



## **CUUPS Annual Report July 2020- June 2021**

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# President's Report for July 2020-September 2021

by Rev. Jerrie Hildebrand

As President, it continues to be challenging to lead during the pandemic. The board has had challenges just as we are clear our members have also. Our chapters are always in our hearts as we read or hear from you. Personally, I am inspired watching congregations and chapters step up inventing new ways to support and grow.

## Key Accomplishments this Year:

- Two programs at General Assembly
  - Virtual General Assembly Summer Solstice Ritual
    - Supported by individual members and chapters
  - Voices of the Earth Presentation
    - Interview with Selena Fox, Andras Corban-Arthen and Starhawk
- Became a sponsor of General Assembly
  - Held a raffle of 3 one year memberships
  - Hosted a virtual bardic bonfire circle
  - Hosted a virtual exhibit hall both with information about CUUPS
  - Set up slides for promoting CUUPS
- Became a sponsor of the Parliament of the World Religions
- Supporting new chapters & those dissolving
- Started Meetups on the second Saturday of the month for members and chapter leaders
- Supported chapters in creating ritual and meetings online during the pandemic.
- Updated Website by adding and FAQ of common questions
- Growth of membership went up to 464 Members

**Board Meetings** These have occurred monthly on the last Wednesday of the month via Zoom. We have had an average of 100% participation by all board members. As a working board we get a fair amount of work done as a small team. We are excited to be in the middle of a search for new board members.

**Financial & Business Changes:** We have worked to get all accounts that CUUPS owns under the organizational tracking. Please see the Treasurer's report.

**General Assembly – Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Online:** This year CUUPS had one program on the schedule at the General Assembly.

**Annual Summer Solstice Ritual** for our online General Assembly. The ritual was set up for people to watch throughout the weekend and after in the on-demand library and is now running for the next several months for participants who attended the event.

Board member Cat R. organized a well-received Summer Solstice Celebration. Board members Om Prakash and Jerrie Hildebrand led blessings, prayers, and poems.

Musicians Rev. Mary Grigolia, Rick Harmouris, Abigail Spinner McBride, Spiral Rhythm, and S.J. Tucker permitted us to use their music. Elemental invocations were created by chapters

from Marietta, GA; Orlando, FL; Louisville, KY; Frederick, MD; Binghamton, NY; Tahlequah, OK; and Denton, TX. Photographs were sent from CUUPs chapters in Prescott, AZ; Pasadena, CA; Chicago, IL; and Wyoming Valley, PA, along with individual CUUPs members Eric Eldrich, Heather N., Mary M., Jenny Spirko, and Sean Thomas for the highlights reel. Readers and other participants whose readings and blessings were read included Linda Barnes, Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, Rev. Leslie Takahashi, Janel Marie, Chris Struble, and Leann Struble.

Thank you all for sending your parts for Cat R. to string together and create the video. For those who wish to see the view go to our YouTube video by [clicking here](#).

**Voices of the Earth** was presented in the same on-demand format. We are forever grateful for the video techs at the UUA for supporting us in editing the quality. We managed to get the video down from 120 minutes to a 90 minute presentation. We are hoping to create a special showing at an online convocation this coming winter coupled with other workshops and presenters.

Next year we hope to see many of you in Portland, OR for the 2022 General Assembly!

**Calling for Volunteers:** Non-profit religious organization need volunteers. CUUPS is no different. The level of work our membership, chapters, congregations and denomination need from CUUPS is larger than what our small board can produce. Volunteerism is low.

Currently we are focusing on the basics of running the organization paying attention to updating all chapter information and supporting businesses.

**Nominating Committee:** A big thank you to Joan VanBecelaere for continuing in this role this year. We have empty seats we would love to fill. If you are interested write to us at [info@cuups.org](mailto:info@cuups.org).

**Inter- and Intra- Faith Relations:** The board continues to network with other organizations in the earth spirituality and Pagan communities. This year continues to be challenging for many due to the pandemic. The board will be attending the Parliament of the World Religions online in October.

If you are interested in participating in this please go to [parliamentofreligions.org](http://parliamentofreligions.org).

**E-Newsletters:** Four email newsletters have gone out since last Summer to approximately 3,750 people. The open rates are steady newsletters have been beating industry averages for open rates at 25-30%.

**Website Development:** Membership registration can be done there via online or downloading a form, printing it and sending it via US Mail. You can download and print membership cards.

