

UUCWC ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

BEFORE



DURING



COMING THIS FALL



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Financial Information on Addendum

Board of Trustees Report

President Wendy Stasolla

I want to make room in this year's report to include all the great work done within and without our walls. I mean *without* in two ways: I mean that we are going outside, into our community, and I mean that, despite the demolition of some of our building's structure, we continue to thrive. Construction started, stopped, then started again, to be completed in the coming months. We can't thank the Capital Campaign team enough for their heroic efforts over the past few years.

Your faithful Board of Trustees facilitated each of these activities. We helped move things along by supporting a thoughtful budget, a strong congregational mindset, and our body of active members and participants.

We are settling into our multiplatform mode by creating more opportunities to connect virtually and meeting the needs and desires of those who attend in person.

We have yet to figure out how to run our church after our Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang, retires in September. She holds so much of our institutional knowledge, that you may have heard "Ask Susan" is the most frequently used phrase among our staff and congregants. There's just so much she does to make things happen around here.

At the Annual Meeting, we gave a deeper view of the behind-the-scenes work needed to make UUCWC happen. Part of our work as a board is to listen; to hear what you are hoping to do inside and outside this beloved community. Let us know!

Finally, I want you to know that we, the board, agree it's a pleasure to serve UUCWC. We look forward to and enjoy our monthly meetings. That's not to say we don't have hard things to contemplate and discuss but a little humor, compassion, chocolate, and Treasurer Denny Rodger's cookies make these things less daunting.

Staff Report delivered by Rev. Kim Wildszewski

The Church That Doesn't Matter by Kelly Weisman Asprooth-Jackson

In the church that doesn't matter, there are no quarrels, no arguments, and no one ever says anything they regret at the meeting to discuss the sanctuary's new paint color.

There is nothing to inspire such passionate intensity because none of the decisions of the church touch anyone's heart, and no one lives or dies by its choices, or even feels for a moment like they might. Everything is easy as pie.

In the church that doesn't matter, no one has to ask for money, or even talk about it much: there is always enough to go around. There is always enough, because no matter how much there is, there is always less to do with it than that. The vision always shrinks to under-match the means. So canvass season is always a breeze.

In the church that doesn't matter, no one ever disagrees with the preacher's sermon. The music is always just fine. There is never a fight about the liturgy, not even if they do joys and sorrows (and not even if they stop doing joys and sorrows). There is never any controversy because no one ever says anything they really care about, and no one else ever seems to care. Because of this, the service is always equally inoffensive at both 9 o'clock and 11.

The sounds of children during worship, the recruitment of Sunday School teachers, the compensation of professional religious educators and the size and condition of space dedicated to religious education; none of these things are ever talked about, or thought about, in the church that doesn't matter. Those issues just seem to take care of themselves, somehow.

No one ever has to clean up in the church that doesn't matter. Or figure out the old electrical system, or consult the building codes, or climb a ladder. If no one bothers to make coffee on Sunday, no one complains, and if no one greets the visitors, no one seems to mind. Everything is easier in the church that doesn't matter.

The total solution to all the frustrations of congregational life requires no consultants, manuals, or webinars. Simply avoid, at all costs, meaning and purpose and anything that might lead you to either or both. Whatever you do, do not let yourself care about the people around you, or the covenant you share.

Yet, knowing this, we still decide again and again to ask tough questions, to take real risks, to do work that needs doing, and to tell the truth. We get out of bed on Sunday morning, we answer that email, we make something imperfect but still sweet for the bake sale and we give our time and attention to a meeting every third Thursday. We ask each other how we're doing, and mean it, we make phone calls and craft projects for the first grade class – we offer our gifts, both humble and great. And we do these things, sometimes in joy, and sometimes not in joy, because they are done in the service of a church that matters to us.

Here is the State of the Church by the Numbers:

We have **280** Adult Members, who have signed our membership book and paid a pledge. When we add our Church Members, Friends (those who pledge but haven't signed the membership book), Participants and Attendees (those in or new to the community, taking classes and exploring UUCWC), we actually serve or are in community with **347 people**. This fiscal year, we also celebrate that we welcomed 13 New Members.

From September (Water Communion) to April 30 our average Sunday attendance was 158. In person average attendance was 98 or 62% of the total, while remote participation on average was 60, or 38%. This reflects the embodiment of our commitment to a multiplatform congregation.

