

Minister's Report to Annual Meeting 2022

BUUF exists is to provide a safe place where we can learn to live more authentic, creative lives and to be a healing force in the wider community. So, how did we do in 2021/2022?

Pretty darned good, actually. I am gratified by the work that various committees such as: the Social Justice Committee, Green Sanctuary, Building and Grounds, and Welcoming Congregation Committee have done. I am also extremely thankful for all the wonderful work our Religious Education Department has done for our kids and adults. Further, I deeply appreciate all the contributions of the more behind the scenes committees such as Endowment, Worship, Nominations, and Membership.

On top of all this, we have become masters of Zoom. I really am in awe of our technical people and how they have engineered hybrid services that are for most of us very satisfying.

Other areas that deserve honorable mention are:

- Our BUUF Board for providing excellent leadership in difficult times.
- The surprising fact that, even in the midst of Covid, our membership keeps growing.
- Our pledge drives which have been visionary, creative, and effective, --
- The quality of our music would probably be the envy of much larger churches.

-We have expanded our work at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen from 6 times a year to 12.

-Our Gift Bag Program continues.

-We are restarting our Parents Night Out program.

-Our bulletins and the Weekly Announce are simply stellar in quality.

-Lay participation in our Sunday services has increased and our services are much, much better for it.

-We have put a large concrete patch on our driveway.

- And, we have managed to create really lovely and satisfying hybrid services.

We have done very well. We continue to be the voice of liberal religion in Berrien County, and most importantly, we continue to learn how to open ourselves to Love, the sacred heart of all creation.

I will, in September, begin my 14th year as minister of BUUF. I get a lot of personal satisfaction and enjoyment from being a part of BUUF. My heart is filled with gratitude. Thank you, everyone.

Rev. Jim McConnell