**UUCGN 2020 Annual Meeting – President’s Report, March 29, 2020**

As our religious community and each of our families struggle with how to live, work and just be with each other in the midst of a pandemic virus threat, it is this community itself which I believe is moving into a central place in our lives. That place ultimately is the commitment we share to love and take care of each other. This is despite confusion, fear and physical separation we all endure, and despite foolishness and incompetence that seems to infect some of our civic leadership.

I am writing my last report to you as your president since April, 2018 and I want to focus on leadership and vision because those goals are central to the duties of UUCGN’s leadership. Even though I’ve been a member for 27 years, I have learned a great deal new about our beloved community. This community has been wonderfully loving and caring for me and my family over these years and is why I have stepped up to take leadership roles here. I plan to continue to contribute as best I can. I know I am not alone in this community benefit and that is one big reason we are growing. As we have grown, many changes and challenges have emerged, which points to the need for a frank talk. We need a clearly articulated vision of UUCGN’s future that we all can buy into in order to develop leadership, strategic responses to growth, and programs that support that vision – on purpose rather than by chance.

I know it is hard to think of anything but this virus, but it is just this kind of huge societal threat that helps us realize how important this place is. The Board of Trustees, along with many of you, for some time have been pursuing a vision for our community that clarifies where we all want to be in five or more years. We will be re-engaging in that congregation-wide conversation as soon as we are able to reassemble, which may not be for some time. However, even while we are homebound, under the guidance of the Communications and Creating Our Future 2025 Committees, we have been exploring ways to pursue preliminary small group discussions by electronic conferencing, based on all the work that has already been done (see: <https://www.uunaples.org/creating-our-future>). We may use professional facilitation for the 355 of us to get to that shared vision. Is social justice fundamental to our purpose? Who do we want sitting with us in services, discussions, marches and in committee rooms? How do we get our needs met – staff, volunteers, training? And more…

With a sense of that shared vision, I believe we then need to be very purposeful about who we invite to join us, and who we choose for our leadership. If we value diversity and widening our circle of friendship, that requires us clearly to be open to inviting racially, economically and culturally different visitors, members and leaders. Perhaps less obvious, we should also consider:

• working people

• women

• seasonal people

• families with children

• young adults

As we elect a new Board of Trustees and look for leadership of our vital program committees, like Safety and Security, Social Justice, Religious Exploration and Adult Enrichment, and eventually emerge from under this pandemic cloud, we should focus on how we can all participate in widening our circle of loving community. It is sorely needed.