

Carol Pawlak
Joy Schroeder
Narrators

Bridget Greuel
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Interviewer

Carol Pawlak: CP
Joy Schroeder: JS
Bridget Greuel: BG

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Abstract: Carol Pawlak and Joy Schroeder are two long-time members of Unitarian Church North at 13800 N. Port Washington Road in Mequon, Wisconsin. The interview is approximately an hour long and took place in the Emerson Meeting Room at the church. Carol and Joy discussed how they came to be members of the church, what they appreciate about the congregation, and some of their memories. The shared past congregational challenges and their concerns for the future of the church. Church programs and specific events are described, as are their thoughts about some of the past ministers of the church. The democratic decision-making processes of the church are described, as well as the congregation's need for near-unanimous choices and consensus building. A brief explanation of the mission of the Unitarian Church North and how it relates to Unitarian Universalism is included. The interview took place as part of the Gathering Places project at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. For more information, see <https://uwm.edu/gatheringplaces>.

Bridget Greuel (BG): This is Bridget Greuel, and I am recording at Unitarian Church North on April 23rd, 2022. It is about 1:20 pm on a Saturday afternoon and I'm here with two church members. I'd like to ask you to say your name and to spell it and just let me know how you'd like me to refer to you.

Joy Schroeder (JS): Officially I'm L. first initial Joy Schroeder S-C-H-R-O-E-D-E-R and I've always been called by my middle name Joy.

Carol Pawlak (CP): I'm Carol Pawlak C-A-R-O-L P-A-W-L-A-K and Carol is fine.

BG: I'd just like for the understanding that you've agreed to talk to me today about Unitarian Church North. The first thing I'd like to ask is how long you've been a member and what made you decide to become a member at Unitarian Church North.

JS: I became a member with my husband in, I think it was February of 1992, so that we've been members for 30 years. What made us join, I wanted to [chuckle] have, we visited the church first when the first Gulf War was going on. I was a nurse and an older mother with a baby that I was nursing, and I wanted to make sure that I had documentation to be considered a conscientious objector. I had heard a rumor that somebody that the government might start drafting people who were had a medical background. Anyway, my husband wanted to join a church for our children to have some religious education. He was, he's recovering Catholic, so we chose this church. We attended an orientation session and I remember Pat Mumm emphatically saying you can join this church if you just want to have contacts with people who have a like mind, you can have social contacts here and that convinced me. We had been part of a peace group and that was kind of our church before a church and then I thought you know that it would be nice. We lived in West Bend and had

lived in Milwaukee before we had more of a liberal community down there, so it was nice for us to be having contacts of like people, who are like minded here.

CP: I joined the church in February 1999. Our minister then was fairly new, and I had been, I had attended the church and really liked the services. But before that I had been a member of Unitarian Church West and I had, before that, I had been a Lutheran, and when I began actually exploring other denominations and attended the Unitarian Church West in Brookfield there was a lay-led service and the message from that service was that wherever you are on your spiritual journey that's OK and I said to myself this is where I belong and that's why I am I'm still here at this Unitarian church.

BG: How would you describe Unitarian Church North to someone who didn't know anything about it or had never heard of Unitarian Universalist?

JS: First you have to say that a UU religion, a UU church stands for freedom of religion. UU started the church as a Christian Church but at this point not many UUs would call themselves Christian, but, in a fundamentalist way, except they might practice living as a christian might say in small letters Christian [chuckle]. Anyway, our members are dedicated to social justice and democracy, and we've been asked several times as the church evolves if we want to change our vision statement and nobody on the board time and again wants to change it: that UCN provides a light of religious freedom in the warmth of a caring community. It just seems like we base our programming on that.

CP: Could you repeat the question?

BG: How would you describe Unitarian Church North to someone who'd never heard of the church and wasn't at all familiar with Unitarian Universalist.

