

November 2017



Ren Manning:

Judy and I came to the Church a half-dozen years ago following our move from Georgia. We had never been Unitarian before, having grown up in the Southern Baptist church of our youth and then progressed to the United Church of Christ and then to this church. We loved the people here and felt we were in the right place, as our faith had progressed from the fundamental view of the spiritual to the more challenging and thought-provoking concepts of what I called the holy. And our commitment to social justice themes deepened and seemed to resonate with Unitarian values.

We settled in more or less as spectators initially. I remember a flippant comment I made to Trip Banner at an auction dinner we found ourselves involved in that so far we had managed to keep our heads down and avoided committee and task force assignments. He chuckled and said, “Just wait”!

He was correct. As we began to put down roots, we began to be asked to join in and participate in the work of the Church. For me, it was the Membership Committee, then the Stewardship Committee, then the Worship Services Committee, the Coffee House Committee, the Social Justice Committee, the Auction Committee and the Safety Committee. Judy served on the Vestry, then chaired that body and has served on Green Sanctuary, Building and Grounds and other committees. If there’s anything that goes wrong around here or anything you don’t like, you can probably blame one of us because we probably had some committee responsibility in that area!

Besides active involvement in committee work, there are many activities that do not involve a formal committee assignment in which we have participated: dinners for fun, all-Church Thanksgiving dinners, adult religious education, Sunday morning Forums, operating the sound system, putting up plywood on Gage Hall windows as hurricanes approach, sump pumping hurricane flood waters beneath the sanctuary and Gage Hall

It’s exhausting just listing everything we’re involved in. It’s also the manifestation of the truism that you get out of an organization what you put in. Here is where we have found fuel for our souls.

Participation has brought instant friendships and feelings of belonging and fulfillment. The number of committees of which I am a member is absurd and not for everyone, but getting involved also brings a sense of ownership (membership really is ownership that carries responsibility to support the Church with time and talent as well as treasure), and that makes full membership very joyful and fulfilling. I heartily recommend it!