finance will follow up once the immediate issues around the shutdown have abated.

Finance helped develop the budget for next year. Budget priorities as per the five-year plan were cast aside, as the focus for the 2020-21 budget was to conserve cash and protect core staff positions.

Shown at the end of this report is a summary of the May Tracking Report covering the period July 1, 2018 through April 30, 2019, reflecting year-to-date actuals with comparable budget amounts. This is part of the regular report that has been recommended to the Board of Trustees for its approval.

For this fiscal year-to-date (through April), the congregation's revenue is \$502,723 (short of the budgeted revenue of \$528,228). Expenses to date are \$444,845 (well below the budgeted \$467,820). The low expenses are largely a result careful conservation of cash by everyone. Pledge income is coming in below budget, but so far has been pretty steady; **thank you** to everyone who is continuing to give in these crazy times! The FY2019-20 operating budget was set at \$625,121.

We do anticipate an End of Year (EOY) operating deficit; however it will be covered by the one-time SBA grant (\$10K) and the PPP grant (\$78K). We will have some surplus funds to cover the deficit in the 2020-21 budget. Given the fluid situation, specifics will be left to the annual meeting. Please stay tuned for the 2020 Stewardship campaign for 2021: we will be facing a serious structural deficit in the 2021-22 fiscal year without additional giving.

Finance is looking for new members. Anyone interested in serving VUU and learning about the money and how VUU operates, please contact any member of the finance team.

The committee has nominated David Sheh, Rich Bitner, and Garry Klepser for Finance Committee terms 2020-22. Our thanks to Bob Fabre who served on Finance this year. Next year's Board will choose a Board Representative and a Financial Analyst for the next congregational year.

	Jul-Apr	Budget	Differenc e
Income			
Compassion in Action	2,647	10,000	-7,353
Contributions Named	20,825	13,110	7,715
Contributions Unnamed	12,575	19,820	-7,245
	361,71	387,86	
Pledges Operating Prior Year	0	0	-26,150
Carryforward	0	0	0
Rental Income	79,163	74,430	4,733
Events	13,760	20,668	-6,909
Investments	145	126	19
Miscellaneous	11,898	2,214	9,684
	502,72	528,22	
Total Income	3	8	-25,505
Expense			
Board of Trustees	452	1,668	-1,216
Caring & Concerns	0	82	-82
Chalice Circles	0	210	-210
East Valley UU	0	418	-418
Hospitality/Coffee	1,222	332	890
Leadership Dev Council	0	168	-168
Membership	269	583	-314
Newsletter	0	168	-168
Special Funds	0	168	-168
Stewardship	2,371	3,750	-1,379
Worship	2,098	3,377	-1,279
Music	1,853	3,332	-1,479
Religious Education	12,429	17,102	-4,673
Social Action	5,790	10,662	-4,872
	107,60	106,61	
Senior Minister	0	5	985
Minister of Music	45,647	58,388	-12,741
Payroll & Payroll Expenses	141,08	144,12	-3,033
	9	2	
Health Insurance	12,062	11,180	882
Administration	19,576	20,475	-899
Property	35,397	24,464	10,933
Utilities	29,462	29,822	-360
UUA & PSWD Dues	22,211	25,384	-3,173
Liability Insurance	5,316	5,350	-34
	444,84	467,82	
Total Op Expense	5	0	-22,975
Mortgage P&I	52,065	52,065	0
	502,72	528,22	
Total Op Income	3	8	-25,505
Operating Surplus/Deficit	5,813	8,343	-2,530



Of course we affirm that all lives matter,
but we proclaim that

Black Lives Matter



Because so often in our society they are treated
as if they do not.

13 Easy Ways You Can Help The Planet

1. EAT LESS MEAT 
2. EMBRACE SLOW FASHION 
3. BREAK UP WITH PLASTIC 
4. FLY LESS OFTEN 
5. RECYCLE 
6. PLANT A TREE 
7. BUY PRELOVED 
8. REDUCE FOOD WASTE 
9. COMPOST 
10. RIDE OR WALK MORE 
11. INVEST WISELY 
12. START CONVERSATIONS 
13. HAVE HOPE 

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