

Annual Report to UUCGT, June 2018
Rabbi Chava Bahle

*In loving memory of those whom we have lost
In joyous welcome to those who have come
In steady friendship to those who face hardship and whose joys become our own*

“When we love, we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too.” — Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

Gratitudes

Each and every day, the staff, leadership and volunteers of UUCGT work to care, share and repair the world. Everything that happens within our walls and outside of them depends upon the goodness that dwells as the inherent worth and dignity of every UUCGT member and friend.

This year our committees, the vehicle through which the mission of UUCGT gets done, have stepped up in countless ways, both visible and behind the scenes. My primary focus on worship, community leadership and congregational care would not be possible without the hard work of our Board of Trustees, Sunday Services, Membership, Committee on Ministry and other organizational mission-driven committees.

I also want to thank the committees whose work build a stronger UUCGT, at times behind the scenes, at times in very visible ways: Facilities, Finance, Policy Art & Exhibitions, Endowment, Hospitality and Kitchen, the new Landscape Committee, Leadership Development, our outstanding Library, Lifespan Experience, Memorial Garden, the Music Committee, Pledge Drive, Safe Congregation, Social Justice Witness and Action, Staff Resources, Memorial Services, and Wednesday Night Suppers.

I am also grateful for the many member-led groups that help UUCGT members and grow in community and spirit, like the Shanti Deva Fan Club, the Women’s New Moon Group, the Men’s Group, and our book clubs. What an honor to be part of this aliveness! It is good to see thriving in these many areas.

Special thanks to the **Committee on Ministry** for hosting the celebration of our shared ministry this year. It continues to inspire me each and every day.

Achievements: Major Areas of Focus – Worship, Community Outreach and Pastoral Care

We had many achievements this year – inside our walls and in the community. Attendance at Sunday services has been steady, and we have enjoyed a wide array of creative, touching and joyous worship, both lay and professionally-led. Many thanks to the **Sunday Services Committee** under the guidance of Amanda Mangiardi and Hal Gurian.

I could not be prouder of the congregation’s support of **Community Needs**, and the needs of our broader community. This year we held a successful book sale, Peace in the Midst: A Community Gathering at the State Theatre, an Interfaith Vigil for Community, Peace and Hope, hosted Haitian midwife Ninotte Lubin for a Wednesday supper, created a #MeToo service of Acknowledgment and Healing, hosted another successful Pagan Fair, participated in the

community Transgender Day of Remember, held our annual Interfaith Christmas Eve, coordinated activists for National School Walkout (March 14) and promoted numerous other events around a wide range of issues.

Through all of these and more of our online outreach we have virtually touched the community the 48,827 times. That's a lot of outreach! Next year we'll need to look at how we engage our current and potential members more deeply and welcome them into this warm loving family.

The **Congregational Care Team** provided loving contact with a tremendous number of our members as we faced challenges, loss, illness and the return, thankfully, to wellness for many of us. Sharing our joys and concerns, both during worship and face to face, in cards, letters and phone calls is the very fabric of our community. Special thanks to co-chairs Joanie Jackson and Pat Light and the CCT team.

Aspirations

In his important book *Liquid Church*, Peter Ward writes, "the church must be like water--flexible, fluid, changeable." Ward urges us "to move away from the traditional understanding of church as a gathering of people meeting in one place at one time to a dynamic notion of church as a series of relationships and communications."

In the year ahead, my aspiration for my work with UUCGT will be to focus precisely on continuing the things we do incredibly well: worship, outreach and congregational care, and at the same time to begin exploring how, in the new era of what church means, we can adopt this dynamic notion of relationships and communications.

What will this mean? How do we build these vital connections? How do we reach the people, especially families with children, for whom the message of Unitarian Universalism and our extended family could be a powerful, helpful and meaningful? These are the questions we will answer together, not only in the coming year, but in the years ahead.