

January 2022 Minister's Board Report

Hello Board,

I just have a few brief comments as we begin this new year. As you know, we have moved to doing our activities fully online as we wait out this latest surge. This has turned out to be a wise move, as COVID has affected the households of a not insubstantial number of our members who would likely have been present at in-person services. To my knowledge, everyone affected is vaccinated and doing okay.

January is the time of year where we need to begin to make sure several things are in motion: budget planning, the pledge drive, the auction, and re-certification with the UUA at the beginning of February. I know that once again the pandemic creates challenges in visioning these aspects of congregational life. Nonetheless, we are once again in a position where we must forge ahead as best we can with what knowledge we currently have.

We ended 2021 with a mix of experiences. In person attendance was starting to increase just before the Omicron variant hit. Some of our small group opportunities (such as the new Soul Matters Circle) were being well attended; vocal and chime choirs were beginning to meet. We had gotten our space in the new building better organized. And, of course, we had the loss of a number of beloved congregants coming all around the same time, alongside the significant health challenges faced by some our membership. 2021 ended on a bittersweet note for this congregation, not without hope, but poignant nonetheless.

Besides the business items listed at the beginning of this report, we will also need to consider how to continue (and expand) the ways in which UUCF can be a loving presence in the lives of its membership and the larger community. This is our great work at this time, though it is admittedly constrained by current circumstances. Yet I remain confident that we can still find ways to make a positive difference, whether it's finding ways to re-invigorate our online efforts, moving forward with Caring for Kids, or continuing to organize in anticipation of in-person opportunities in the near future.

In appreciation,

Rev. Jason Cook