

# THE JOURNAL

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 UNIVERSITY  
Christian Church

A Disciples of Christ Congregation



Seek the Sacred • Commit to Love • Empower to Serve

# Reimagining How We Do Church: 5 Strategic Shifts We Need to Make Now

Perhaps I'm naïve, but if you would have told me way back in March, when we first had to suspend in-person worship, that we'd still be out in the middle of summer, I wouldn't have believed you. What started in March as an interruption, has evolved into a disruption.

But maybe that is okay. I have spent my entire ministry believing that disruption can be a good thing. Maybe that's hard to accept in the midst of a pandemic. But when things are disrupted, something new can break in.

For the last several months, church leaders all over the world have been asking, "When are we going to get back to the way it was?" But what I've come to see is that the wrong question. A better, more faithful question is: **"What changes to do we need to be making to our ministry to thrive during and post Covid-19?"**

***If our focus is on getting the past back, it is impossible to embrace the future that God has for us.***

What I have come to see in the last few months is that the Coronavirus has not so much created a new future as it has accelerated cultural change that was already taking place. This may sound simplistic, but churches that were thriving before the crisis are likely to see that growth accelerate. Churches that were in decline are likely to see their decline occur more rapidly. In the same way, churches that were aware of some shifts taking place in the world around us, and taking bold steps to adjust and adapt to

those shifts will be those congregations whose best days are ahead of them.

Here are what I see as a few practical shifts that University Christian Church has been dealing with, and is focusing on during this liminal space between what was and what will be.

## Shift #1: From Analog to Digital

This spring we were forced to make the leap to online worship. While it has been an adjustment for many, we have come to see that we will need to continue this practice even after Coronavirus has gone away. Churches that will thrive during and after this crisis will have an effective digital delivery strategy that extends beyond online worship into connection and spiritual formation. The best strategies will be those that look beyond simply recreating online what we were offering in person. Our task in the coming days will be to reimagine what discipleship and spiritual formation look like inside a digital delivery strategy.

## Shift #2: From Teaching to Equipping

In the past, much of our focus has been on gathering people each week for worship and spiritual teaching. While teaching is very important, thriving churches are shifting their focus to equipping people with the tools and resources they need to engage the Bible, practice spiritual disciplines, and live out

God's mission in their lives. Our attention in the coming days will need to be reimagining how to facilitate meaningful spiritual growth experiences that move people from just being participants to actively taking the next step along a discipleship pathway.

### **Shift #3: From Gathering to Connecting**

Gathering and connecting may sound like the same thing but thriving churches have learned that effectively gathering people for an event does not in and of itself provide a transformative experience. Growing congregations are instead shifting from focusing on how many people gather each week to celebrating how many people they connect with relationally. God designed us to need one another. Our challenge in the coming days will be to reimagine how to provide opportunities that place an even greater emphasis on relationships and life transformation.

### **Shift #4: From Complexity to Simplicity**

Complexity is easy. Simplicity is hard. More church activity is not positively correlated to growing churches, but it is to declining churches. For the last 2 ½ years I've been inviting us to think about what it might mean to do less, better. Thriving churches are becoming more intentional about their mission and vision, and in learning to focus on what's most important. The result is a more effective, efficient, and adaptive ministry. This effort seems counterintuitive, but it works. Our energies in the coming days needs to be re-imagining what is most important for our church and then what it might look like to align resources, time, and money to ensure we are focused on our mission and vision consistently and effectively.

### **Shift #5: From Counting Attendees to Engagement**

It's not enough to get people into the proverbial pew. The call of the church is to transform lives not just take attendance. Faithful churches are shifting their measure of effectiveness from counting attendees to focusing on individual movement along the discipleship path. They measure and celebrate each step a person takes along the discipleship path and the impact of the church's ministry in their mission field. Therefore, our call in these interesting days is to reimagine how engagement and impact can identify a more direct connection between participation and growing disciples.

These are challenging days. But I believe with all that I am that we are up to the challenge. The opportunity for impact has never been greater. And our best days are still ahead of us!



Rev. Dr. Russ Peterman, Senior Minister



# The Beat Goes on...

University Christian Church's Music Ministry has not missed a beat since our services moved online in March. The last four months have been filled with our learning new ways of offering music for online worship. The parable of New Wine in Old Wineskins comes to mind... this pandemic has forced us to reinvent the status quo lest we become ineffective or irrelevant. These changes have not only transformed our processes but helped us to appreciate what we had taken for granted for so long.