**Social Media:** We have worked to keep up with Social media with a small team. The lists have a variety of people who post. It is an opportunity to educate about UU Paganism. Currently we are not able to constantly manage Twitter. The statistics for our social media outlets as of August was:

<a href="#">Main Facebook public page</a>	19,773
<a href="#">Facebook Members Group</a>	Grown 34% since the end of July. 5,315
<a href="#">Facebook CUUPS Bulletin group</a>	1,843 Followers
<a href="#">Facebook Nature's Sacred Journey page</a>	457 Followers
<a href="#">Twitter</a>	We should check into HootSuite so the post activity to twitter is the same as FB. HootSuite does this automatically.
<a href="#">CUUPS Chapter Facilitators</a>	Unused until facilitators are confirmed and verified by their congregations.
<b>Instagram</b>	This reaches a younger demographic than FB. We are investigating this outlet to better serve young adults. We will be looking into HootSuite so the post activity to twitter is the same as FB. HootSuite does this automatically.
<a href="#">CUUPS Podcast</a>	32 podcasts listed of past General Assembly presentations are hosted here.

### What's Next:

**Covid-19 adaption:** Supporting chapters and members through the Covid-19 pandemic with innovative ways to create ritual and share with the organization.

**Chapter Updating:** Membership is contacting chapter leaders and churches to validate actual working chapters and to be clear chapters are in covenant with their congregations and CUUPS. We want to support everyone in healthy chapters and relationships!

**Communications:** Strengthening the tools we use to share and hear from members. Social media development.

**Overall:** Continuing to support the membership of the organization and earth-centered and Pagan spirituality in the UUA.

### In Gratitude...

I am forever grateful for the teamwork of this board. The past two years have been tough but you the members fuel what it takes to gather ourselves up and be in service.

Many thanks to all of our chapter organizers, members, home congregations, ministers and religious professionals, and so on in the denomination. You are the reason for our work. I thank you on behalf of all of the entire board of CUUPS.

Submitted in Service,

Rev. Jerrie Hildebrand  
President, CUUPS, Inc.  
[president@cuups.org](mailto:president@cuups.org)

## Membership 2020-2021 Annual Report

by Rev. Debra Gilbert

This has been a year like no other. The main focus for Membership is connecting with CUUPs members and chapters. Membership worked to create and maintain relationships with CUUPs members including active members, potential members, lapsed members, chapter representatives and UU congregations.

This past year, the Covid pandemic has had a huge effect on the world, our country and in turn, our CUUPs chapters. For reasons of safety, CUUPs groups were no longer able to meet in person. This effect of the Covid Pandemic changed the landscape for everyone and chapters searched for other ways to be meaningful to its members.

Zoom Technology and [Facebook Live](#) seem to be the two most popular ways the CUUPs chapters have been in contact with their members. One benefit of this new way of connection is that geography is no longer a factor for attendance. Some CUUPs members have relayed that they have had visitors attend their rituals that live across the country and this participation has enriched both parties.

Also new this year, CUUPs Members have participated in monthly Facebook Second Saturday Brainstorm and Fellowship sessions hosted by Cat Rigby, CUUPs Board secretary. Each month, CUUPs members get together, share chapter highlights, brainstorm ideas for upcoming rituals and get to know each other. Are you interested in joining this second Saturday Facebook event? [Please go to our CUUPs Facebook page](#) for more details.

Membership was in constant communication with CUUPs Board about membership and chapter issues. The board used a team approach for intervention and follow up that has proved to be successful. Besides working with active members and chapters, Membership has been committed to reaching out to members whose membership has lapsed to invite them to become an active CUUPs member. A special note of thanks is given to the CUUPs Treasurer who worked in partnership with Membership throughout the year.

Membership worked closely with other members of the board to prepare for Virtual General Assembly. It was exciting to see so many of our CUUPs chapters participate in our Summer Solstice Celebration which was pre-recorded for GA and the first CUUPs virtual Bardic Fire Circle which was a live Zoom event.

CUUPs hosted an online exhibit hall complete with flyers about CUUPS, Membership, and Chapter Applications. Membership also coordinated the first ever Membership GA raffle where we had three winners for our one year CUUPs memberships. Congrats to the GA raffle winners and welcome to CUUPs.

Sadly, a change in life circumstances caused the need for Glen Morrison, to resign from the board. Glen assisted with Membership and was in training to lead Membership after my current term expired. We were sad to see Glen leave and wish him well in future endeavors.

This year, Membership has begun a Chapter Verification project. This project included contacting 107 chapters that were listed on the CUUPs website to verify chapter status, verify chapter contact information and to update the Chapter Directory listing. A note of appreciation to all those who have responded to emails, had discussions or assisted Membership in this project. New and potential members are always looking at CUUPs Chapter locations on our website to find a CUUPs chapter to attend and Membership wants to make sure that they can find your Chapter.

