

## **2023-2024 Annual Report of the Worship & Music Committee**

### **First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta**

**Members:** Adeline Bailey, Reverend Kathryn Hawbaker, Martha McGovern (chair), Maggie Meyer, Suzyn Mills, Annie Warmke (Martha Webster – Choir Director; Randall Kidder – Pianist; Jane Tumas-Serna – Design & Decoration; Nancy Luthy – Board Liaison)

**Mission:** The mission of the Worship and Music Committee is to collaborate with the minister in planning and presenting meaningful and inspiring worship services of high quality.

#### **Goals:**

- Strive to achieve worship services that challenge the intellect, promote spiritual growth, connect emotionally, develop a sense of community, and inspire the congregation to action.
- Bring in speakers and provide services that represent diverse points of view.
- Continue to provide services and activities that promote interaction across the life span (generations) within the life of FUUSM.
- Increase the involvement of the congregation in the musical elements of the service through performances and hymn singing.
- Expand outreach to the community through performances and activities.
- Develop and encourage lay participation. Continue to recruit lay worship associates and leaders and provide ongoing guidance for laypersons to develop and deliver effective worship services.
- Strengthen a collaborative style of worship planning among the Worship Committee members, Worship Associates, members of the congregation and the minister, and (when it is reactivated) members of the BRIDGES Program Council.

#### **Highlights of the 2023-2024 Year in Relation to Stated Goals**

1. In terms of worship services, the Committee has endeavored to balance continuity and variety. We continued to organize services around the theme questions of “How can we be mindful and authentic in cherishing all life?” and “How could we tire of hope? – so much is in bud” (words of Denise Levertov) as well as the concept of Active Hope and other UUA suggested themes and programs.
2. To address the goals of solidifying community and expanding our outreach, we have identified the first Sunday of each month as a “Bring a Friend” opportunity and have had several follow-up workshops after services (Jenni Papp – on RE for young people and Janice Terry and George Banziger -- conflict resolution). To raise community awareness and participation, Roger Kalter, Annie Warmke, Jane Tumas-Serna, and Rev. Kat Hawbaker facilitated an eclectic display of art by artists of the congregation and the wider community.
3. We have continued our consistent acknowledgement of indigenous peoples in services, and Native Americans have been speakers and musicians for several worship services.
4. Choir Director Martha Webster has established a library for choir music and plans to expand its storage area as well as create a work station. She is honoring copyright laws by buying copies of sheet music for all members of the choir. Under her able leadership, Choir has performed once per month and for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

5. We routinely incorporate recorded vocal and instrumental music, and Pianist Randall Kidder continues to expand his musical repertoire and to enhance services with his inspired selections.
6. We have continued to encourage lay participation. During this year we have had 23 lay-led services, and we included voices of members and friends in both virtual and in-person statements and musical performances (LeeAnn Gallucci, Josie Jeffery, Griffin Jeffery, Laura DeLancy, Gerry Spiegler, Riley Brumbaugh). Also, Green Sanctuary planned and presented a Sunday worship service. We have expanded the number of people who are willing to serve as Worship Leaders: Adeline Bailey, Andrew Clovis, Virginia Henthorn, Dawn Hewitt, Chris Jacobs, Kelcey Jacobs, Mark Krivchenia, Nancy Luthy, Martha McGovern, Suzyn Mills, Rebecca Phillips.
7. We have been able to present diverse perspectives by using recorded materials from UUA, General Assembly and other UU congregations. We also have had 10 services with guest speakers: Steve Free, RE Director Jennifer Papp, Denise Thomas, Drew Waepew-Awaehsaeh, Sara Swisher, Janice Terry, Ph.D., and the Rev. Hilary Krivchenia, a retired UU minister.
8. Before the beginning of her Sabbatical, Reverend Hawbaker led 29 Sunday worship services and was able to hold non-Sunday morning observances (e.g., Solstices) and the Christmas Eve candlelight service (in person and on Zoom).
9. We have continued to weave diverse world faiths into our services by having representatives of various faiths and highlighting holidays, observing World Interfaith Harmony Week, and exploring concepts from the perspectives of multiple faiths.
10. We have consistently included a Time for All Ages in services and are communicating with the childcare staff so they can prepare relevant follow-up activities.

### **Future Plans**

In this upcoming year, we will:

1. Revitalize Time for All Ages teams.
2. Establish a display of thematic books available for borrowing and organize the total book collection for the young people.
3. Support the renewal of the BRIDGES program and collaborate on planning integrated activities.
4. Reenergize the Worship Associates Team.
5. Continue improvement of our technology capabilities for both in-church and virtual services and maintain and expand our use of new worship resources.

### **Thank You**

The Worship and Music Committee wishes to thank the many individuals who have contributed to the worship services this year and to express our gratitude to the congregation as a whole for its support and constructive feedback. We especially appreciate the aesthetic attention that Jane Tumas-Serna has given to the seasonal and thematic displays in the Sanctuary. We are grateful to Mike Bailey, Elaine Barr, Kat Hawbaker, Ralph Olander, Al Tuttle, and Jonathan Brier for their efforts to acquire new technology and their willingness to learn new skills in order to produce a variety of effective services for both in-Sanctuary and virtual participants. We are, indeed, a beloved community.

Respectfully submitted, Martha McGovern, Chair, Worship & Music Committee