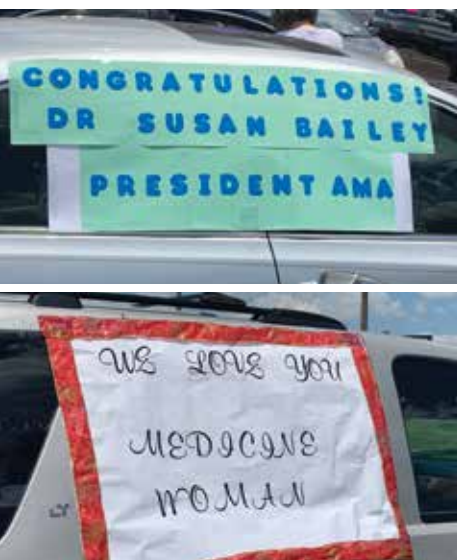
Choral singing has been recognized as unsafe at present, however the resulting UCC Virtual Choir has been a highlight for many! Members of the Chancel Choir have participated in these monthly projects designed to provide a virtual anthem for our online worship services. It has been eye-opening for many of us as we each realize how important our fellow singers are to our success. As the conductor, I have been gratified to hear the amazing product that is created when so many faithful singers combine their efforts for the glory of God. We plan to continue singing monthly until in-person worship returns. The Chancel Choir has also continued to enjoy fellowship through occasional Zoom meetings. Unfortunately, our meetings are now **BYOO** (Bring Your Own Oreos).

We also celebrated Dr. Sue Bailey with a drive-by parade upon her induction as President of the American Medical Association.

Handbell choirs have been on their usual summer hiatus, but are hopeful about a return this fall. At some point during Phase 2 of our regathering plan, small handbell choirs will be able to rehearse with appropriate social distancing and face masks. Finally, wearing gloves won't seem so unusual! All ringers should be on the lookout for information from Eric and Mimi regarding rehearsal plans early this fall.

Finally, I am pleased to introduce a new program beginning after Labor Day. The UCC Virtual Music Series will begin on Sunday, September 13 at 6:30pm. Every other week on Sunday evening, we will stream an informal music presentation online. It will be brief, only 20-30 minutes in length, and feature a wide variety of musicians. Plans include: various hymn sings with Janet and Amy, family musicales (think the Von Trapp family), children playing recital repertoire, friends of UCC and more. And during Advent, we are planning a very special presentation that will be sure to put you in the holiday spirit. Stay tuned! The beat goes on...

—Rev. Dr. Todd Prickett, Minister of Music



# Member Engagement

Hello from my dining room table in Ft. Worth, TX, headquarters for Member Engagement at University Christian Church! I'm happy to inform you that through the magic of technology and some creative alternatives to in-person meetings we have been actively engaging our current members, new members and even first-time guests who have come to us through our online worship.

In order to stay connected with our congregation, we have set up weekly Meet & Greets with Russ at noon, every Sunday via Zoom. This has been a great way for anybody who wants to join us to check in with each other, hear what's new with our plans to reopen the church and sometimes hear the inside scoop on producing the fabulous worship services that we've all been enjoying. Register at [universitychristian.org/meetandgreet](https://universitychristian.org/meetandgreet). We'd love to visit with you!

Every week we have numerous first-time (and repeat) guests who join us for online worship. What fun it is for me to welcome them, find out how they found us and to learn more about them. If they're interested, I offer them ways to get involved with our ministries and our church. I've been so surprised by the growing number of out-of-state guests that we're hosting!

Our New Member program has been robust, despite having to change the way we normally do things. We've had good attendance for our UCC & You classes where we focus on introducing folks to the history of our denomination, identifying individual spiritual gifts

and opportunities to use them through our ministries, and discussing the tenet specific to being a member at UCC. For our new members, we've delivered to their porches, "Welcome to UCC bags" and then later, official UCC name tag gift bags.