If you have had changes in chapter leadership or changes in email or contact information, let Membership know at [membership@cuups.org](mailto:membership@cuups.org).

Sadly, some of our CUUPs chapters have struggled and several have closed. Membership has talked with some of the CUUPs members of these chapters to offer support and guidance. Our hope is that like a phoenix, a new CUUPs chapter in those cities will emerge in the future.

Membership regularly attended monthly board meetings and worked in concert with the rest of the Board throughout the year.

In closing, I would like to personally thank all the members and chapter representatives that have worked with this committee and me. This has been a year like none other and Membership has been honored to be a part of your spiritual journey with CUUPs.

Blessings,

Debra

Debra Gilbert

Vice President of CUUPs Membership

[membership@cuups.org](mailto:membership@cuups.org)

## **Ministerial Relations Report for July 2020-June 2021**

by Om Prakash (Rev. Dr. John Gilmore)

I began to formally serve on the CUUPS Board September of 2017 in the Ministerial and Right Relations position. I have worked to inform various groups within the UU Movement, via, Facebook and email, about who we are as an institution, what activities we are engaged in, what resources we have, and how they can plug into our activities.

I attended monthly meetings as well as others focusing on specific tasks like General Assembly Planning, GA Ritual Planning, and some Executive Committee meetings. No GA face to face this year, but I did register and worked with Don Plante to explore our options for presenting at the 2021 GA. During the virtual GA I took the opportunity to explore some of the offerings at GA and to at least virtually reconnect with some of the groups of which I was a part for many years during active ministry. I also helped pass on information to various members of the CUUPS Board who were working in the virtual exhibition hall, and helped facilitate one of our programs and took part in the second.

I have been in contact with ministers, as necessary, offering any type of information they might need and in order for them to become more familiar with what a CUUPS chapter would mean for the larger home congregation.

I have also made myself available to various groups as needed, and am working within the CUUPS missions and goals to broaden our associations with other groups and to become more multicultural.

In lieu of this, I am still working in that direction by posting some of our activities on various social media platforms to inform people that we are available to aid in their spiritual search for truth and meaning and having conversations when the opportunity arises to discuss what we are doing as a Board and affiliate of the UUA.

Namaste,

John (Om Prakash) Gilmore  
CUUPS Right Relations  
[rightrelations@cuups.org](mailto:rightrelations@cuups.org)

## Secretary Report for July 2020 - June 2021

by Catherine Rigby

I have the honor and privilege of serving you as the current CUUPs Secretary. I was elected in mid November 2019 for a term of 2019- 2022. I began serving Dec 2019. This completes my second year serving in this role.

My main responsibilities lie in administration. My primary duties include

- Assisting the president in creating the monthly Board agenda
- Attending and taking the monthly CUUPs Board Meeting minutes
- Creating filing systems for the organization and managing the records and files in them
- Answering [info@cuups.org](mailto:info@cuups.org) and [secretary@cuups.org](mailto:secretary@cuups.org)
- Sending letters of condolence and congratulations to CUUPs members and chapters as their life events have become known to CUUPs
- Assembling the annual report after BOT members turn in their materials and then taking minutes at the Annual Meeting.
- Assisting the president and other officers as needed.

Other weekly/monthly tasks this year included helping CUUPs chapter leaders and members connect. I did this by

- Getting to know more of the CUUPs members by participating on Facebook groups regularly
  - [Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans - CUUPS](#) (CUUPs members group)
  - [CUUPS Chapter Central](#) (CUUPs chapter Leaders groups)
- Hosting nine 2nd Saturday “Brainstorm and Fellowship” gatherings over Zoom from 7 PM - 9 PM Eastern Time where attendees can talk about how the last ritual went on their own or with their chapter, brainstorm ideas for next ritual, then talk about what is on their minds and give opportunity to share wisdom, connect, and collaborate with others.

The first year was 9 sessions from Oct 24, 2020 to May 2021 with June off for General Assembly. This event continues this year. CUUPs participants are taking more “ownership” of what topics they want and “mini panelists” are coming out to share their

experiences to help other leaders.

- Collecting dates for the CUUPs Worship List (<https://tinyurl.com/CUUPsWorshipList>) and sharing it online. Later archiving old ritual dates and updating the document to be the current one.

