

2018 Report on Membership and Caring

Submitted by Lisa M. Fuller

Active members, 42 (Members are people who have signed the membership book and participated in the life of the fellowship in the past 2 years.)

Voting members, 31 (Voting Members are people who have signed the membership book and submitted a pledge and affirmation form for the current church year.)

Friends, *LOTS & Growing!* (Friends are people who support BUUF and its mission but who have not signed the membership book.)

It's always exciting to welcome new Members and Friends to BUUF. In 2017-2018 we ingathered 1 new member, Kristen Lownds. Sadly, she and her family will be leaving BUUF this summer to start a new adventure in Kalamazoo. They will be deeply missed.

Attendance and participation is trending up with lots of new Friends. Though the past year has had terrific Sunday Service attendance, official Membership may decrease as several members relocate to new areas. Ellen Block moved in January to be closer to her family and friends. Hilary Johnson's job and heart took her to Kalamazoo. Tom Hackley and Emily Bettencourt are also leaving the area to be closer to Kalamazoo family. On behalf of the congregation, we wish them all smooth transitions to their new homes; successful, healthy futures; and all manner of bright blessings. They will be deeply missed, also.

There are exciting things happening at BUUF. Unquestionably one of the most exciting things to happen over the past year was the very successful introduction of Parents' Night Out. PNO was championed by Rev. Jim McConnell, whose wife Patty advised *'you're missing a great opportunity if you don't start providing some support for your parents of young children'* after visiting BUUF for the 2017 Christmas Eve service. The BUUF board approved funding for PNO childcare and assumed responsibility for recruiting adult volunteers to assist with dinner and games at the church while parents enjoyed some much appreciated free time. Between 5 and 7 families participated monthly March – May, with 8-10 children present at BUUF for each event. Paid childcare is provided by Dean Jackson Adams (son of Keely Adams) and Daphne Martz (daughter of Vanessa and Tracie Crenshaw). Adult volunteers have included Rev. Jim, myself, Dennis and Ellen Higdon, and Gloria Weberg. Parents' Night Out is a fun way for BUUF generations to interact, and *you're missing a great opportunity if you aren't participating!*

This fellowship is the community of ourselves. In addition to many other acts of kindness, caring and reaching out, BUUFers provided support for Erin Hamilton after the birth of her daughter, Iris, last August; Jim Fuller surrounding his October back surgery; and is assisting with travel and other needs for a member receiving medical treatment out of town. Every week I hear about other gestures of caring that occur within our fellowship. To actively live our BUUF affirmation, consider accepting an invitation to help one another.

As we contribute to the life of this community, we affirm our lives within it. Over the next year Rev. Jim and I plan to resume regular UU Allcomers gatherings and re-introduce Circle Suppers. UU

Allcomers is an enjoyable way for people new to BUUF to learn a little about BUUF's history and future plans, and get to know others better. Circle Suppers are small potluck dinners hosted in members homes. They've been a UU tradition of fellowship for decades and it would be great for BUUFers to participate in them again!

Our community is fortunate to have BUUF, a caring, religious community dedicated to diversity of thought, social and environmental justice, and peace for all. If you feel ready to become a member of this Fellowship, let me know. But whether you honor BUUF with your membership, or choose Friend status--someone who supports BUUF without becoming a member--**your support and engagement in this fellowship is deeply appreciated, and vital for every individual searching for spiritual meaning.**

Blessed be. May it be so. Amen, amin, ameen.

Lisa Fuller