Now, I'm pleased to introduce our most recent new members:

**Bailey Cannon**

**Matt & Jacy George**

**Matt Jacobs**

**Elaine Logue**

**Lee & Chandry Manzke**

**Emily Pook**

**Candy Clifton & Cindy Peters**

**Richard Distler**

**Britt Feik**

**Leslie Harding Distler**

**Reece Harty**

**Kelly Runnion Feik**

**Lori Russell**

**Tom & Susan White**

—Stacy McCoy, Membership Engagement Coordinator



**BE LOVED.**

**BE KIND.**

**BE YOU.**

In the times of COVID-19, we all need a little more love, kindness and opportunity to find ourselves. Children's Ministry is giving families the opportunity to put these statements into action. As the length of quarantine made a June VBS improbable, we asked

the question, "What makes Vacation Bible School important?" We realized that the opportunity to develop relationships and share the Gospel is paramount—so we shifted to in-person to service-oriented VBS October 9-12. However, the summer did not seem complete without a way for families to engage in VBS-style opportunities and Compassion Camp was born. For five weeks, families had the opportunity to engage in a VBS-style Compassion Camp at home. Everyone is on a different schedule and trajectory this summer and the online model allows for at-your-own-pace study and engagement with your family. Each week, Children's Worship introduce our theme, Bible story, and activities followed by opportunities to engage compassion at home in more elaborate ways. We have welcomed all to the



table, learned about caring for our neighbor, shown compassion to ourselves, learned to be present, and finally, learned about a new start in God's love and compassion. Powerful work of compassion with families this summer!

While we reimagine our typical summer activities,

we are planning for the time when we will gather together again. Our Weekday School is working with state licensing requirements and recommendations for a safe, albeit different, start to the 2020-2021 school year. Children's Ministry is planning for Kick-off Sunday on August 30 and making plans for the restart of Discovery Kids and Preschool Spark faith development (whether in-person or at-home depending on our phased regathering plan). Our goal for families to share faith through our Family Faith Formula of everyday activities with the language of God and faith throughout remains a primary goal of faith development for the entire family. Remember, be loved, be kind, be you as we grow into a new way of Children's Ministry during this season.

—Rev. Kera Watts, Minister of Children & Families



# What's Next?

Normally this article would be full of fun anecdotes about UCC Youth's Service-Learning Trips and camp experiences, with photos of our youth building relationships with each other and partnering to do God's work in the world. Because those trips didn't happen, it would be easy to assume that our youth have not been engaged in relationship building, quality conversations about faith, or partnering with God to do good work. But that's simply not the case.

All summer our youth have been serving the larger Fort Worth community by working alongside the rest of our church to make lunches for Presbyterian Night Shelter, deliver groceries to people who usually rely on Fort Worth ISD for food, make masks, and deliver "You Are Loved" signs to members of our congregation. They've modeled for us what it means to continue to do the work of the church in the midst of a pandemic.

We've also been engaged in hard conversations about how our faith informs what we're seeing in the world right now. Parents gathered to talk about *Raising White Kids* by Jennifer Harvey, and shared their experiences of having race conversations with their kids. Youth gathered to talk about how faith can call us to act when we witness racism, and what those actions can look like. They have also gathered to play games with each other, a nice reminder that there is room for joy during difficult times.

All the while, the Youth Strategic Discernment Team has been evaluating youth ministry at UCC, and getting creative about new possibilities for our young people! I'm very excited about "what's next" for UCC Youth!

Speaking of what's next...Disciples Class is going to pick up where we left off soon. We're working on some significant ways to honor our incoming 6th grade youth, as well as honor the incoming freshmen as they transition to high school.

We're launching three new series of conversations, each for a different age group.

"Who Are You" is a three-week series for high school youth running from August 16-30th discussing the Spiritual Gifts Inventory, Myers-Briggs, and Enneagram.

"What's In the Bible" will cover the "who, what, when, where, why?" Questions about the Bible. This series launches on September 13th for 6th and 7th grade youth, and runs through the end of October.

"Visible Faith" is for our 8th grade youth, and asks the question "What does being a Christian 'look' like these days?" It also launches on September 13th and runs through the end of October.

Of course, all of these opportunities will take on a virtual form, unless we're at a point where it's safe to gather.

I'm looking forward to the day we get to be back together, and my prayers continue to be for everyone's safety and good health. God is still at work, friends, and we have so many opportunities to partner in that work.