CP: I would describe us as a place where anyone would feel welcome and there are no restrictions on what you can believe. That doesn't mean necessarily that we believe anything and everything. It's a place that for me coming from another background I feel like I can keep on learning and growing, and I can change. After reviewing some of the religious background that I've had, I have changed. So that's what is open to anyone who comes: acceptance and the ability to grow in the way that you want to.

BG: Tell me about one of your favorite memories.

JS: I have so many, let's see, well, I was allowed to organize a barn dance a couple of times so that was one of my favorite memories, actually. [chuckle] We had a caller and a little ensemble, and we did some Contra dances and we had a meal. We did it twice, I think. But so, one of my favorite memories included Carol and her husband in their 80s following a dance that was very rapid. They were keeping up with it just fine. It's just wonderful family kind of fun. Another good memory for me is we had a small organization of parents with children, young children, that was organized by a couple of the members, the mothers. It was called POTAI, parents of toddlers and infants. We later called it UUFO: UU Families Organization. We had you know organized an outing once a month or something you know like we went to the zoo, we did some sledding, we had maple syrup at our house, breakfast, and it was just great for parents to be able to talk to and support each other. Then my favorite, favorite memory is when I had cancer treatment, there was a person on the pastoral care committee Carol Broman that organized volunteers for our family. We got meals for weeks. We got childcare at the drop of a hat when I had to go to the hospital. We got financial support. We got emotional support. It was just wrap around, what I would call wrap around services and really helped us get through.

CP: Interesting, Joy. I remember that group of parents POTAI, I think a lot of us called it potty because there were a lot of little kids in the group. Actually some of my memories when I look back on them or some of the organizing that we tried to do that was challenging at times -- when the United States went to war in Iraq

there were a group of us that wanted to take a stand for peace and I was surprised at the time that not everyone was supportive of that, but looking back on it, I think it was a time to grow for everyone. Other things about my life here, I was very active on the social justice committee and it's part of the reason that I'm a Unitarian because Unitarians are very active in social justice. So, there were a lot of a lot of moments there that I felt like we were doing something important and making a difference. But our most recent memory is last spring, I was recognized at our annual meeting for the different committees and the different projects I've been involved in and in all the time that I was here. I think it was because I resigned from the social justice committee and people started looking at things, I guess she's done a few things here, so that was a very nice moment.

BG: You've both been members for a really long time. Can you tell me more about how you became a member – what the process is and what signing the membership book was like and if that's how that works and if that's a ceremony or what is involved with that?

JS: When my husband and I joined there was nothing special, I don't think. Like I said we had gone to an orientation meeting. Now they have classes, two or three classes, I think, after church, for members. Path to Membership they called it, New to UU, they've called it. I'm not sure if it's being called now but you know, we just said we were interested in becoming members. We signed the book. Somebody grabbed a couple that was an older couple – Irwin - I can't remember his name - he was a retired doctor, and his wife Emily, and they witnessed us signing the book. Then you're expected to make a pledge shortly thereafter. Now I know the board has in the bylaws, I think, in order to be a voting member, you have to have made a donation of, like a pledge of, there's no specified amount. You just have to have made a pledge so that's all there is to it. I have participated a couple of times in those meetings where they have new people come and that was rewarding for me to be able to go and say, you know, what committee I've been on, or how rewarding that was, and what special religious education classes we have here.

CP: Could you repeat the question?

BG: Of course. When you became a member how did you, there's a signing of the book and I'd like to understand more about what the membership book is and how the process works to become a member and if there's any kind of ceremony around that book signing.

CP: When I joined the church, I had come from another Unitarian church, as I said, and in in both churches there was a new members orientation. I don't think that's exactly what it was called but I do remember in both churches that the minister who I think was leading the group suggested that we put ourselves on a continuum, physically put ourselves close to one end of the of a line which was believed in the triumvirate of God and the other end of the line was atheist. So, I kind of wandered around a little bit and then found a spot and I was surprised that I was closer to the triumvirate of God than anybody else, but there were people of all along the that continuum. I do remember signing the book here and I don't remember that there was a witness when I signed it. I'm not sure that the book is still used.

