

Sunserv (Sunday Services Team) Report

April 2022

The past year has been a busy and difficult one for Sunserv (Sunday Services Team), and the Tech Team, yet we continue to provide excellent services to the congregation, as attested by those same members in feedback. In general, we hear that the services have been meaningful, mindful, centering and inspirational.

Last summer and fall, in anticipation of her upcoming leave (vacation, education, sabbatical) starting in late December, Reverend Meghann Robern worked extra hard at managing the needs of the congregation, and delivering her fine services, which included a candlelight service in December. During this time, she often did double-duty as a Tech provider on many Sundays.

In case you have ever doubted the abilities and steadfastness of this congregation, I am here to inform you that this is definitely a let's-pitch-in, can-do kind of church. During Rev, Meghann's leave time, between December 26, 2021 and June 26, 2022, more than fifty church members will have been involved in creating wonderful services like those we have been experiencing over the past three months. Before the end of March, we had all 27 vacant Sunday speaker slots filled, right to the end of June!

In addition, another dozen people have been involved as the Tech Team, at least eight more as Pastoral Care volunteers. We have also invited four ministers and four guest speakers, and we took advantage of a national service put on by the CUC in February. Plus, the Social Justice/Green Action Team will have hosted about a half dozen services, and a church Covenant Group, the UU poets, and the A-Team have all stepped forward to deliver 26 quality services. The UUA will be streaming a General Assembly service on June 26 at 11:30 a.m. Winnipeg time.

And I am happy to say that we will have blown the entire Sunserv budget by the end of this fiscal year, save for \$3.13.

Vespers Services, at 6 p.m. on Tuesdays, was started up again midwinter by Janine Reid and Ashlyn Noble, and they do a marvelous job presenting music, meditation and words of inspiration for the first half hour, then an opportunity for conversation in the second half. One night, when I tuned in to Vespers, I met two delightful people I did not know during the conversation portion, one from Vancouver and the other from St. John, New Brunswick.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that we have felt the lack of church staff on the Team. Andrea James, who has steadfastly created wonders for the church over many years, decided to retire as DLFD last fall. Her warmth and brilliance are dearly missed.

We have scarcely had any Story Wisdoms during our services the last few months.

Our Music Director, P.J. Buchan, stepped back last autumn also, after many years of leading the Choir and the Congregation in song. His incredible works and dedication to excellence in music will never be forgotten and, still, we can hear his voice every Sunday through the more than 150 hymns he recorded

with Rev. Meghann, pianist Paul Rodermond, and Choir members. Acting Music Director Paul Rodermond took a new position in Niagara-on-the-Lake in February.

We have also had to say adieu (temporarily?) to four very busy Service Coordinators in the past several months: M.C. (Cate) Ziegler, Pamela Hardman, Darlene Payne, and Paula Wachs. These people have all made great contributions toward delivering sterling services during their times with us. Some may return as their work / home / activity situation changes over the coming months.

Presently on this amazing Team, we have Rev. Meghann (on leave Dec.26 to Jun. 26), and Service Coordinators Marian Siemens, Sarah Cummings, Kelvin Seifert, Steve Lennon, Dylan Fijal and Odell Havsdottir, who is also a Tech whiz. They have all been doing fabulous work, and have pulled rabbits out of hats many times, but some are feeling the stress of the work, and are talking about stepping back for a while. In anticipation of the amount of work it requires to put together a service, we have been implementing a new measure, whereby we try to double up on Coordinators for each service. This seems to be working quite well, and it is nice to have some help and support when preparing the services.

The Tech Team that supports the Zoom services has been expanded, thanks mostly to Odell Havsdottir and Melanie Leslie. We are in the process of creating a job description for a proposed paid Tech Person, who would probably put in five hours a week helping prepare Tech Files, and then Spotighting speakers on Sunday mornings.

Many members have asked us when we are returning to in-church services. There are now several teams involved in working to produce multi-platform services, so that all interested parties can receive our services. They are also determining what needs to be done to begin holding at least some aspects of services in the church sanctuary. Our Zoom services over the past two years have not only been reaching several of our members who could not physically come to the church, but also other people who find us through electronic media from various parts of Canada, as well as from the U.S.A.

We are learning, always learning, to be inclusive, both in terms of physical ability, but also in cognitive ability and other forms of diversity. These are common messages in many of our services. We are really striving to be truly a welcoming congregation.

We go forward with eyes wide open to the challenges that lay ahead, and with a solid determination always to make Sunday services meaningful and interesting.

We at Sunserv welcome any and all feedback.

Steve Lennon, Acting Chair for March, April