

2020 REPORT OF THE FUMC CHURCH COUNCIL

This year can be marked by many words - but at FUMC Madison, the one that comes to mind the greatest is “connection”.

The beginning of 2020 brought the retirement of Reverend Tina Lang, and the council's unanimous motion to make Tina a Pastor Emeritus of FUMC. At the same time, while our church awaited the appointment of a new associate Pastor, our world turned upside down, and the effects of COVID19 began to strike our community. A downtown church building, situated in a normally bustling downtown community, became an empty building in a matter of a week. As children we learned through song that the church is not a building, but the church is the people. Even apart, our church spread throughout the city, and into other states and even countries as our online presence grew. Faithful giving sustained the church throughout the year.

At the same time, the pandemic of racism came to the forefront of our minds. Members of the church met and sustained weekly conversations for half of the year to determine how our church would take action and came up with a robust and prayerful proposal. Affirmed by the council, the group is proceeding with planning for action in 2021 to engage more deliberately.

Other ministry highlights included countless hours by the green team to work towards a feasible option for environmental stewardship of creation through solar panels. The youth program gained leadership through the hire of the Associate Pastor, Rev. Maribel Celiz, and along with the rest of the staff at FUMC, developed ways for youth to meet virtually and serve, despite the pandemic.

Hopes Home continued to find ways to engage with those in greatest need in our community, despite the need to pivot, caring for those most vulnerable in this incredible time of need. Volunteers continued to offer critical care through food and other ministries, using an otherwise empty church building to safely stage food and other essential goods for distribution.

Our church has been active throughout our community during 2021, connecting. Weekly meetings between the Pastor and myself, the Church Council chair, and regular online meetings of the COVID team, created a collaborative approach to a constantly changing worldly environment, while our faith stayed constant and our church strong. Without missing a beat, members showed up for church online, for each other at online classes and at meetings with nearly 100% attendance. Our membership grew and online classes brought people together that may have never happened prior to COVID-19. The church engaged deeply in important conversations and didn't take a break. Our yearning for the connection we find in our faith community at FUMC brought about new opportunity and friendship that will continue into 2021.

Ellen Carlson
608.692-9978