



**uu santa fe**  
MANY WINDOWS, ONE LIGHT

February 8, 2022

Dear Friends,

You, the members and friends and volunteers and staff of UU Santa Fe, are quite wonderful. Thanks to your patience, flexibility, commitment and generosity UU Santa Fe is not just surviving the pandemic, we are thriving in this strange time:

- Viewership is up. We have 600 subscribers to our YouTube channel.
- About 250 people watch the most recent Sunday service in the course of the week.
- Membership is steady and we have added 20 new members since the pandemic began in March 2020
- Group participation is up. Thanks to Steven's dedication in teaching all of us how to Zoom, our group participation in the last 2 years has increased from about 120 participants to over 300. That's more than our membership!
- Giving is up. We have done several fundraisers and special appeals in the last year. We funded our solar project, we celebrated Gail's first decade at UU Santa Fe and raised nearly \$14,000 to support the endowment, you have donated generously to support our community partners. We held a mega sale and a book sale and a Mardi Gras auction and we have exceeded our goals every single time.

As we said – you are amazing.

Now we need you to do something much less glamorous but just as important—the next step in amazing is to fully fund our 2022-2023 operating budget. Let us tell you why: In the course of this pandemic we have changed. We have become a multi-platform congregation.

That means that worship, small groups, neighborhood groups, classes, committees, social justice efforts, fund raising and everything else we do happen on-line as well as on-site when possible. Part of what's so cool about being a multi-platform community is that when COVID is quiescent and we can be together things can happen in hybrid form, both on site and online. And when COVID is active and we need to be careful (or when the weather is bad) we can move completely on line. We don't need to miss a beat. Being multi-platform means that time and location are no longer barriers to participation at UU Santa Fe. We have old friends who have participated from central America and others in hospice who were able to come to worship even after they were home-bound.

But it is more work for volunteers and for staff. Multiplatform ministry means we need to envision every offering in at least 2 formats and we need to take extra care to stay connected by telephone and email.

Our experience (at UU Santa Fe and across the UUA) for the last 23 months has persuaded us that a multi-platform congregation that allows people to participate online, onsite or hybrid as circumstances and preferences dictate is the future of church. We have an amazing team of volunteers and staff that has made our transition to this new multi-platform world pretty smooth, but we had no idea when we started this that it would be permanent. Now that we are aware that it is the shape of community for the foreseeable future we need to staff for that future.

You may not be aware of how lucky we have been with Steven Mead—our program ministry staff member. We hired Steven as a consulting religious educator five years ago, but we got so much more. Steven's deep knowledge of Unitarian Universalism, his organizational abilities and his tech skills were a major reason we navigated the pandemic as well as we have. His efficiency and flexibility meant that we were able to shift his job description as program demanded. His generosity allowed us to reallocate some of his hours and compensation this past year to upgrade our bookkeeping position to a Business Manager and relieve some stress on our dedicated volunteers.

That down shift in program support and tech support showed us just how much Steven has been doing and we realized that we really do need at least a ¾ time program ministry staff position to sustain the level of programming we presently have. If we want to deepen our in-reach programming and widen our outreach we will need even more staff hours. But that's still in the future.

For the 2022-2023 budget year we need to increase pledging enough to sustain our current program level and take a little stress off our tech and computer volunteers. With inflation being what it is (over 5% in 2021)—that looks like a 12% increase in pledge income. We know not everyone can afford to increase their giving by 12% but if the folks who have more can give more than 12% and the folks who have less can increase at least a little and the folks who aren't pledging at all can take the plunge and donate something we will make it work.

These are transformational times, friends, and they call for a transformed Unitarian Universalism. With the right kind of support for our teams and committees, classes and groups UU Santa Fe can continue to participate whole heartedly in UUA initiatives from UUA legislative advocacy, widening the circle, voting rights and in local efforts to end hunger and poverty, support domestic violence prevention initiatives, support fair immigration and keep our state green and beautiful.

- Together we are navigating the pandemic
- Together we are becoming a multi-platform congregation
- Together we can fund this canvas
- Together we can help heal our world

Blessings,

Rev Gail Marriner, Minister

Sherry Kraemer, President, UU Santa Fe Board of Trustees