JS: I think so.

CP: Is it? OK. So that that was my experience.

BG: And that was kind of my follow up question. Where is this mythical book? Do either of you know?

JS: I don't have where the book is and there's probably more than one book because it got filled up by now, but I haven't seen it since we signed it.

CP: I haven't seen it either I don't know where it is. I do remember, I think it's part of that book that has some of the original members but also the original reason for our being. our mission statement, that's what

I'm trying to say, and it was very different than our mission statement would be today. It was much more traditional Christian message.

BG: Changing gears a little bit, what do you think the funniest thing is that's happened here, either to you or that you know about?

JS: I'm not one of those people that remembers jokes or anything like that, so I don't know but first thing I thought of was we had a Halloween party and Charlie Keenan came dressed up in a bee costume. He's a beekeeper and he now runs Beevangelism. He's really into teaching people about bees and keeping them going so that was really funny. He's kind of a round guy and he looked like a bumble bee. I have to mention our people who are regular volunteers here, Dean Johnson and Dan Lusk are funny every day. They just make witty comments constantly and then other people try to keep up with them and be funny also. So, you know it really, our church has been through a lot, and to have these volunteers stay with the church has been quite challenging and I thought at some point we would break down in our relationships but we're still supporting each other and keeping the church going so I think that humor helps so much.

CP: I'm not sure it's funny but it's interesting to me that when I was doing a review for the history of our church, during the time that the church was being built we did not have an elevator and an elevator shaft was being added. During the time that building was happening there was someone who had committed a crime and ended up hiding in the newly built elevator shaft and I'm not sure how he was found but no one was injured, the police became aware that he was there, and he was captured.

BG: You mentioned, Joy, some of the challenging things and we talked earlier about Gil Church's vote for the minister. Can you talk about some of the challenging things and/or the vote for Gil Church as minister?

JS: Well, first of all, I wanted to say as long as we have been members of the church and until recently there's been pressure for people to give money to the church because the building is so expensive [chuckles]. So, when Gil offered to be the minister and he offered to be unpaid then there was just not really clear communication about what his qualifications were. He acted as minister in the meantime while we were looking, while we were hoping to get a minister, he gave us sermons for free. They were good I thought. I voted yes for him to come to our church but after the whole thing was finished, I learned that there was something about his divinity, his qualifications, and he had attended divinity school, but he wasn't totally approved, I think, for ordination. There was something in his evaluations that was not great, and our director of religious education at the time, Trudy, she, there was some reason she didn't like him, and I learned later that she thought he was putting his nose in every committee and kind of wanting to tell her what to do and she was already a minister of religious education, so she wanted to do her own thing. But there was a communication that went out in a letter that went out to everybody in the congregation that was really not clear at all about -- there was some problem with him, and it didn't really state what it was. So, after he didn't get voted in, then there was a discussion about really when you call a minister it should be unanimous or very close to unanimous -- 80 percent, 90% or whatever and that wasn't happening for him. Then we had to have an interim minister come first for one year and then he stayed for two years, and he had meetings like neighborhood meetings. He would find this group of people that lived in this area and meet with us and try to kind of smooth over what had happened and that helped. But really the person who, one person in our neighborhood group kind of explained to me what had happened with better clarity than anybody else had. Then he dated somebody who was in our church or who was in another UU church which is a no-no and so

BG: Sorry, who is "he"?

JS: Robert Flanders. The interim minister. So that was funny. But then we called another minister, and we went through a process, the proper process for the one that's approved by the Unitarian Universalist Association to get Elena Rigg and she was very beloved. I for one was a little taken aback when we got a