Grace and Peace,

—Rev. Jamie Plunkett, Minister of Youth & Families





# Behind the Scenes of the Magic of Sunday Mornings

Ever wondered how UCC's digital worship services come together? There are many talented people working behind the scenes who put in many hours of work to get the service done each week. The service must be planned, roles and responsibilities assigned, the lights, sound and cameras set up, and graphics created. Each section is recorded and then the process of post-production editing takes place. After the recording is reviewed, it must be uploaded to the various platforms. It takes a tremendous effort from our team, working their individual parts to make the production a success. Here's a glimpse into that process.

**4** SETS   **7** CAMERAS   **48** LIGHTS

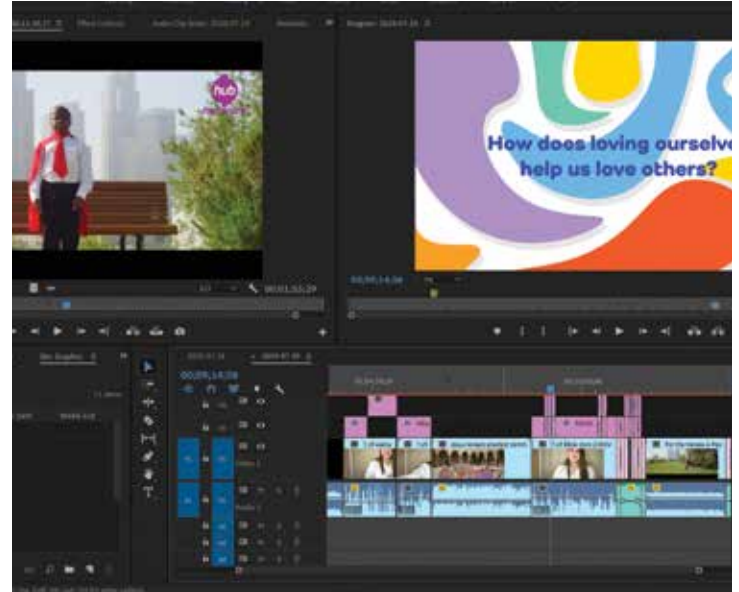
**20** HOURS EDITING PER  
50 MINUTE SERVICE

*that's* **460** TOTAL HOURS  
SPENT EDITING  
(March 29-August 23)

**10** SOFTWARE PROGRAMS   **250** MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

**23** ONLINE SERVICES  
(March 29-August 23)





# UCC Staff Additions



Leanne Griffin

## **Business Assistant, Joined UCC: January 2020**

Leanne Griffin worked most recently as a surgery and insurance coordinator for the Head and Spine Institute of Texas - Plano. In high school, she played handbells for her church and was first chair French horn in the Texas All-State Band. Leanne enjoys gardening, fishing, chandlery, camping, swimming, crafting, music, arrowhead and gem hunting, and spending time with her family and friends.

## **Custodian, Joined UCC: March 2020**

Jose was born in Lubbock and raised in Fort Worth. He worked as a floor and sanitation supervisor with Albertsons and AWG for 27 years! He has now relocated back to Texas from Oklahoma. Jose is married to Yvette and has 5 daughters, 5 grandsons and 2 granddaughters. He and his family spend a lot of time outdoors doing yardwork, camping, cookouts, fishing, biking, and remodeling homes. Jose's favorite thing about UCC is working with his very professional, knowledgeable and friendly coworkers.



Jose Hernandez



Kimani Oletu

## **Media Production Assistant, Joined UCC: June 2020**

Kimani was born in Houston, TX and grew up in Memphis, TN. In high school, he played the trumpet and was a member of both the Robotics team as well as Academic Decathlon. Previously Kimani was a video producer for Talus Pay. He received a Media Arts degree at the University of North Texas. Kimani likes cooking and baking; often making treats and pastries to relax in his spare time.

## **College Ministry Coordinator, Joined UCC: August 2020**

Mason joined UCC as a member in 2014 as a high school student. He is studying at Brite Divinity for a Master of Divinity degree. Prior to joining UCC, Mason was the youth minister for South Hills Christian Church and the Community Relations and Volunteer Coordinator for Fortress Youth Development Center. He and his wife, Katie, were married in the UCC Sanctuary by Rev. Jessica Vacketta in 2018. Mason enjoys walking his dogs, Bernie and Gizmo, and making music with friends.