Anecdotally, we are a bit anomalous with these numbers; most congregations that report this info are seeing 80% in person attendance and 20% online. What we are finding that other congregations have not necessarily experienced is this: many folks who can't come and must be joining us remotely due to geography or physical ability and so are our standard group that have to be on zoom. What is different for us is that many are toggling back and forth between in person and online attendance due to travel or illness or maybe just because it's a rainy day, so many who could be in person are choosing to be online some Sundays.

Only once, when an internet cable was cut in early construction, did we meet without the entire community. We prioritized both in person *and* online worship, creating rituals for each space, mailing out earth teachers we engaged with this year, and investing in high level technology.

Like in many churches throughout the country, we have experienced a small decline in membership. But unlike others, we are in a time of rebuilding and dreaming rather than constricting and closing. We are healthy.

Our Choir currently has 24 members. Over the course of the year they sang 23 pieces. We welcomed 10 guest musicians over 8 services - including 3 for next week's flower communion. There were 7 services featuring musicians from our congregation, reminding us that there is excellence right here. The South Philly Big Band returned, bringing in 119 people from within and outside our church community, and many of us humbly received Dynasty Battle's mini concert just a few weeks ago. Erin Busch and I co-wrote 8 centering songs, essentially creating a new mini-hymnal for us and for Unitarian Universalism. We offered you two meditation services. In addition to it all, the Wildflower commission provided opportunity and money to underrepresented artists.

Our music program has grown these years. And we have become a more embodied, and I think proud, people because of it.

This year in Children's Faith Engagement, we introduced the PrayGround, where children can crawl and play with soft toys while their grownups sit nearby. The activity

table and binders help keep hands busy with coloring pages while listening to the service.

Julie Rigano made bringing Unitarian Universalism into our homes manageable and easy through her Taking the Learning Home emails that helped parents stay up-to-date with what their children were doing, while also giving conversation starters and activities families can do to deepen their faith together throughout the week. (It's hard to realize that Julie was brand new last year and spent last summer onboarding).

We experienced the new Palm Sunday pageant, and rejoiced once again in our annual Christmas pageant. There were 34 children registered in religious education this year, raising our total number of people we serve to 381.

We are committed to intergenerational living. We are working tirelessly to imagine a faith engagement program that meets the needs of our children, and the capacity of our parents.

To Robin Pugh's ministry, in our smaller circles, we had 71 people participate in Chalice circles where five participants became facilitators. Lisa Schilansky introduced *Breathe*, an opportunity to pause and slow down in a world that's constantly forcing us to speed up. We offered book groups including the UUA's Common Read *On Repentance and Repair, Making Amends in an Unapologetic World*; *Black AF History: The Un-Whitewashed Story of America*; and *White Women: Everything You Already Know about Your Own Racism and How to Do Better*.

I offered a Write Your Own Memorial Service class. We had 16 people take two different Wellspring classes. 21 folks moved through Pathways, our path to membership. Tending the Flame, our small group for parents, continued monthly and Lectio Divina continued weekly. We offered numerous Article II sessions. We gathered for puzzles, games, stand up comedy and improv after delicious potlucks for Welcome Table Wednesdays.

We prioritize our need for connection, learning, and meaning-making as an expression of practicing our faith.

We lived our values in the public square in numerous ways, most recently at the Pride parade, but also by rallying in Newtown, PA, for the people of Palestine; at the Poor People's Campaign in Trenton, NJ; with the NJ Social Justice Institute's Reparations Say the Word work; at a recent Lobby Day, a legislative breakfast and at a one-on-one meeting with the Assemblywoman where I spoke, and then later testified on behalf of all of us.

We began a formal relationship with the Lenape Tribe with the presence of Bluejay, their Chief, on a Sunday morning. We tended to our history with the Boy Scouts. Lisa spoke about Unitarian Universalism at Mercer County Community College, and also organized a Religion and Life small group at The College of New Jersey. Earlier in the winter, I led

the prayer at the Hopewell Community Trans Day of Remembrance vigil, which was separate from the Trans Day of Remembrance and Resilience vigil that Lisa led here, and the vigil honoring the life and death of young Nex Benedict, that Lisa and I offered. I also received an email yesterday from Ewing Township inviting me to bless the Pride Flag that will go up for the first time in their history.

