

2019-2020 UUAA Men's Fellowship Report

Submitted by Gregg Peterson

The UUAA Men's Fellowship comprises UUAA congregants who identify as men and who participate in the activities sponsored by the Men's Council. The Men's Council consists of 9 men who serve three-year staggered terms and are elected by members of the fellowship. The council provides leadership and support for activities which are designed to enhance friendships, spiritual growth and positive community engagement.

The membership of the 2019 Council included Kurt Skifstad, Craig VanKempen, Sean Reed, Mike Muha, Tom Reischl, Gregg Peterson, Jim McCargar, Jim Schaefer, and Pat Herbst. In 2020, Glenn Kime, Glenn Harris, and Kenji Yano joined the Council as Jim McCargar, Kurt Skifstad, and Craig VanKempen finished their terms.

Highlights: Nurturing a supportive community of men, now and in the future

- The 2019 Men's Retreat, held at Judson-Collins Center on Wamplers Lake, from September 20-22, 2019, was our 20th annual gathering. 50 men attended the retreat including 9 first-time attendees. The theme of "Resilience" was highlighted in small group discussions and in a session on spiritual practices, led by Reverend Manish.
- A Men's Council representative participated in the planning stages of the congregation's new and invigorated pastoral care activities and the Council continues to encourage the fellowship to actively support and attend to the pastoral needs of the congregation.
- Members of the Men's Council began a series of meetings with members of the Womyn's Council to brainstorm on future joint programming.
- The Men's Council unanimously agreed to contribute \$1,000 to the congregation's "Stone Soup" fundraising effort.
- The 2020 Men's dinner, set to feature State Representative Yousef Rabhi on the topic of "Civic Engagement", was postponed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Eight active circles continue to provide ongoing mutual support to 80+ men of the congregation. This work has continued via virtual meetings at an even greater pace since the beginning of the "stay-at-home" orders.
- Monthly breakfasts and "Men's Night[s] Out" provide an additional avenue for men to gather in community. The monthly breakfast recently moved to a *weekly* online virtual gathering in light of COVID-19.
- The Council is actively brainstorming on innovative and safe alternatives to the formats of our annual dinner and retreat in anticipation of the need for continued social distancing for the next several months.