

THE COMMUNICATOR

Foothills Unitarian Church's Bimonthly Newsletter



Welcome to the First Issue of the (new) Communicator!

by Rev. Gretchen Haley, Senior Minister

In the last few months, about 50 of our community members - probably some of you! - have been visiting with about 300 others as a part of our capital campaign for the building expansion. It's been incredible to witness the church caring for and connecting with each other in conversations grounded in our shared mission.

One important lesson from these visits was that often each person knows a slice of what's going on at Foothills, but may have no idea about other things they are not directly connected to. In some cases, that lack of information

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leads to mis-information, which is sometimes simply confusing, and in a few cases, painful - creating a sense of disconnection. This was hard, but important to hear. It made me realize, we can and should do some things to address this.

Of course, it's not unusual in a church of more than a few hundred people for everyone to not know everything. Actually, it's a sign of success that a lot of us (me included!) are often surprised to learn something new that for others is "old news." It signals a vibrant, dynamic community with a wide distribution of energy and innovation.

And, there *are* things that we can and should consider our shared understandings as a cohesive community, especially for those of us who are deeply invested and committed in the partnership of this work. And this is how I understand all of you who have picked up this newsletter - in your mailbox, or on a Sunday morning. Partners. Leaders. Committed to building this community not just for the congregation as we are now, but for the generations yet to come. So

Sermon
Podcasts
downloaded Jan.
2020: **1165**

People who
attended on
Christmas Eve:
700

this *Communicator* is for you, and for us.

Our goal for this new publication is to provide you, the Foothills community, a deeper sense of what's happening in your church beyond promotion for upcoming events, or Sunday series - although we will have some of that too. We hope this helps you feel a greater sense of connection and ownership in our shared work, and better understand how you can plug into things that most resonate with you and your life.

We'll also provide a chance to connect with other members, with news of milestones, as well as stories of those who help create and lead our many amazing programs.

We've navigated a lot of change over the last decade. With the building expansion on the horizon, and the ambitious dreams of our newly established vision, we can anticipate that there will continue to be meaningful change in the years ahead.

As one of my colleagues the Rev. Jen Crow has written, "if you're not changing, you're dying." It's good to be in a living community with all of

you! Through these pages, on Sunday mornings, in small rooms with big agendas - and in everything in between, let us grow in trust, in connection, and in partnership - as we commit ourselves ever more fully - to life!

What's Next in Worship

March 2020
The Ethical Life

March 1 - "Objectivity/Sub-jectivity" Rev. Sean preaching (Adult Choir at 8:30 & 10)

March 8 - "All or Nothing" Rev. Gretchen preaching (All ages start at 10 & 11:30)

March 15 - "Cheating" Rev. Sean preaching

March 22 - Rev. Kristen preaching (Adult Choir at 8:30 & 10)

April 2020
To Love What is Mortal

March 29 - "We Know How this Ends" Rev. Gretchen preaching

April 5 - "The Dawning Day" Rev. Gretchen preaching

April 12 - "Back to Life" Easter Sunday; Rev. Gretchen preaching (Adult Choir at 8:30 & 10; All ages start at 10 & 11:30)

April 19 - Rev. Sean preaching

April 26 - Rev. Kristen preaching

Note: On **May 3rd** (Spring Music Sunday) we return to two services, at 9 and 11.

Update from the Board of Trustees *by Sara Steen, President*

In conversations with long-time church members, many of whom have served on the board themselves, I often get asked "What is it that the board does now?"

With the shift to policy governance in 2017, the work of the board has changed. We are tasked with thinking about the future of the church, looking years and even decades ahead, and thinking about what the church will need to attend to now to continue meeting its bold vision.

The board does its work through what is becoming a standard rhythm of **discerning vision, reviewing ministry's interpretation of the vision, monitoring the ongoing work of ministry through board policy, and developing and carrying out a plan for linkage with our stakeholders.** Two

years into policy governance, the board continues to learn about what each of these jobs entails, and to create clear procedures to complete them.

Discernment of vision is work that happens once every five years or so, through the kinds of visioning sessions we held in 2018. Our congregation comes together to reflect on what feels most important about the work

Foothills does, and to imagine our future. The board distills these reflections into a long-term vision for the church.

