



NEWSLETTER

How Story Matters

Facebook or YouTube Livestream at 10:00am, Sunday

From songs, movies, plays and biographies (and of course the fiction section of the library stacks), we show our human need for sharing stories, hearing stories, and imagining ourselves in the character's shoes.



Photo by [Daniel Schludi](#) on [Unsplash](#)

*"Who are we but the stories we tell ourselves, about ourselves, and believe?"
— Scott Turow, [Ordinary Heroes](#)*

Annual Summary from the President

Susan Zelle

It's been an excellent year despite the challenges of Covid, and I'd like to share some of the highlights with you. At the top of the list has to be settling in our new minister, "Rev. Bob" Renjilian, who managed to win our hearts "long distance" through his sermons, porch visits, pastoral calls, and concern for our well being. A close second would be hiring Kevin Lausch as our CRE Director and watching him develop into a fine storyteller and teacher as he found innovative ways to connect with our youth. Through quick thinking and the hard work of Treasurer Gail Meyers, Dave Roberts and the Finance Committee, we received a PPP loan and later in the year, the welcome news that the loan is forgiven. Realizing the pandemic created additional financial hardships, the Board made the commitment to continue paying full wages, and continues its commitment to paying a living wage for our hourly employees. We are in good financial shape. The Finance Committee has crafted a balanced 2021-2022 budget that does not draw on our reserves and – with the full support of the Board of Trustees – sets programming as a priority with a 74% increase.



We took some bold steps to remain connected with our community. We enhanced our outdoor meeting spaces and used them for events as varied as a Christmas holiday celebration complete with singing (yes, singing!) and s'mores, weekly Fellowship on the Green gatherings, monthly Soul Matters discussions, and Chalice Camp. RK Young, Frank Parsons, and Kathryn Burleigh worked wonders with significant upgrades and tweaks to our AV system, and John Austin and others have brought us the UU music which makes our services even more special. Not all churches were able to make that happen. We improved our indoor spaces by investing in a new air exchange system that protects staff and allows us to welcome small groups – both from within UUTC and from the community – into our fellowship hall. While we monitor the air flow statistics, we are working on opening further, and imagining what worship will look like as we reopen.

Our Endowment Committee was able to make its first gifts this year after formally being given that authority in updates to the bylaws last July. And Social Action, under the able leadership of Kathy Reiff, embraced more active participation in our community, rounding up members and others to provide the ingredients for salads each Thursday to Bread of Life, and still others to assist with grocery delivery through Sharing House. They are also continuing their work at Davidson River School.

Despite Covid, our membership continued to grow this year, and the success of the recent pledge drive headed by Kristin Leesment showed us how much we value our beloved community. Thank you to the Board, staff, committee and team members, and the many volunteers who have helped preserve and grow our community. I leave you with some thoughts from Connie Goodbread of UU's Southern Region: "What have we learned? How are we supporting and serving the community in which we sit? What is at the center of our faith that should never change?"

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve UUTC during a very special year. We have been given a chance to strengthen and reimagine ourselves, so I challenge you to consider this question as we go forward: If our mission is to transform people and the world, what should UUTC be doing?

Children's Religious Exploration



Kevin Lausch, Director of CRE

Family Event and Parents Chat - Saturday, May 22 at 2:00-3:30PM

Join us at the Fellowship Green for kids activities while parents talk about what type of programming you would like for the coming year (fall-winter-spring), plus to give us your thoughts on reopening. The kids' activities will be nature based, plus we'll have snacks of course! Please RSVP to kevin@uutc.org to attend.

Youth Book Club - Saturday, May 29 at 2PM-3:30PM

The last book club meeting for tweens and teens for the spring will cover "The Midwinter Witch", the last book in the Witch Boy trilogy. The Book Club will take a break for the summer and will restart in September. Hope to see you there!

Chalice Camp - Monday to Friday, Aug 9 to Aug 13 from 9am to noon

Chalice Camp will "Return to Hogwarts" again with this fun, magical camp for kids aged 5 to 10. Camp activities will include a trip to Diagon Alley, making yummy treats, care of magical creatures, and of course potion making! Youth aged 11+ can be a House Prefect (camp helper) and youth aged 13+ can lead a "house" of kids. More information and registration will be available soon.

B.Y.O.B. at the Fire R-I-N-G

This is a no-curriculum event. Our next fire circle will be **Sunday, June 6th, between 5:30 and 7:30**. So far, we have one Master of Fire to maintain order of the orange flamey-thingee. We are eager for more Masters of Fire to surrender themselves to service for backup. If attendance exceeds the site's capacity, we will schedule other occasions. You are free to move about the site. Seating around the fire is limited



to un-burnt logs unless you B.Y.O.Chair as well as your beverage.

There may be marshmallows, if demand reaches the ears of someone in charge. [Please inform the admin](#) if children will be present, in which case THERE WILL BE MARSHMALLOWS.

All activity is at your own risk. The ground is not level and there are bumpy things called "nature."



Come hang out with this guy!

Interested in Membership?

Have you been visiting UUTC? Would you like to learn more about this congregation, during our COVID-safe online Zoom sessions? [Let Rev. Bob Renjilian know about your interest](#), so he can set up the sessions at the dates and times with the most compatibility with those who want to sign up. **This is great for folks who are curious**, and/or for those who want to later take the official step to become a voting member.

New UUTC Library Hours!



Eloise Shepard

The plan is to have the lobby open for masked and socially distanced interested Members and UUTC Friends to access the library materials on **four days a week**— the doors that say USE THIS DOOR will be open so you can come in and find something to enrich your week.