woman minister, you know it's kind of like, I had always had men doctors and men ministers and, like, I was surprised at myself, but she was just amazing. She was really good. I mean not every single sermon was inspiring, but very many were. So, then we had the whole conflict over Reverend Julie. When Reverend Julie came she was called by a committee and that was a proper search committee, but she, right away I noticed that she didn't include any congregational response and that was one of the things I liked the best about coming to this church -- is sometimes the minister like Elena Rigg would say after her sermon, she would say, well you don't have, this is a church where you don't have to agree with what the minister says, so you know, if you have a question or a comment you want to make we have a few minutes to do that, and Reverend Julie didn't do that at all. So, I asked somebody on the Worship Committee, you know, why isn't this happening anymore. She says, well, [chuckles] you better talk to the Reverend about this. The other thing was, she wanted to be called "the" Reverend, you know, whereas our ministers before that always went by their first name. So I went and had an appointment with her and she just said, oh you know you get the same people coming up in congregation response and they can yammer on and on and it's been {unfinished sentence} and then I said, well, is this recommended by the national church, that churches don't have congregation response anymore? She said, oh yeah. Then I asked around and found out that there were other people that really missed it and that it was still going on in other churches. Then there was a couple of personal conflicts, a couple of people had personal conflicts with her, and it wasn't resolved very well. They made up, the Board wrote a covenant about how churches should work out their own problems and we called in somebody from the Midwest UU group, and it just wasn't ever resolved. Then a few of us noticed that our membership was decreasing and decreasing and it, we had had the recession and there were other churches that were losing membership at the same time, but it came to a point where we couldn't afford keeping up this large building that had been expanded when Elena was a minister and our membership was growing, and we had to decide between selling the building or letting the minister go and become a lay-led church. So, we decided, we had many discussions, and decided to let the minister go and break her contract and then it was quite a big ordeal. We had to pay her some kind of severance, I think. So, when Gil was not accepted as the minister, there were some people who left and some people who came. The same kind of thing with Reverend [Julie] Forest, but since that time our membership has just been steady. It's just been gliding along, but I think with the volunteer efforts of people, I think, having our church run as a lay LED church, it has really encouraged people to give more money to the church. It's been more meaningful, I think, for people, so it's been amazing. Then we had retired ministers and right away after Tony Larsen gave a couple of sermons, you know, I was the Co-chairperson of the Worship Committee, people would come up and say, oh you got to get this guy as our minister, and I thought the same thing. So I approached him after a couple of times and said, you know, would you consider being a minister for us? Then we did this whole discussion about could we get a part time minister? You know, could we afford apart at least a part time minister? Does hiring a part time minister have to go through the same process as having a full-time minister? So, we decided it would be possible for him to decide on his own if he wanted to come to our church as a part time minister. So that really has helped at least keep our membership steady. We've had you know a few people leave, a few people come, but our problem now is we don't have enough young people to keep up churchgoing. Sorry to take all that time.

BG: It's OK.

CP: I think from Joy's comments you can hear a theme that I think is present in maybe other Unitarian churches too, that the minister is not necessarily worshipped like they are in other churches. They are seen as being very human and it does develop sometimes factions within the church -- people that support the minister or don't support the minister. I think, you and I, Joy, might not have the same perception of ministers. Elena was a very good minister and well loved. So well loved that I think she could not be criticized, and I found sometimes that she didn't meet my needs. There were other times in the church that things that were difficult to deal with were not centered around the minister but as I said earlier, making a

decision about whether or not we would stand for peace rather than going into the Iraq war, and that it took a while for us to decide. It took a number of, I think, maybe three years of annual meeting decisions about what it would take -- for what percentage of the congregation it would take to make a statement, a public statement, and it came pretty close to the percent that it would take to call a minister. I think close to 90%, if I remember correctly.

JS: There were just a couple of people who didn't want to agree with it.

CP: Yeah, so having said that, on the on the really positive side, when we were kind of forced to become a lay-led church, we came together. I guess sometimes out of conflict and out of difficult times better times emerge and that happened because we had people that came forward to be really good leaders in this congregation. I remember the first meeting after Reverend Julie had to leave, that two people at an annual meeting came forward on that day and said, OK we will work together, and we will be the leaders.

JS: Two women, right? Co-presidents.