My annual tasks included work for General Assembly:

- Collaborating with the participating CUUPs chapters and members and helping them make their video clips.
- Collaborating with musicians for permission to use music and working with treasurer to buy a music license or leave them a tangible “thank you” donation in their online tip jars
- Doing the video production work on the CUUPs Summer Solstice Ritual for Virtual General Assembly June 23-27, 2021. The video was offered in the “on demand” library during General Assembly and is now archived at the CUUPs YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHMfQIHbh68&t=5s>
- Attending the Virtual General Assembly and participating in workshops helpful to my work with CUUPS National. Being present when possible in the Virtual Exhibit from CUUPs and answering any CUUPs related questions posted on the GA Boards.
- Hosting a “Virtual Bonfire / Baric Circle Lite” social at General Assembly where attendees could share stories, songs, readings, and more. This was also the spot for the raffle winners to be pulled from the bowl and announced. When the main event was over, guests could hang back to talk to CUUPs Board members for a time. Several guests shared the virtual bonfire was one of their GA highlight events.

I would like to thank both CUUPs members and the CUUPs BOT for a great year! I really appreciate being part of a working board where we can help each other out and work together as a team toward common goals and projects!

I look forward to continuing to serve you in 2021-2022.

Warmest regards,

Cat Rigby  
CUUPs Secretary  
[secretary@cuups.org](mailto:secretary@cuups.org)

## Treasurer Report for July 2020-June 2021

By Ron Zorn

Here is where we are at the end of the fiscal year.

### Balance in accounts as of June 30, 2020:

5/3 bank	\$ 18,797.04
PayPal	\$ 559.98
UUCEF	\$ 16,021.35 (UU Common Endowment Fund)
TOTAL	\$ 35,378.37

### Fiscal year (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) expenses are outlined below:

Wells Fargo final Fees	\$42.42
Liberated Syndication Podcast Fees Yearly	\$84.00
Inffinipay fees	\$376.02
Donation to Circle Sanctuary Lady Liberty League completed in honor of Carrill (Afaire) Lee Mills.	\$100.00
To David Pollard for social media for September 2020	\$100.00
Wild Apricot Yearly	\$972.00
PO BOX renewal til July 2022	\$540.00
Re-mail Services	\$36.11
Zoom Fees - Yearly	\$159.80

Prison Newsletter - Ink, stamps, paper	\$292.63
Constant Contact Yearly	\$588.00
UUA Dues Yearly	\$500.00
Wild Apricot Fees Yearly for website/membership portal	\$972.00
<b>UUA – General Assembly Expenses In Detail</b>	
Gold Registration for CUUPs	\$2400.00
Board Registrations	\$800.00
Speaker registrations	\$600.00
Donations to Musicians for use of their music on Ritual for GA	\$200
<b>Parliament of World Religions Expenses In Detail</b>	
Parliament of World's Religions Membership	\$1250.00
Board Registrations for Parliament	\$200.00
Total Expenses	\$10,212.98

**Non-Membership income and donations:**

PayPal Annual Giving fund income	\$25.00
Amazon Smile	\$29.23
Total	\$54.23

It has been a pleasure serving as your Treasurer this year!

Ron Zorn

CUUPS Treasurer

[treasurer@cuups.org](mailto:treasurer@cuups.org)

## Volunteering with CUUPS

We love all of our members and chapters and invite you to volunteer with us. Many hands make for lighter work they say. Contact Jerrie Hildebrand at [president@cuups.org](mailto:president@cuups.org) with ideas, and any interest you have in participating with us.

## Many Thanks...

CUUPS exists because of a vision brought forth in 1986 to support UU's who honored the Earth and celebrated it. Today we are a covenanting community of the UUA.

Our vision and mission statement says:

The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) is an organization dedicated to networking Pagan-identified Unitarian Universalists (UUs), educating people about Paganism, promoting interfaith dialogue, developing Pagan liturgies and theologies, and supporting Pagan-identified UU religious professionals.

The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) was chartered by the Unitarian Universalist Association at the General Assembly in 1987 for purposes of enabling:

- networking among Pagan Identified UUs; providing outreach of Unitarian Universalism to the broader Pagan community continentally.
- providing educational materials on Paganism for Unitarian Universalist congregations and the general public.
- promoting Pagan - Jewish & Christian dialogue; encouraging the development of theo/allogical and liturgical materials based on earth and nature centered religious and spiritual perspectives.
- encouraging greater use of music, dance, visual arts, poetry, story, and creative ritual in Unitarian Universalist worship and celebration.
- providing support for Pagan-identified UU religious professionals and ministerial students; and fostering healing relationships with our mother, the Earth and all her children.

Thank you members, supporters, ministers, board chairs, governing bodies in churches, and all who support CUUPS. We so appreciate you and honor you.

Here is to next year!