

March 13, 2021

Midwest Unitarian Universalist Conference & Midwest Unitarian Universalist Foundation

**2020/2021 Annual Report
to the MidAmerica Region & the Mountain Desert District**

Midwest Unitarian Universalist Conference

History: With the consolidation of the American Unitarian Association (AUA) and the Universalist Church of America (UCA) in 1961, the Midwest Universalist Conference and the Western Unitarian Conference formed the Midwestern Unitarian Universalist Conference (Conference) and the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Foundation (Foundation).

Purpose: The purpose of the Conference is to further the interests of Unitarian Universalists and their institutions in the mid-continental states (i.e., MidAmerica Region and the Mountain Desert District); to support those institutions to spread the message of Unitarian Universalism; and to distribute returns generated by funds held in trust by the Foundation, a subsidiary corporation. The purpose of the Foundation is to hold those funds received from the AUA, UCA, and other sources in trust, and to invest, administer, and safeguard those funds.

Funds: There are four funds for which the Conference and the Foundation are responsible:

- the General Fund, which provides an annual grant to the MidAmerica Region and the Mountain Desert District, and which can fund other initiatives;
- the Ryder Fund (1888): the investment returns are used to provide emergency financial support for retired ministers and their partners;
- the Iva Laughlin Fund (1903): the investment returns are used to provide emergency financial support for elderly Unitarian Universalists; and
- the Colchester Fund (1926): the investment returns are used to provide an annual scholarship that is awarded by Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago to a Unitarian Universalist theological student.

Since June 2016, the MidAmerica Region has been the fiscal agent for the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Conference. This role is limited to holding funds distributed from the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Foundation related to the Ryder, Laughlin, and Colchester Funds, as well as limited funds to support small grants, such as those of the Munroe Husbands Grant Program, which provides grants to lay lead congregations for leadership development, communications tools for outreach, growth, and related matters.

The Conference Board has developed materials to publicize the funds available from the Ryder Fund, the Iva Laughlin Fund, and the Munroe Husbands Grant Program. The Board also sends money from the Ryder Fund to the UUA for distribution to retired ministers and their partners through the work of the Rev. Richard Nugent, Church Staff Finances Director consistent with the guidelines of the Ryder Fund.

All Grant Program applications can be found on the Conference/Foundation website. (<http://www.midwestuuconf.org/>) Work on the website has continued this year, thanks to Barb Gutsch, a MUUC Board Member, who serves as the Webmaster.

Committees: The Conference has several working committees: The Nominating Committee, the Colchester Fund Committee, the Laughlin Fund Committee, the Ryder Fund Committee, and the Munroe Husbands Grant Program Committee.

A distribution in the amount of \$5,672 from the Colchester Fund was sent to Meadville Lombard Theological School this year. This money was awarded to a theological student as the Colchester Scholarship for the current academic year.

Few grants were awarded this year. The following grants were awarded this fiscal year: From the Ryder Fund \$ 0; from the Laughlin Fund \$ 700; and from the Munroe Husbands Grant Program \$ 0. The COVID pandemic may have impacted applications for and distributions from these funds.

Other Business: Besides the distribution of monies, the MUUC Board and the MUUF Board both made changes to their governing Constitutions and Bylaws in the past year. Most of the changes were clarifying; a significant change was to allow all meetings to be conducted virtually. Old MUUC Constitution language was not clear on whether the annual meeting had to be in person. MUUF Bylaws were updated to reflect current practice and the relationship with MUUC.

Interim Meetings: The Conference directors and the Foundation directors work separately during the year via quarterly tele-conference.

Annual Meeting: The Boards of the Midwest UU Conference and the Midwest UU Foundation hold our annual meeting in Chicago in early May, where we meet separately and jointly. The 2020 meeting was held virtually on Saturday, May 2. (Note: The 2021 meeting will be held virtually May 8).