Once a vision is in place, the ministers work with various congregants on ministry teams to develop an interpretation and implementation plan, which includes both their understanding of what the vision calls for, and specific plans for moving the vision forward. The board approves this plan, then engages in regular monitoring of progress.



The board also engages in ongoing **monitoring** of ministry compliance with policy. Board policy sets both guidance and limitations for the ministry work that is the lifeblood of the church, and the board is responsible for ensuring that these policies are followed. Board policies cover broad areas such as caring for members and paid staff, with specific areas within, such as providing leadership

development opportunities and ensuring safety (e.g., policies about firearms, disruptive behavior, and building security). Every month, the senior minister provides a report to the board detailing compliance with these policies.

To ensure that the board is faithfully representing our community, we develop what we call a "**linkage plan.**" The board is accountable not only to members of the congregation, but also to groups such as our community partners

(e.g., the Food Bank), to our broader Unitarian Universalist faith community, and to people in our community who haven't yet discovered Foothills but who will need us in the future. We are in the early stages of developing a linkage plan that will put us in regular conversation with these stakeholders so that

we can regularly hear and respond to the needs of our people.

The board is most effective when our community understands the work we are engaged in. We meet monthly on third Thursdays, and board meetings are open to all congregants. Please don't hesitate to contact us at theboard@foothillsuu.org if you'd like to know more about our work.

Family Ministry at Foothills *by Eleanor VanDeusen, Dir. of Family Ministry*

Foothills has a long history of offering fantastic Sunday morning religious education programs for our kids, aka "RE." Our new name, "Family Ministry," reflects our desire to offer not only great programs for kids, but resources for the whole family. We want to support parents and grandparents in their role as their child's primary spiritual and life guide.

We know that family life patterns have changed.

Almost all parents are part of the workforce and there are a wider variety of family structures - single parents, blended families and grandparents taking active roles in parenting. Families today have multiple challenges from economic stress to mental health challenges to stressful political and world events. We know that our children and youth are experiencing significantly more mental health challenges.

All of this has motivated us to shift our emphasis beyond just providing curriculum based Sunday classes. We are thinking more holistically about the



entire family and want to come alongside parents, supporting them and partnering with them in the challenging job of raising thoughtful, compassionate humans.

Here are some highlights of the things we offer in our Family Ministry Programs –

Sunday morning Small Groups for Kids during our church services emphasizing relationships of care and trust, led by dedicated, screened adult and youth volunteers. These groups use curricula provided by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

A Sunday morning **Youth Group** for teens where they can feel accepted and wrestle with their emerging beliefs and values.

A Sunday morning **Parent Group** where parents can find community and share challenges and celebrations.

Targeted Resources for Parents including a Family E-Newsletter, Family Facebook Group and Instagram.

Fun Events for Families to find community. Buckhorn Retreat, Pumpkin Carving Night, Family Gingerbread Party and more!

Family Zones & Multigenerational Worship Services, designed to engage all ages so our kids enjoy attending church services, because attending church helps them to see themselves as future Unitarian Universalists!

We average **80** children each Sunday.

Students participating in our 8th Grade OWL: **17**

OWL (Our Whole Lives) Comprehensive **Sexuality Education**

Programs partnering with families to provide safe and accurate sexuality education.

Spring Break and Summer **Camps** for Kids.

Service Opportunities for Youth and Families through our Justice Ministries like Faith Family Hospitality, The Food Bank, and Foothills Food with Love.

Family Ministry truly means ministering to whole families!

Our Family Ministry Team

Eleanor VanDeusen
Director of Family Ministry
eleanor@foothillsuu.org

Lauren Farley
Family Ministry Coordinator
lauren@foothillsuu.org

Betsy Naas
Family Ministry Assistant
betsy@foothillsuu.org

Music is Vibrant at Foothills! *by Christopher Watkins Lamb, Music Lead*

On January 11, around 40 people gathered for a rich day of community building and honing skill and song at our **choir retreat**. Kloy Intawong, our Foothills adult choir director, led breathing and posture exercises before diving into many of the pieces the choir will be singing in the months to come. We have quite a wonderful selection of music for you this spring.

