

Pastoral Care Associates Annual Report 2019-20

Pastoral Care Associates: Cecile Bonvouloir, Karen Campbell, Moe Daniels, Roy Goodman, Hal Holway, Gail McMorrow Donahue, Barbara Spitz, Kim Steele, Diane Wolfe

The purpose of the Pastoral Care Associates (PCAs) is to extend the reach of the minister in providing pastoral presence and care to members and friends of the congregation and to support the congregants in their joys and sorrows. The PCAs meet regularly with Rev. Allison Palm and Ben Atherton-Zeman and have been active since September 2012.

The PCAs take turns being the designated PCA of the day during Sunday worship services. In this role we collect Candles Cards before the service, light candles during the “Caring Candles” time in our worship service, follow up as needed with those who submit a card, and send out the weekly email with the candles to the UU Cares email list. Throughout the year, PCAs offered care by staying in touch with those who can no longer attend church services regularly, listening to and holding space for those who needed someone to talk to, sending cards, reaching out by telephone and email, and visiting as appropriate. We have also organized members of the congregation to provide meals/rides for short periods of time for members who are in need.

This year, the PCAs started the year with an in-person training, including training on the technology needed to communicate with one another. The PCAs and staff use Trello to track pastoral needs in the congregation. Training for new PCAs will take place via Zoom in August.

Our monthly drop-in Grief Group continued this year, led by Karen Campbell. Members have continued to take advantage of this space, and we are glad to be able to point people to this resource. The meetings were cancelled the last three months of the year due to COVID-19. Karen is hoping to re-start the group in the fall in an online format.

We had planned to have a Death Cafe (small group conversations on death and dying) and a speaker from the Final Exit Network (a Death with Dignity organization) in mid-March. Unfortunately, we had to cancel both events due to COVID-19.

With the move to online church and the need for social distancing beginning in mid-March due to COVID-19, the PCAs modified their work somewhat, refraining from in-person visits. Several PCAs also served as Caring Circle Leaders beginning in early April, along with other members of the congregation. Each leader was assigned 10 households to check in on regularly during our time of social distancing. Many members deeply appreciated these check ins. We are assessing this program to decide if it is a good way to keep people connected over the next year or if something else would work better.

Roy Goodman and Karen Campbell are leaving the PCAs at the end of this church year, and Gail McMorrow Donahue is stepping into a smaller role with the PCAs. We are grateful for all that they have done in their time as Pastoral Care Associates!

The Pastoral Care Associates are always considering how best to serve the needs of the congregation. If you have ideas, feel free to reach out to Rev. Allison or one of the Associates.