Mason Wagner



Monica Bradley

## **Assistant Minister for Digital Ministry, Joined UCC: August 2020**

Monica is currently studying at Brite and will be a candidate for a Master of Divinity Degree next May. She has a BA in psychology from San Diego State and had a successful 27-year career in social services prior to starting her graduate studies. She's served on various boards in San Diego and values the opportunities she has to do social and racial justice work to bring about healing in our world. Monica enjoys golfing, traveling, being in nature and spending time with her family.





# The 30th Anniversary of the Sanctuary Cross

Thirty years ago, UCC's Sanctuary Cross was installed above the baptistry on World Communion Sunday, October 7, 1990. This year, the 30th Anniversary of the cross will be observed on Sunday October 4, also on World Communion Sunday.

The story of the Sanctuary Cross begins in 1989 when artist Judy Oelfke Smith was invited to design a cross for the chancel. Judy had previously accomplished several design projects for the church, including the creation of 38 stained-glass windows for the enlarged sanctuary. The Sanctuary Cross project was a collaboration of visionary church members, and was underwritten as a gift to the church from Catherine R. Alexander and her family in memory of Robert D. Alexander.



Judy envisioned a cross that would work in harmony with the existing Romanesque architecture of the church. Elements considered were the painted patterns of the beams, various design motifs, extant colors throughout the sanctuary and the warm, comforting atmosphere of the space. The Sanctuary Cross was designed, constructed, carved, painted and gilded over a period of 18 months. Mark Gilger constructed the cross from bass wood according to Judy's design. (Note: Mark Gilger and Judy Oelfke Smith gifted their entire work on the cross to University Christian Church.) The cross measures 7 feet, 4 inches tall. Once constructed, it was transferred to Judy's bedroom studio, where the carving and painting began. Judy's final touch was the application of 23-karat gold leaf.

The Sanctuary Cross illuminates the faith of the Disciples of Christ Church with a series of sacred Christian symbols, both ancient and modern. As explained by Judy, the four Gospel writers are depicted

with symbols that signify their gospel message; the Paschal Lamb holds the banner of victory over death, symbolizing the resurrection of Jesus Christ and life eternal; eight symbols for love surround the Lamb, a heart at each corner of the central square and growing from each side of the square, and four large hearts which initiate the vine motif that extends out into the arms of the cross. The hearts are symbolic of God's love understood by Jesus. These motifs, rich with meaning, transform the cross into a celebratory symbol of joy and hope.

Judy Stempel, former Associate Minister, UCC, observes: "It would be hard to imagine our church building without the rich symbolism and artist's touch provided by Judy Oelfke Smith. Her art and her work are everywhere you look—from the designs on the tile floor of the sanctuary, to the communion table, to many of the stained-glass windows, to the large Celtic cross on the outside wall of the building, to the design of the columbarium, to the Sanctuary Cross above the baptistry. Judy's art has enhanced our space and our life since the 1960's when, my father, Senior Minister Granville Walker, first recognized her gifts and invited her to use them. Thanks be to God for the beauty with which Judy Oelfke Smith has surrounded us!"



# Congregational Care Ministry

UCC has twelve Congregational Care Ministers who went through training, an application process, an interview, and a time of discernment. They are passionate about caring for others, and I just could not be more excited about and pleased with the work they are doing. Having these volunteer ministers has created a completely new level of care for the members of our congregation. With love and compassion, they are making phone calls, sending notes, and walking with people during times of illness and grief.

This ministry also has the benefit of the incredible gifts and organizational skills of our Congregational Care Coordinator, Michelle Groom. With her support and direction, your CCMs have logged nearly SIX HUNDRED interactions with church folk since they started serving in May. You read that correctly—six hundred!

Our CCMs are eager to serve and they are truly using their God-given gifts in this ministry. I don't have the words to express what a pleasure and privilege it is to serve alongside them. Congratulations to this very first class of CCMs! We will provide CCM training each year. If you are interested in learning more about this ministry, contact Rev. Shannon Moore [#wearethechurch](#).

—Rev. Shannon Moore, Senior Associate Minister

Feb 7-8 with Rev. Karen Lampe, the creator of the Congregational Care Model. Attendees from 5 area congregations gathered to learn more about this incredible ministry.



## Keep on praying and guard your prayers with thanksgiving. —Colossians 4:2

My name is Sherron Abernathy. I have been a member of UCC for about 3 years and I have been a Christian since I was 12 years old. My faith background was with the Church of Christ. However, I knew the moment I walked into UCC that I had found a home. I am a retired social worker and have spent many years helping others. I would like to continue this goal as a Congregational Care Minister.