CP: So, we had Co-presidents for maybe three years and now we're down to one president again. I think one of the things that I'd like to say about being a member of this church and probably of any church, but I feel like I've been a member of four or five different churches because the people change, their issues change, the times change, and that even though I've been here 27 years, I've been a member of a few different churches here.

BG: That's really interesting. On a more positive note, what's your favorite thing about this church? I mean, it could be people, it could be events, but what is it that you love most about the church?

JS: For me it's the community and, I don't know about Carol, but for me I live with my husband and he's a member here, too, and he started working with the Building Committee before we were members. He only makes friendships -- he only makes social contacts with people that he does volunteer work with. He has the Building Committee, they call it a play group at this point, and it's all guys -- there've been women in the Building Committee, but at this point it's all guys, a couple of young guys, but mostly older guys, and they love having projects to do because they can get together. But the community here is special since we have, well the UU church doesn't have a creed or a dogma. We have principles and it's more like guidelines. I just feel that is so much respect for a person. You know, anybody who goes to any church, they don't follow the dogma all the time. They have varying degrees of believing in this or that and here it's just openly said, you know, you're on a journey and you do what you want to. So, we kind of support each other's questioning and doubting and growth. That's what I like about being at this church.

CP: I think getting to know the people and finding good friends here, that's an important part of the church but some of the auctions, the fund-raising events, have really been fun. We've had an outside auctioneer hired, but we've also had people from the congregation who lead the auction. As Joy said earlier, we have some people who just have great sense of humor. I don't know, Brian Mitchell is one who's not here now, but he was doing a really good job on leading the auction. It was a special night. Other events, I guess, that I remember is special is the 50th anniversary evening when we had a really special dinner, special entertainment.

BG: What do you think UCN contributes to the community, either Mequon or the greater Milwaukee area? How does it fit in and how would you like the community to view it?

CP: I always remember a member who has passed on, when I was early a member of the Social Justice Committee, she was on the Social Justice Committee, and there were some questions about our beginning and why we were here in the middle of Ozaukee County. Her response, because she was one of the founding members, Phyllis, I can't remember her last name [Samore], yes, her response was, well a lot of us knew that

we needed to have some progressive liberal presence in the middle of Ozaukee County. So that's, I think, what we do contribute to our community. Also, I'm really proud of, because I was part of it, that we made a decision probably 15 years ago to give half of our offering every Sunday to some, either local, state, national, or international organization that that we believed was making a difference in the world and carrying forward our values. I think initially people thought, how can we do that because we're always short of money, but we had heard and read that offerings tended to increase when people chose to do that and that's been true. I think that that's a contribution that we make that's important.

JS: I'll agree with that of the Share the Plate program. I remember stating at some meeting that I thought our church should have something that we give money to. They're always worried about raising money for the church, but other churches have missions in other countries, or they have a project going on in the inner city or whatever and we didn't have that. I thought, you know, what does this religion really stand for? So, I was really pleased when one of our presidents or the board suggested that, and it's really supported a lot of different groups. It kind of helps to make you informed about what groups are around besides the you know peace and environmental justice groups asking for our money daily. I would say that's what's unique for our community. We have offered information and involvement in social justice issues. We've had movies here or speakers on, you know, on social justice issues not only for the sermon but also just for like workshops. We had a workshop on transgender one time, that was really good, and this is a place where youth that are growing up with liberal families can find support. Like our family lives in West Bend, which is a very conservative community, and I would say our daughter didn't have many peers that had any kind of exposure to liberal ideas until she came here. The religious education for children is so different. Like I said, we don't have dogma and creed and we don't have catechism and whatever those things are called for the Catholic Church [chuckling], but we have a coming of age program that helps the children look at big questions, like where do I go when I die, what is God but and they ask them to make a statement of what their religious beliefs are now, knowing that and they may change. Then we have a comprehensive sexuality program that says that gay people are normal and so it's something that people can't get anywhere else.

BG: You touched on the lay people who sometimes give sermons and that you had three years with lay-led sermons. Can you go into a little more detail about how that works and how the person is chosen to give the sermon?