In your annual meeting summary, you'll see so much more to be proud of on this not that was entirely lay-led. Please take time to read through this. Too often I hear people not knowing or understanding the depth of justice work this congregation does. From the Food Ministry's meals, to Faith Action Ministry's sponsored refugee family and ESL program, to Earth & Climate Justice Ministry's speaker series, to the over 300 postcards written by this congregation to the Governor and PA legislators. Between the Auction surplus and your weekly plate, we've given out around \$13,500 to community organizations whose mission and work we support in the world. It matters that we are here, it would matter if we weren't.

Our congregation is known. We make a difference in the lives of the larger community.

Lastly, there were just a few small other things. Like, the construction project literally unearthing our foundation. And the complete gutting of our offices. A healthy number of new rentals, like the sweet 16 here in the sanctuary a few weeks ago. Concerts and Breathwork, and the return of our transportation fundraiser. According to the annual report, 1/3 of the congregation volunteers on a committee, team or ministry.

Susan Irgang launched "This Month at UUCWC " to keep you informed. Roberto Santiago responded to ever changing needs; Lynne Quinto and Rachel Hansen kept our books and communications in order, while Ariel Schwartz with the Tech Team continued to elevate our multi platform services. We're now half way through our time with Lisa. And of course, this was the year when Susan and Robin reduced their hours to help last year's deficit, but continued a high level of work. Which meant I learned what it meant to be the only full time staff person. **It wasn't always fun, or easy, but with this team it was worth it.**

So What's Next:

Here's what we know from some informal data among UU colleagues. The congregations that are growing have four components: dynamic preaching, excellent music, a solid religious education program, and low conflict or a capacity to address conflict.

We will never again be the church that so many of us left in 2020. But we have the right formula to see ourselves into the future and for the future.

What's next? So much. So much of what is needed and good in the world. Because this place matters. Thank you, everybody, for a remarkable year.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

Auction Team

Barbara Drew, Jayme Trott, Lori O'Neil, Marcia Wittmann, Co-Leaders

Members:

Boutique: Lynda Shapiro

Food: Mike Muccioli

Decorations: Sue Busch, Karen Scheick

Child Care: Lucy Giancourt and Colleen McCourt Tech Asst: MJ Hansen

Live Auction MC: Roger Shapiro

Other Valuable Members: Bob Busch, Marilyn Cichowski, Scott Drew, Bonnie Gilbert, Linda Hahola, Janet Hubbard, Ron Iannacone, Bud Johnson,

Leslie McGeorge, Patty Mikes, Simone Niemczura, Chris Piatek, Mark Pokryska, Lori Rahn, Denny & Penny Rodgers, Connie & Lee Schofer, Belinda Seiger, Jackie Thomas, Linda Vogt, Debbie West, and

Michelle Zechner

We report another successful auction. Income exceeded our target (\$31K) by approximately \$8K thus enabling Council for Faith in Action to give about \$4K (50% of over-target) to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. We celebrate the participation of newer members, on the team, as bidders, donors, and party attendees

Construction imposed many restraints on our activities. Space for a Sunday information table was limited. Reaching Zoom attendees was a major challenge and we acknowledge that many people were overloaded with Emails. In only eight weeks we solicited, collated, edited, printed, and distributed the auction book. No mean feat! With Construction blocking much of the building we held the kickoff party in the Sanctuary and Lobby.

Next year? We expect the Auction to remain an important fundraiser. We'll encourage the experienced members of our team to continue their good work and to welcome, and train newcomers to share the load.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

Capital Campaign and Project Team
Jayme Trott and Susan Vigilante, Co-Chairs

Members of your group:

Farzad Shadzik, construction project lead;
George Faulkner, treasurer

We have broken ground!! Concrete has been poured, the kitchen has been gutted, and boxes are everywhere! We are so grateful to all the generous donors to the Capital Campaign who made this possible!

