

CVUUS President's Report, Spring 2025

The Parable of the Choir: *"A choir can sing impossibly long because singers can individually drop out to breathe as necessary and the note goes on."*

In this report I want to shine a mirror back at SOME of the things that our congregation has accomplished this year, and work that is ongoing. This is by no means a complete list, just an indication of how we are, together, holding a beautiful note:

We have expanded our **building use** to levels not before seen, and the reviews have been rave ones. To quote our Administrator Laura: "I see immediate smiles and awe as renters and visitors enter the sanctuary exclaiming "it feels so peaceful and calm in here"". Concert attendees say "it's so beautiful", CSAC trainees share "we love and feel so safe with your inclusive signage". Community chorus members say "thank you for all you do to welcome our community in so many ways, you're amazing". Addison Allies and Mexican Consulate attendees tell us "you're our home". We agree with Laura when she says, "it's an honor to help hold space for so many who seek us, living fully into providing sanctuary in these rattling times". Thank you, Laura, for investing so much in sharing our building. This year a small crew **fine tuned our rental form** and our prices to better reflect the cost of hosting and our myriad of space offerings, which can be daunting to manage. We also branched out into hiring event hosts so that we can offer more services like tech support, and added this position as a line item on the rental form; all moving in the right direction to make our building an asset that we are proud of and that earns us income when appropriate.

We've all been enjoying the **communication** from CVUUS in the shortened form and we have Laura and (former Communications Assistant) member Jess Danyow for that. Thanks for keeping us all in the loop! The **Communications Team** is also sharing our good work via social media (find us on facebook and instagram) and other sites like Front Porch Forum. Stay tuned for ways we can all help with communications!

Our **Music** program, under the tutelage of Jen Cohen has been amazing this year! The choir has tackled such diverse music, and always with energy, enthusiasm and reverence, and Jen's music service received a standing ovation! Thank you choir, and thank you Jen (and band) for being such an important part of our community at CVUUS.

Thank you to Julia, our **Religious Exploration Coordinator**, for her organization, her presence, her wonderful Times for All Ages, and for getting our program on track to welcome RE this summer as well as OWL and other programs back next year. The Fairy House activity at the Rhubarb Fest was absolutely off the hook (popular) and we saw many new families in our sanctuary that day. Thank you also to the RE Council and volunteers who are fueling the programs in our RE with their leadership and volunteer time. We are looking forward to a summer of fun RE commencing in July!

We want to congratulate Tom Morgan on the completion of his **Hybrid Community-Parish Internship** here at CVUUS. Tom, you have invigorated and consolidated our congregation's Social Justice work in ways that we are so excited about. We appreciate your kind heart, passion, and wisdom. Your legacy will live on in our **Social Justice Team** and we are so excited that you will remain a part of our congregation and a part of that team. We welcome all to get involved in this exciting work. Tom won't be an unfamiliar face as he operates his venture, Green Mountain Justice, using office space in the Fenn House. Thank you to the group of folks here at CVUUS who helped to mentor Tom during this internship.

The **Roots & Wings Campaign** was a true highlight of this year! We will hear more specifics from Mary Hadley at our Annual Meeting. Thank you to the team that made this happen. We came together and surpassed our goal for this three year campaign. The board and Finance Team have set an ambitious goal of paying off our mortgage by the end of 2025, providing our congregation some firm ground to stand on in an unpredictable world. Thanks for all that you have each done and will do to make that happen. An exciting part of this campaign is the Strategic Initiatives Fund- a fund that, once established, can be pulled from for a myriad of social justice or other projects that we are interested in or called to do. Work is being done to draft a Policy which will ensure that this fund is used fairly, sustainably, and in ways consistent with our values. Stay tuned for that!

Part of this campaign brought in a substantial gift to the Fenn House and the **Facilities Team** and a wonderful crew of volunteers did an incredible job restoring our Fenn Chapel, raising the floor and making it more accessible, among other things. Special thanks to Scott Barkdoll for this. Exciting plans are in the works for more, and we will hear from Llyn Rice at the Annual Meeting about what some of those plans are and how you can get involved.