JS: I can speak to that. I joined the Worship Committee, which is now, again, called the Sunday Service Committee, just as we were having the last days of Reverend Julie. I wanted to know how it worked and I wanted to contribute speakers, so that I kind of got talked into being a scheduler. Somebody might suggest somebody as a speaker; they've heard that speaker before, they went to a workshop or whatever, or they've heard them on public radio or something. Then, you know, I being a scheduler, I would call people that I knew in the peace movement and environmental movement and ask them to give a sermon. We give them a template of our order of service, you know, to let them know that they're expected to do a 15- or 20-minute talk and the rest is stuff that we do standard. We give them an honorarium and there's guidelines for the honorariums. We pay more for a UU minister that's retired or current borrowed from somebody else's church. We pay a little more for people who are super experts in their field or and then we pay less for people who just, for the head of a group or something. Then sometimes we alter the order of service a little bit. Sometimes we allow them to include music that's meaningful to them that's still spiritual, ask them to do a spiritual message, not just information. So that's how that works. [To CP:] So have you ever been involved in getting a speaker?

CP: I guess I understood you to ask also about individual members who were became speakers.

BG: Yes.

CP: A few of those I remember. Poul at one time, has a strong background in social work and working in the jail system and so he had a talk, I wouldn't call it a sermon, a talk about that. We have a professor, a few, I think. Amanda [Seligman] has given talks. I think one was on Buddhism. I also, I didn't give a whole talk, but I remember at one time Reverend Julie, not Reverend Julie, Reverend Elena, asked people to respond to the statement how do you wrestle with God or how have you wrestled with God? I took a stab at that and sent her an email and said these are some of my wrestlings with God. She asked me to read that on a Sunday morning, so I feel like that's really encouraged in our congregation. I, by the way, have kept that because I keep wrestling with God.

JS: Yeah, I didn't realize that was part of your question but we have had members do services. I just asked another one who is a past member to repeat his sermon on health equity and he's going to do that, and I gave a couple of sermons. It took me years to write them [laughing]. I asked for help from Drew Kennedy, who's a retired minister for the First Church and he didn't want to spend the time to do that, but I got some support for my first sermon from a couple of ministers and Tony's open to that. We've had ministers who have had a little class on how to write a sermon kind of thing, but it was really very, I don't know, rewarding to write a couple of sermons and hear about it afterwards, get some feedback.

BG: Did you include, what did you call it, congregational feedback on yours?

JS: I'm pretty sure, yeah, the first one I did was, I called it reflections rather than a sermon. It was about, there was a time when I co-facilitated a class called Cakes for the Queen of Heaven. It's a UU curriculum about ancient spirituality, women spirituality, about how, you know, the deities in ancient times were women and what women archaeologists have decided that, you know, women were way more in leadership positions back then and there were no wars, there was no mass murderers, back then. Anyway, like I had my reflections on that program, how meaningful that was for me. I gave another sermon on embracing feminism, about how feminism is for everyone, and I had a couple of guys come up to me afterwards and said they expected me to blast them, and I didn't, you know, they were really grateful for my insights, so that was really cool.

BG: My last question would be where would you like to see UCN in 10 years?

JS: [Chuckling] As Carol alluded to, you know, that every so often our church has evolved in a different way, in a different direction. It depends some on the minister and it depends some on the community. We've said lately that trying to get more members and more people with young people with children, that's what I would like is for more families with children to again come back to the church and keep the evolution of UUism going. Also, I would like to have more emphasis on culture change rather than religiosity, I guess, there you know, I mean, I think that our culture in general is all about competition and domination, one person over another and I just think our church could participate in helping to change our culture to be more empathetic or more egalitarian. I would like to see some kind of connection with black churches or with, you know, people working against racism. Another thing is I think that our music has kind of diminished a bit in our church. We at one time had, you know, lots of good music performances and I would like to get back to that. Our church really now is aging people and so something needs to give us some energy and some, it's gonna be needed to be changed in a way that young people want it to go.