The **Foothills Outreach Choir** formed in the final months of 2019 out of a desire to provide music, caring and comfort to members of our community in times of need. This smaller choir, comprised of singers and musicians who feel a special calling to provide caring music outside of Sunday mornings, has mobilized several times already to visit church members in their homes. If you know of someone who could use a musical visit, please reach out to our caring network, using caring@foothillsuu.org.

We've heard from many people that when we learn a new song, you wish you had the musical notation as well as the lyrics. We're happy to announce that we have a new **songbook** with seven of our most popular songs that are not in the hymnal. Pick yours up on Sunday!

In March we move towards **exploring ethics and morality** through our series theme, and music is no exception. We will hear twice from the choir and we will have a chance to musically move through decision-making frameworks that guide us in daily life. For a preview of one of our choral pieces, search the internet for "On Justice, Truth, and Peace" by Amy Bernon.

In April, when our worship series explores **questions of life and death and mortality**, our choir will offer two beloved pieces we've sung in the past: "Dirait-On" and "I Will Lift My Weary Eyes" on Easter Sunday, April 12. The month will also feature a number of guest musicians.

As 2020 is underway, know that I welcome your hopes, dreams, and visions for what music can be at Foothills this year. You can always reach me at christopher@foothillsuu.org, catch me on a Sunday morning, or set up a time to connect.



Most Frequently Sung Hymns (Non-Series Songs) Sept 2019 - Jan 2020

- 1) **Spirit of Truth** (7 Times; mostly at 8:30 service)
- 2) #1009 **Meditation on Breathing** (5 Times; mostly at 11:30 service)
- 3) *Tie* **Where You Go, I Will Go** and **We Shall Be Known** (4 Times; mostly at 11:30 service)
- 4) *Tie* #1015 **I Know I Can**; #1018 **Come and Go With Me**;
Love Has Already Won; #1028 **Fire of Commitment** (3 Times)

Avg. Attendance
at the **8:30 am.**
Sunday service:
94



Avg. Attendance
at the **10:00 am.**
Sunday service:
155



Avg. Attendance
at the **11:30 am.**
Sunday service:
76

A Little Building News

by Jeffrey Mizell, Administrator

Good news - bad news related to our HVAC system and the status of our existing furnaces. During our annual maintenance for our furnace systems, Fort Collins Heating and Air noticed a crack in the housing of a furnace in the RE building. The good news is that they did some testing, and are confident that we can go forward until the building expansion with the small repairs that they made. Strange news - did you notice that the RE building was super cold in mid-January? Did you load up on space heaters? The furnaces were not flipped back on after maintenance. Not to worry - they're running strong once again and the heat is kicking.

More good news - in case you were still worried about getting out of the larger, east parking lot, the giant snow pile that was forcing us all to drive over the median has been plowed again to clear the driving surfaces. Fear not - you can comfortably park in the east lot again.

Stay on the lookout for all things building in these ongoing *Communicator* articles.

Now this article didn't talk much about the new building. But I'll leave you with this exciting news: there will be 183 more seats in the new sanctuary than there are words in this article!

Strengthen Your Connections in Our Community

by Kay Williams, Auction Chair

Please join us for the auction, "Foothills in Wonderland," on Saturday evening, April 18. This is a fabulously fun event that you won't want to miss. Come dressed up as Alice, the Mad Hatter, the Cheshire Cat . . . or not! (costumes not required!) Tickets go on sale March 15th.



Are you curiouser and curiouser? Don't fall down a rabbit hole! Keep your eyes and ears open for more information. The Amazing Auction Team will be in the Social Hall every Sunday. Start thinking about what you'd like to donate - we're encouraging donations of fun events and experiences (dinners, parties, hikes...) over "stuff."



Did you know? Foothills has a B&B program!

Several Foothills members open our homes to host traveling UUs and friends who are visiting members of our congregation. Our homes are located throughout Fort Collins and in Windsor, and several are close to public transportation.

We offer reasonable rates, \$50 - \$75 daily, depending on the number of guests and rooms needed. A continental breakfast is usually served. All proceeds go to our congregation.

More info at foothillsuu.org/bandb. Interested in being a host? Contact Sue Taylor: BandB@foothillsuu.org or 410-960-1019.

If You Eat, You're Invited!

by Bryan Hulse, Foothills Climate Justice Ministry member

It's a well-known fact that some of the strongest relationships are formed over food. Food and community go together so frequently that it is almost impossible to separate the two.