In addition to the library you are familiar with, we have acquired additional books and DVDs and taken organization to a new level. We have new labels inside each book and DVD. Color-coded dots by topic help make your searching easy. No “card” required, but borrowing privileges are for UUTC Members and official Friends. Please be sure to sign out your materials in

our check-out book so we can keep track of how the library is used and where the materials are. No re-shelving required when you return them, I am happy to take care of that for you—just drop them in the “Return Books Here” box!

Here is the Schedule:

- **Mondays: 10-12:00**
- **Tuesdays: 10-2:00**
- **Thursdays 10-12:00**
- **Fridays 3-5:30**

So be sure to come by and “check it out” (pun intended!)



Virtual Coffee Hour— Now Biweekly



In an effort to reduce staff time commitments, we are making the **Virtual Coffee Hour** an every-other-week event, AND we are moving back to Zoom!

The Wonder platform increased its restrictions, making it distinctly unfriendly. Most everyone has now had a fair amount of practice with Zoom, so you'll find us that way!

[Click Here to Join!](#)

A Welcome Change

RK Young

Pictured at right, Mary Bennett and Kay Webb enjoyed the BYOB at the RING maskless. Fully vaccinated, they and other attendees felt comfortable maskless — outside.

This theme continued at the following Fellowship on the Green. When you come to these events, the only reason now to wear a mask is for the protection of others. **For those hospitalized with Covid now, 99.7% are unvaccinated.** That's a strong statement in favor of vaccination, but we do need to remember that our youth are only just being able to get vaccinated, and children under 12 still cannot. And. There are those for whom medical issues prevent them from vaccination. These are the ones masks can protect—on their faces and on ours.

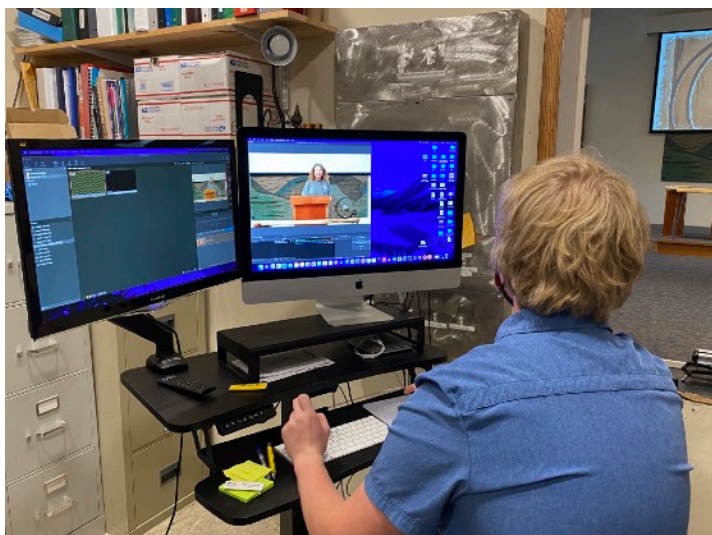


Very soon we will be able to have a new normal of Sundays, but since that is indoors, we will encourage everyone in attendance to remain masked, and there will be no coffee hour indoors. There may not even be a coffee hour *outdoors,* because we must rebuild our squadrons of volunteers!

Which brings me to a request. We will continue hybrid services — as we had for David Parker's family — so that those who prefer to attend with coffee and pajamas may. But we need new members for our Membership Team who like to help with fellowship type activities (no record keeping!). We need new members for our flower team, who can take responsibility for a Sunday every 5 or 6 weeks. We need new ushers and greeters. If you're ready to be part of reopening UUTC, we need to hear from you. We are pretending we are starting from zero, because—hey. There's been a pandemic. We're all handling it differently. But if you can be a part of the welcome we are famous for— we need you!

Thanks in advance for anything you can do. Big Hugs are coming.

What Does Hybrid Look Like?



RK Young

When you attend online, Sundays will look mostly the same, we hope. Except PEOPLE will be in the sanctuary! In an ideal universe, we will have a camera aimed at the pulpit, and a fixed-mount camera with a wide-angle lens to cover the room. If we can round up a third HDMI-friendly camera, that one will cover the candles for joys and sorrows. A new 75 foot cable is on order to facilitate one of these.

The screen will likely only go up before the sermon and come down again afterwards for the closing music. All vocal music will be prerecorded, but we hope that our talented pianists—both those we are accustomed to and those we aren't— will be able to provide that live element now and then at least for opening and closing pieces. Our pulpit camera can now slide and pan to cover a pianist.

Those in the booth (Frank, pictured above, looking at Kathryn on the screen) now must use two monitors to handle the software— that change went into effect this Monday. We are using ProPresenter (purchased last year), connected to Ecamm (subscription-based software) connected to Restream (subscription-based software). ProPresenter does the bulk of



Masked in-person attendees (Family & LHHH)

the work, but Ecamm is necessary to talk to Restream— which is a quarter the cost of the regular restreaming tool recommended by ProPresenter. Basically, ProPresenter lets us direct what things happen when and from which video source. Ecamm says “send this to the web.” And Restream gets it out to YouTube and Facebook so someone can see it. It takes direction well. ;)

As you would expect, this is not a simple task. It's not awful, but frankly, younger, faster reactions can handle it more effectively. There is camera handling, sound board handling, and software handling... sometimes simultaneously. No one person can staff this position— we are talking about every Sunday. And possible other times for other programming. And special holidays. Frank heads to college in August, so we'll be on the lookout for another trainee. Kathryn is backup, but we are on the lookout for someone who would like to learn these skills and make a decent hourly wage.

Know someone? Give 'em my number.