CP: Ten years. [laughing] I will be 95 and maybe I'll be here maybe I won't, but I hope that we have more young people. I think they're needing middle school and high school people. It seems like, in many congregations it takes one or two kids who are really interested that bring in other kids. We don't have a very large, I'm maybe not up to date on that right now, but I don't think we have a very large religious education program in middle school and high school, so I'd like to see that. I'd like to see the families that are here grow and bring in other families because I think we do; I'd like to see our numbers increase and we've talked about that a lot. I'd like to see our presence in the community and something like the Family Promise, we've supported the homeless in Ozaukee County, in fact we're kind of helping them get organized and getting

Family Promise off the ground. I'd like to see that us continue to support that. Even more, I'd like us to see that it's not needed. I'd just like to see us grow and change in positive directions and continue to be making our offerings to all kinds of important organizations.

BG: I'm ending the recording with about 30 to 40 seconds of silence that helps with the recording later but while I do that, while we just sit here for silence, think about anything I haven't asked you that you really wanted to share, and we'll go back to that in a little bit.

Silence

BG: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

JS: I'd like to talk about that, we didn't skip a beat with a pandemic. There was, you know, the lockdown in Wisconsin and then I think we had one more service in person and then the next service was online by Zoom and that was thanks to Jackee. Jackee was our director of religious education at the time and young enough to know how to deal with the technology. She had a Zoom account and, you know, could help get the church service done. We would have the guest speaker record their message and the worship assistant record their parts, and the music would be recorded, and put it all together. It was quite the production, but she really helped with that. Let's see, and then at some point we started having what we called hybrid services, like somebody would be here at the church without an audience so we would have a small team of the worship assistant and the minister and, I don't remember. I think we might have had recorded music then, but anyway we were able to with doing it by Zoom we were able to continue our coffee hour. Coffee hour is a wonderful social time after church so people could be on and contribute to discussions or conversations a little bit before church and for probably about half an hour after church. Then we got a camera to do the hybrid services and then we got a different camera and a TV. Now we're going to get a huge TV screen and so we've continued with the hybrid service being people coming back to church at first with masks and now masks are optional and then you're having you know there's so many people who come. We have so many computers that are counted online and so many members that are counted in person. I think it's been amazing. We did kind of -- she says she's not burned out but the person who took over and began Co-chair of the Worship Committee after myself, she was really good at the computer stuff so she would coordinate, you know, the videographer and the music recordings and she would be in charge of putting that all together and now it's the office manager that does that. It's quite a lot of work but I'm really proud that our church has been able to go through the changes. Right away they developed a committee called, well a subcommittee of the board, it's called the reopening subcommittee and it includes several people. There's like a nurse and they researched the information from the CDC and from the local public health numbers and they've gotten information from our church's insurance company on risk management, and they really weigh everything about what is safe. For the longest time that national UU church organization recommended that we don't open, that we don't reopen, and have people come in person to church but we started because we thought with the wearing masks and having air purifiers and, you know, we just figured we would be [unfinished sentence]. At first, we did a survey and found out that there were, you know, all the adults were vaccinated, and we really felt as if it would be safe so that's been amazing.

CP: The one thing that I don't think we talked about, that I was just reminded of, burnout has been a problem and one of the people that was very much involved in in getting us online and getting our Zoom services established, I think, there was some burnout there because I haven't seen her for a while. With other positions in the church, I noticed that after a while people who had been in a position for a long time just don't show up for a while or don't come back so that's a concern. Also, I really would like to talk about a little bit about MICAHA, the Social Justice Committee in the church is associated with Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Aligned for Hope and they've been in the community since the mid-80s, I think, and they've done some really important work like calling attention to redlining. I know one of the things we did was work

with the legislative jury to get more nurses into the public schools and that happened for a little while until the budget was cut again. But, anyway, MICAH was a really important association that we supported financially and that we've been a part of.

BG: Thank you both so very much.