As we look to build a stronger, more just, and more resilient community, one of the strongest tools at our disposal, then, is that of preparing a table and sharing food. B.F. Newnam and R. Gagliano say it well when they write:

Giving homemade food to your guests is a metaphor for sharing and openness.

*Gathering around a table to consume it is a metaphor for community. Eating it in unison is a metaphor for mutual understanding.***



With this in mind, the Climate Justice Ministry at Foothills started sponsoring a monthly "Seasonal Supper" the last Friday of each month at 6:30 p.m.* The goal of the Suppers is two-fold, and the first is to foster community. They are open to all, without obligation or expectation. I like to say that if you like to eat, you're invited! But we don't limit our community to those around the table. After the meal we have a short presentation about an environmental or food-related topic, to help us engage with the issues of the broader local, national, or even global community.

The second goal is to show that eating is a deeply environmental act. The industrial food system and its global spanning supply networks mean that we can have almost any food we want on any date of the year. But all this convenience comes with the high costs of pollution, greenhouse gas, and environmental degradation. Thankfully, we are fortunate to live in a place in which options for local, non-industrialized food abound.

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At each Supper we highlight foods that are locally and seasonally plentiful during that month. In fact, most of the ingredients used to make the Seasonal Suppers are grown right here, and purchased face to face with the farmer who grew them. For example, a meal featuring tomatoes, zucchini, and eggplant might be served in July, but potatoes, carrots and onion are more appropriate for January. Then we gather a handful of volunteers to transform those ingredients into a delicious shared meal that showcases the possibilities of our local, seasonal, and sustainable bounty.

Looking forward into 2020 and beyond, it seems like we could really use more sharing, openness, and mutual understanding. We're in a time of deep unrest, be it political, social, or environmental. We might feel powerless, or scared, or just plain lonely, and nothing is a better tonic for those feelings than fresh food, served with warmth and love. The table is set and there are seats a plenty. Won't you come join us?

***Note: Climate Justice Ministry is celebrating Earth Day (4/22) with activities for children, and our Seasonal Supper for April has been moved to 4 p.m. on that date.**

***Source Brunch Is Hell: How to Save the World by Throwing a Dinner Party, by Brendan Francis Newnam and Rico Gagliano (Little, Brown and Company; 2017)*

February 2020 Financial Management Updates

by Gretchen & Jeffrey

As of January 31, 2020:

Most recent month closed: November 2019

Current financial focus: closing 2019, issuing donor reports for year end, completing capital campaign and annual pledge visits; entering pledges and issuing statements.

July 2019 - November 2019	Actuals	Budget	Difference
Income	\$398,719	\$382,784	\$15,936
Expenses	\$413,676	\$456,384	\$42,705
Total Net	-\$14,949	-\$73,600	\$58,641

Note: The greatest income in the calendar year is always in December, so our net income both in terms of budget and (spoiler alert!) actuals rebounded fully to a net positive in

December. Look for a full update on 2019 financials in the April *Communicator*.

So far, through our campaign we have confirmed 309 pledges to our operating budget at a total of \$588,272. We will need another 90+ pledges and \$120,000+ to fund our 2020 budget. Our Stewardship Team is working on this.

To see the presentation from the 2/16 Campaign Conversation, go to foothillsuu.org/leaders.

	2019	2018
# Pledges to Operating Budget	390	370
Pledge dollars received	\$667,000	\$672,279
Offering plate	\$91,529	\$78,539
Shared with Community partners	\$45,765	\$39,270
Donations (non-pledged) received	\$124,569	\$104,264
TOTAL non-capital Income 2019 (not final)	\$928,863	\$894,352

Our Path of Intentional Giving

As a part of membership, we ask everyone to be on a path of intentional giving, one that reflects an increasing sense of commitment and stewardship for our mission and our future.

Step 1: Give a routine amount to our operating budget each month/quarter, ideally through an auto-withdrawal.

Step 2. Make a pledge that reflects your annual commitment of giving to the operating budget.

Step 3: Make a pledge that is a percentage of your annual household income.

Step 4: Make a pledge that is 5% or more of your annual household income.

You can make or update your pledge, or make a donation at foothillsuu.org/give.