The **Welcoming Team** greets us with an open door and a friendly face each and every Sunday, but also offered some well-attended sessions this year on "Getting to Know UU" and "Getting to Know CVUUS". They streamlined their communications on the Breeze database this year and take every opportunity to express, as Mike says, "how every member, and especially our more recent visitors and members enrich us as a spiritual community through their varied yet shared life experiences". This June 1 we welcomed a whopping 15 new members! Way to go, Welcoming Team.

Our **Landscaping Team** has added 2 new people to our team and are up to 5 members now. They plan on purchasing a few tools to leave onsite that people can use for unplanned stops to work as they have time, which is a great idea. Keep a look out for some new perennials to grace our gardens.

Our **Library Team** continued to strengthen our collection with emphasis on diversity, social justice, and books published by the UUA's Skinner House and Beacon Press. They added more signage in the library, reinstated the book sale cart, provided advice to UU library volunteers in Florida and Missouri, and began discussing ways to promote greater awareness of our library's resources and our TinyCat online library catalog: <https://www.librarycat.org/lib/CVUUS/>. Ideas:

a Little Free Library proposal for CVUUs, more frequent promotion of our Library of Things (LOT), better management of CVUUS archives. New library team members always welcome!

The **Flower Co-op Ministry** (aka Flower Buds) always welcomes more involvement on a weekly or yearly basis as they continue their steadfast dedication to bring visual comfort and a special seasonal flavor into the sanctuary and surrounding areas every week with their arrangements. Their creativity and thoughtfulness bring so much to our space.

Oftentimes the least glamorous and visible work is some of the most important and that might be the case with some ongoing work that has been happening with our **Governance Policy Team**. Governance determines how we make decisions and a brave and steadfast crew has been working hard to provide clarity and align policies for who makes decisions, how, and when. As Social Scientist Brene Brown says: “clarity is kindness”! Clear expectations lead to harmonious relations. It’s perfect work to do during our final year of self-reflective Interim Ministry time. Stay tuned as this work continues into 2026 in time for our new minister to chime in.

Our **Personnel Team**, special shout out to Gordon Gibson, works hard at clear and fair contracts, provides assistance and consultation for personnel changes or concerns, and this year worked with the Finance Team to adjust our staff compensation to nearer the salary mid-points of the Unitarian Universalist Association salary data base for our Region, an important step towards living our values.

Our **Board** report is in a separate document but I wanted to mention here that a lot of Board time this year has gone into forming the Search Team slate that we present to you for approval at our Annual Meeting. We reached out to every single member of this congregation and heard back from a vast majority of you with a list of names whom you thought would represent CVUUS well on this team. I want to especially thank Brett Milliet for carrying the bulk of this work. We collated votes, and together gathered a group of individuals who we feel represent a variety of perspectives. We are so thankful they are willing to dedicate the time to engage in this search for a settled minister. We anticipate finding a great match, but should we not, the UUA provides options now: if your search team is not enthralled with the candidates in the “Settled Search” they have the ability to enter into a “Contract Minister Search” which might present a different pool of applicants. All of this to say, our goal is a successful search for our next Settled Minister and we feel we’ve got a great team with solid options, and a wonderful community supporting them. We’ve got this!

And of course the common thread through all of our work (besides our UU “JET PIG” values) are our Ministers: the dynamic duo co-Interim Ministers Rev. Christina and Rev. Tricia. We love and appreciate you! They are supported by their amazing **Transitions Team**, a group who has counseled and advised them throughout their time with us- thank you Transitions Team!

To these and all other teams here at CVUUS: Small Group Ministry, Worship, Finance, The Caring Network, Art Gallery, Hospitality, Share the Plate, Nominating Committee, and others...

...my heartfelt thank you. We all carry this note that is CVUUS, and we carry it together.

Please attend our Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 8. Our by-laws state in Article VII, Section 4: “a quorum for meetings of the Society shall be 25% of the membership at the time of the notification of the meeting”. We need you! If you are on zoom you CAN vote and your presence counts towards achieving a quorum.

Warmly,

Hannah Sessions, President