Sherron Abernathy



Shirley Branham

I grew up practically in the shadow of UCC! My family came to UCC when I was 5 years old, and I have been here ever since! Through childhood Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Chi Rho then CYF, CWF, Stephen Ministry, Chancel choir, and many other facets of the church, it became a part of my life, and I shaped my faith around the teachings of those who served here. Congregational Care Ministry is a way that I can continue to serve God, my church and it's amazing congregation. It is an honor to serve in this way, alongside the excellent staff that we are so fortunate to have.

I am a native Texan and lifelong member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). My husband Charles (Chuck) and I moved to Fort Worth after he accepted a call to serve as a minister at UCC. I loved this incredible congregation from the very beginning and have remained a member ever since...And what a blessed 43 years this has been! Having experienced the loss of my husband a little over a year ago, I know firsthand how much additional love and support is often needed and appreciated when we experience life's trials and transitions. I am deeply humbled now for the opportunity to join the other eleven dedicated members of our first CCM team as together we seek to serve our church family in a spirit of kindness, compassion, courage, and hope.



Carolyn Dowell



Jeanne Duke

I have professional experience as a pharmacist, pharmaceutical sales representative, and ordained minister. I recently retired after serving more than a decade as an attorney for a federal agency. I have been a member of UCC since 1991. Over the years, I have been involved teaching Sunday School, singing with the Chancel Choir, ringing handbells, helping with the Boar's Head Festival, and in various leadership positions.

For the last 11 years, my husband and I have been ranch caretakers in Albany, TX, about 116 miles west of Fort Worth. We are now retired and living at our Possum Kingdom Lake home. I previously served at UCC as teacher, then Director of the Weekday School, then as Associate Minister for Children and Families. I also organized grief conferences at UCC and co-led several intergenerational study trips abroad with Dr. Ken Lawrence. I have a passion and calling for pastoral care and I know our congregation will benefit from the support and teamwork of the CCM ministry.



Nita Gilger



Kay Higgins

I moved to Fort Worth on Monday, August 8, 1977 to attend Brite Divinity School. On Sunday, August 14 I attended church at UCC, met Ron Shirey on Monday, and was singing in the choir on Thursday, August 17, 1977. Soon to begin my 44th year in Student Affairs at TCU, my life has offered numerous concurrent leadership positions at UCC. I am both humbled and thrilled to be called to the new role of CCM.

I am so honored to have been trained and chosen as one of UCC's CCMs. I worked 42 years in public education, 25 of those years as an administrator caring for students, families, and school staff. I am now blessed with being able to give more time caring for the church family I have grown to love! I cherish visiting, praying, and sharing scripture with you surrounded in God's amazing grace and love!



Royanne Kerr



Gay McKeever

Significant in my life are family and friends, vocation, and faith. The principles that I hold dearly are respect for all people, compassion, care of others, service, hospitality, and most importantly, love of God and others. When I learned about the role of the CCMs at UCC, it seemed like a natural fit. My calling to become a CCM was clear. It is with gratitude that I am able to serve our UCC family. Thanks be to God.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind....You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22: 34-40

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you.  
—John 14:27a



Carry each other's burdens and so you  
will fulfill the law of Christ.  
—Galatians 6:2

My parents joined UCC and thus began a wonderful faith journey for me. My first memories of church were in the welcoming face of my teacher, Mrs. Mundhenkie. Her smile lit up the room, and I knew I wanted to be a part of whatever she offered! When I was in high school I began singing in the choir and we always sang two services—getting to listen to the message and participate in the music – twice – only helped shape my journey. I learned early that accepting opportunities for service at our church meant that I received so very much more than I gave—and that has continued throughout my life! Now I open the door on an enriching new opportunity and following Christ in an exciting new way.



Jan Miller



Roxanne Penix

Born and raised in Fort Worth, I am married and have two children, two step-children, five grandchildren and one great-grandson. Joining UCC in May of 1998, I served as a teacher in Journey Land, a member of Chancel Guild, a Deacon and an Elder, and a member of Worship Life Committee and the Welcome Team. In February 2020, I heard God's clear call to serve as a Congregational Care Minister.