Distribution from the General Fund: Part of the agenda at the Annual Meeting was to determine the annual grants for 2020-2021 to the MidAmerica Region and the Mountain Desert District. These grants are based on a formula that takes into account the number of congregation members (weight = 45%), the number of congregations (weight = 45%), and the geographical size (weight = 10%) of the region or district. The number of members and congregations was based upon UUA certification data as of February 1, 2019.

The maximum amount available for distribution is 4% of a rolling 13-quarter moving average of the Foundation's General Fund. The distribution for 2020-21 is as follows: \$85,232.81 to the MidAmerica Region and \$23,254.19 to the Mountain Desert District.

Conference Board Directors (seven members) (three-year terms) (one director represents the Mountain Desert District, six represent the MidAmerica Region)

- Michael P. May, (President) First Unitarian Society, Madison WI (2021)
- Rollie Hanson, (Secretary) First UU Society, Milwaukee WI (2023)
- Allan J. Lindrup, First Unitarian Society, Chicago, IL, (2021)
- Charles Lewis, (Vice President) Church of the Larger Fellowship, Des Moines, IA. (2023)
- Kathy Wire, First UU Church, St. Louis, MO, (2022)
- Barb Gutsch, UU Fellowship, Salina KS (2022)
- Fred Cole, UU Church of Boulder, CO (2022)

MidAmerica Region and Mountain Desert District Requirements

Please note that the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Conference requires an annual report from both the MidAmerica Region and the Mountain Desert District to confirm that the work of these two organizations continue to be aligned with the purposes of the Conference which are listed above, and Conference's interests which are as follows:

- **Section 1a.** To facilitate the vitality and growth of Unitarian Universalism in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain states (i.e. Mid-America Region and the Mountain Desert District).
- **Section 1b.** To strengthen Unitarian Universalist congregations, districts, regions and organizations and institutions, including the Unitarian Universalist Association and Meadville-Lombard Theological School.
- **Section 1c.** To invite congregations to effectively serve the communities in which they are located in accord with their mission and the principles, purposes, and ends of the Unitarian Universalist Association.
- **Section 1d.** To encourage outreach and support of Unitarian Universalists living in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain states who do not live in communities served by Unitarian Universalist congregations.

Midwest Unitarian Universalist Foundation

The fiscal year is from April 1 to March 31. The total assets of the Foundation have grown from about \$200,000 in 1962 to \$2,962,358 as of March 31, 2020. This valuation as of March 31 was at a low point in the market due to market losses following the onset of the COVID pandemic. The assets as of December 31, 2019, were \$3,557,772, and as of December 31, 2020, were \$3,952,715.

The financial statements are audited annually. The auditor of record for a number of years continues to be Wilkerson, Guthmann, and Johnson, Ltd. of Saint Paul, Minnesota. The audit report, determined that the financial statements of the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Foundation presented fairly, in all material respects, its financial position, and the changes in its net assets and cash flows in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

The Foundation assets are invested in a variety of mutual funds and exchange traded funds which provide investment diversity. The Foundation determines its asset

allocation each year and currently strives for a 70/30 allocation between equity and fixed income. The Foundation also is very sensitive to keeping investment expenses as low as possible while seeking reasonable returns.

Foundation Board Directors (seven members) (three-year terms)

- Katherine Brewin, Chicago, IL (President) (2023)
- Laura Gossman, Casper, WY (Secretary) (2021)
- Vicki Pratt, Omaha, NE (2022)
- Brian Hellmer, Fitchburg, WI (Vice President) (2022)
- Rebecca Pace, Cincinnati, OH (Treasurer) (2022)
- Roger Sell, Indianapolis, IN (2021)
- Christopher Franklin, East Peoria, IL (2023)

Katherine Brewin was appointed by the Conference Board and the Foundation as its registered agent in the State of Illinois.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Conference and Foundation,

Michael P. May, President
Midwestern Unitarian Universalist Conference
Date: March 13, 2021