Number of
pledges
to the capital
campaign: **293**

Financial Fun Facts for February

We currently have about **\$75,000** in cash reserves. This is the most cash we have had reserved in over a decade.

Our Endowment is currently worth **\$326,000**.

162 households give through a recurring donation (automatic withdrawal)

Total dollars
pledged to the
capital campaign:
\$6 million

Member Milestones

Celebrating:

Congratulations to **Erin and Richie Valenti-Nelsen** on the birth of new baby Jasper River on Feb 13th.

Congratulations to **Katie Steiber and Amy Doran** who welcomed foster daughter Lucia in January.

Best wishes to **Ellie Murrow** who has moved out of state to be near family.

Seekers
engaged for the
first time from
Sept.-Dec.: **51**

Holding in love the families and friends of all of those who have died in recent months:

Christina Andre, longtime Foothills member

Wyatt, nephew of member Jessica Vyvial-Larson

Louis, brother of member Muriel McIntire, uncle of member Lyndy Latta

A dear friend of members Walter and Patti Nash

Rubye, stepmother of member Vonna Ault

Happy birthday to all those who hit a new decade since December...

December: Inara Winter, Jasper Silver Lord, Melissa Blevens, Lizzie Porter, Haley Richards, Jaime Holloway, Suzanne Knapp, Shanna Henk, Tom Rhodes, Lynn Martinelli, Dick Cullor

January: Owen Powell, Madeleine Miller, Brendan Mahoney, Rob Owens, John Hunt, John Kutzik, Lil Price

February: Rain Lesage, Cheslea Hotchkiss, and Kindra Weisbrod, Amanda Johnson, Page Frick

Special happy birthday notes to **Norm Illsely who turned 95** in December, **Lois Martin who turned 96** in December, and **Dick Pillmore who turned 97** in February!

If we missed you, we must not have your correct birthdate in our system - so be sure to send an update to Amy@Foothillsuu.org. And...happy birthday to you, too!

Welcome recent new members:

Joseph Hamilton, Jayne Jacobs, Deb Lindner, Angela Mitchell, Christopher Rom, Eric & Rachael Sudhalter

Congratulations to members in the news:

DJ Anderson and Nate Donovan, who were elected to the PSD School Board

Erin Hottenstein, who announced her candidacy for the Health District Board

Newcomers
completed Base
Camp (Orientation)
in Jan.: **38**



Foothills Unitarian
LOVE UNITES US ALL

2020

March

**1 (Sun.) Congregational Mtg.
for Building**

2 (Mon.) Social Senior Potluck

8 (Sun.) Food Bank @Foothills

**11 (Wed.) Slightly Senior
Sisterhood Luncheon**

**14 (Sat.) Wake Up! Coffee and
Conversation on Race**

**16-18 (M-W) Kids' Spring Break
Camp**

19 (Thu.) Priestley Book Discussion

**22 (Sun.) Food Bank @Foothills
Foothills Food with Love**

Families served
twice/month at
our Food Bank:
125

Total shared
with community
partners in 2019:
\$45,765

April

5-12 Faith Family Hospitality

6 (Mon.) Social Senior Potluck

**11 (Sat.) Wake Up! Coffee and
Conversation on Race**

12 (Sun.) Easter, Baby Blessing

16 (Thu.) Priestley Book Discussion

18 (Sat.) Foothills Auction

**26 (Sun.) Food Bank @Foothills
Foothills Food with Love**

Weekly Groups

**Mon.: T'ai Chi Chih
Meditation**

Wed.: Choir Rehearsal

**Thu.: White Fragility Book
Group (3/26 - 4/30)**

Keep up to date with all of Foothills events at foothillsuu.org/events

***The Communicator* is published
in even-numbered months
(February, April, June, August, October, December).**

Standard articles include:

- Note from our ministers
- Update from our Board of Trustees
- Upcoming Worship Series information
- Financial Updates
- Member Milestones
- Building News
- Data points about our congregation

Each month we'll also feature two or three of our ministry areas. In the April issue, look for updates from the Caring Network and Adult Ministries, including a preview of summer programming.

For more timely news, check out our e-communications subscriptions page at **foothillsuu.org/subscribe**.

Editors: Anna Broskie and Rev. Gretchen Haley



Foothills Unitarian

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