I was born and raised in Fort Worth and lived here much of my life. I left Fort Worth to attend college at Sam Houston State in Huntsville. I earned my degree in Criminal Justice/Social Services. After school I went to work as a caseworker for a childcare agency in Stephenville, Texas. Our agency provided adoption, foster care and campus care for children ages 0 to 18. While in elementary school, I learned about social work. I discovered it was what I wanted to do. I enjoy the study of people and how they work. I am now retired after a career working for the State of Texas on the field of Child Protection. I look forward to the opportunities provided by University Christian Church to continue serving others.



Beverly Shockey



Judy Stempel

I grew up in Fort Worth and UCC and am a graduate of TCU and Brite. I served on the pastoral staff of UCC for 13 years. In retirement, I live at Trinity Terrace where I have learned that people, as they age, can easily become disconnected from the church they have loved and served. As a CCM, I am a bridge between UCC folks at Trinity Terrace and their church home—providing pastoral care and a sense of connection.

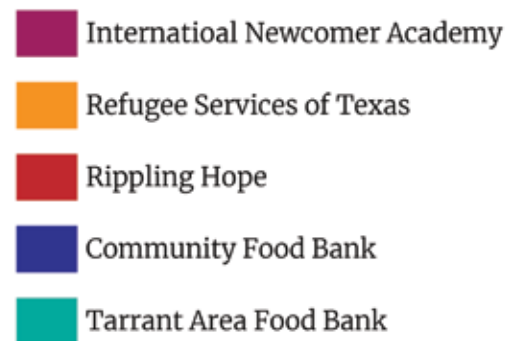
# THE CHURCH AT WORK IN THE WORLD

**“Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the door, and see all the people!”**

I have found myself saying more than once, “I can’t wait for us to go back to church,” but the truth of the matter is that we never left church. Over the past several months, I have been reminded again and again that University Christian Church is more than just a building. I have witnessed our faith community be church in powerful ways, courageously living out Christ’s love.

We have held three donation drive-throughs for our partners at the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition and DRC-Solutions. Since mid-March, we have delivered groceries every week to FWISD families impacted by COVID-19. The week after Easter we began delivering 300 sack lunches and bottles of water every Friday morning to our partners at the Presbyterian Night Shelter. With the help of Chandry Manzke and a team of dedicated mask makers, we have distributed 2,000 face coverings to those in need. Sunday school classes have provided meals to frontline workers and a dedicated group of note writers have sent cards to seniors living alone.

Because of your faithful sharing of financial resources, we have been able to make



additional gifts to Tarrant Area Food Bank, Community Food Bank, Refugee Services of Texas and the International Newcomer Academy.

**Here is the church, see all the people, sent forth in the world, to care for God’s people!**



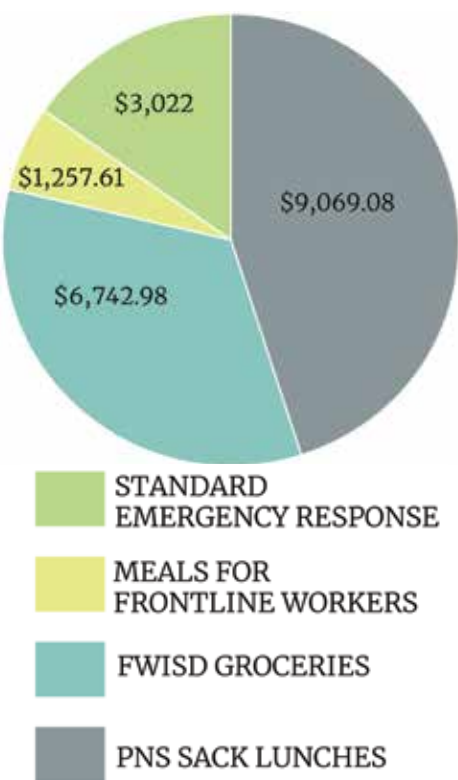


# COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND

Thus far, \$25,000 has been allocated by our Outreach ministry and/or given by members to our Emergency Response Fund. This fund has allowed us to swiftly respond to community needs as they arise, offering help and hope to our Fort Worth family during COVID-19. As people of the table, it's no surprise that many of these ministries have focused on feeding God's sheep:

- Since mid-April, we have provided 300 sack lunches each week for guests at the Presbyterian Night Shelter. This ministry started when we were sheltered in place, and UCC members generously purchased all of the supplies needed to make sandwiches and sack lunches at home in April and May. In June and July, individuals and families continued to make sandwiches at home, while a very small group of volunteers gathered at the church to make sack lunches every Thursday afternoon. To date, we have provided 4,800 lunches. Each week 25-30 volunteers give approximately an hour or more of their time to this ministry, that's over 400 hours!
- When schools closed to in-person learning, FWISD reached out to churches to see if they would be able to help provide groceries to families impacted by COVID-19. Since late March, we have been providing weekly groceries to 7-10 families.

One of the mothers said that she will never be able to express what how grateful she is for this support. Our weekly deliveries show these





families that they are not forgotten, that they are supported, and loved during this difficult time. Thank you to the many individuals who have purchased and delivered groceries.

- In addition to these weekly food ministries, we have also provided lunches and dinners for the medical teams working in COVID units and for individuals who worked overtime to staff the Emergency Shelter at the Convention Center. These catered meals were a small gesture to show our frontline workers that we see them and we appreciate all the sacrifices they are making to care for our Fort Worth family.
- Our Emergency Relief Fund has also supported those seeking assistance with rent, utilities, groceries, and transportation (bus passes, gas cards, etc.).

Your gifts of time and resources enable us to respond to the needs of our community members as they arise, truly being the church at work in the world. If you would like to make an additional financial gift to support these efforts, please visit [www.universitychristian.org/online-giving](http://www.universitychristian.org/online-giving) and select “Emergency Response- Pandemic” in the “Choose Fund” drop down on our giving page.

—Rev. Jessica Vacketta, Minister of Connections

# Bag-It Night 2020

Even though the start of school will look completely different for students and educators this fall, The Children’s Closet Ministry of University Christian Church is committed to supporting our partners in FWISD. The Children’s Closet Advisory board has been discussing a variety of ways in which we can safely distribute uniforms to kids who need clothes this fall. Our top priority is listening to the school counselors and working with administrators to ensure we meet the needs of students without adding to the already increased stress level of teachers. Safety for students, volunteers, and educators is at the forefront of all of our conversations as we continue to share God’s love.

If you would like to be added to our Bag-It Night e-mail list to receive the most up to date information on Bag-It Night and our Children’s Closet ministry, contact [melanie.williams@uccftw.com](mailto:melanie.williams@uccftw.com). To make a gift to The Children’s Closet, visit [universitychristian.org/give](http://universitychristian.org/give).



# ROSEMONT ELEMENTARY SUPPLY DRIVE

This has been a very difficult season for many families and students. In the first six months of 2020, we have experienced anxiety due to the pandemic risks, uncertainty about losing our jobs or making ends meet, and stress caused by ever changing priorities and situations.

Despite these difficulties, passionate school and religious leaders seek to embrace the beginning of school on September 8 with the same enthusiasm and hope as previous years.

At the invitation of Principal Nakita Brewer, we have been working with our partners at Rosemont Elementary School to organize a “Back to School Drive-Through Round-Up” on September 3. Principal Brewer hopes this event will give her students and their families the support and care they need to start the school year on a bright note, while complying with health protocols to keep everyone safe.

Because of your generous gifts, UCC will provide school supply kits and 2 uniform polo shirts for every child. Rosemont Elementary families in need have received free uniforms for 20 years as part of our extensive community outreach with The Children’s Closet, and in 2019 every student at Rosemont Elementary received uniform shirts through this ministry. The Children’s Closet currently provides over 8,000 uniforms a year in 82 elementary and 26 middle FWISD schools.

If you would like to give to the supply drive and/or support our partnership with Rosemont, please visit [universitychristian.org/supplydrive](https://universitychristian.org/supplydrive).



# Celebrations *AND* Transitions

April-June 2020

## New Members



Bailey Cannon



Matt & Jacey George



Lee & Chandry Manzke



Matt Jacobs



Elaine Logue



Emily Pook

## Member Deaths

Harry Stucker, April 9

Bunny Ridgeway, April 11

Earline Prescott, April 14

Carol Lee, April 14

Jeanie Bristol Smith, April 20

Pat Record, May 4

Frances Tomlinson, May 9

Harold Turney, May 10

Dottie Castleberry, May 16

Mary Frances Butler, May 18

Irma Gene Cooper, May 18

Mildred Jones, June 3

Bob Hughes, June 14

Bill Hrach Jr., June 15



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# Notes.

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