Our original contractor delayed the start beyond reason, resulting in increased borrowing costs, appraisal fees, and loan extension fees. Taking Farzad's advice, we hired our current contractor, Mizu, instead! Subsequently we were informed by the Sheriff's office that our original contractor is being sued for nonpayment of subcontractors.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

Congregational Engagement
Pam Shadzik, Team Leader

Members of your group: Holly Bussey, Nathalie Edmond, Sandy Muccioli, Jane Root

We are delighted to have held (with the leadership of Marianne Alt) a Leadership Retreat where members who had left leadership roles in the past few years gathered to meditate, reflect, and share. We consider the nourishment and renewal of leaders to be important to the health of our community and plan to continue the practice each year.

We refined the process for Congregational Engagement conversations and trained an excellent team of interviewers and scribes.

We built a board, physical and online, describing opportunities to serve on different committees.

We offered "Ask Me" tables, both virtual and in person, on Sundays following services, where congregants could meet members of Congregational Engagement and ask questions about connecting with UUCWC.

Our biggest challenge continues to be implementing a system for reaching members who wish to learn how to engage with the congregation. We have built an approach for Congregational Engagement conversations, formed a wonderful team of interviewers, and are working on how best to formalize the process.

In the coming year, we plan to develop, with staff and the board, a consistent year-round approach to the development and support of leaders.

We will continue to refine the Congregational Engagement process.

We will enhance the *Opportunities to Serve* (both in person and virtual) so that they better describe needs and skill sets in committees in informative and invitational ways.

COUNCIL FOR FAITH IN ACTION MEMBER TEAMS:

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

CFA: Community Action Ministry
Jenny Ciccolini, Team Leader

Members of your group:

Alison Streit Baron, Peter Boughton, Holly Bussey, Julia Campbell, Jen Couchoud, Nathalie Edmond, Heather Edwards, Mike Gianella, Geri Koblis, Judith MacLaury, Colleen McCourt, Al Migdal, Jane Root, Sue Saddlemire, Jim Sanders, Chris Schilling, Pam Shadzik, Lauren Shallish, Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris, Phyllis Warren, Mike Wilson

We celebrate a) that our ministry is still here and b) the liminal space we occupy as we discover how to serve the congregation in the future.

Heather Edwards, one of our founding co-chairs, has moved on to focus more on LGBTQIA+ activism in which Heather is deeply involved as an educator in the New Jersey public school system.

We plan to serve the congregation's needs as related to LGBTQIA+ community activism.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

CFA: Earth & Climate Ministry

Barbara Drew, Al Johnson and Leslie McGeorge, Team leaders

Members of your group:

Pete Boughton, Janet Hubbard, Karen Kent, Geri Koblis, Chris Piatek, Mark Pokyrka, Penny Rodgers, Steve Saddlemire, Sandy Steinberg, Wendy Stasolla, and many others who participate by being on our group email list.

Subgroups:**Outdoor Adventure Hike**

Members: Loren McAlister, Geri Koblis, Chris Piatek, and Steve Saddlemire

Indoor Plant Watering

Members: Linda Hahola, Donna Miller

We:

- Inspected the solar-powered generation system, and distributed our report.
- Requested a grant to cover improvements to the mechanical room and display energy production in real time. We received approval for FY 2025.
- Achieved a stronger presence at the CFA and info tables and growing cooperation with groups such as UU Faith Action NJ, UU Justice PA, UUA's Green Sanctuary 2030, and Citizens Climate Lobby.
- Made two public presentations for environmental education. In the fall of 2023 *Green Amendment* by Maya van Rossum and in the spring of 2024 *Earth Day Climate Talk* with 4 speakers; Mike Winka, Mike Aucott, and Pat & Steve Miller.
- Developed and approved a plan with goals and tasks to achieve *River-Friendly Status, Green Sanctuary 2030*.

During the coming year, we will:

- Continue debating participation in *Green Sanctuary 2030*.
- Install a real-time energy production monitoring system.
- Add native plantings to the memorial garden and new entrance area
- Add PA residents to our team and increase awareness of UU Faith Action NJ.
- Continue coordinating with the Council for Faith in Action.
- Offer educational programming such as Green Tables more often.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

CFA: Faith Action Ministry (FAM)
Barbara Schroeder Jensen, Team leader

Members of your group:

Leslie McGeorge - liaison to UU Justice PA;
Mike Wilson - liaison to UU Faith Action NJ

Jamie Evanini organized the mailing of more than 900 postcards, reminding voters to vote in primaries in GA and VA.

Mike Wilson did some tabling and postcarding.

In collaboration with St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, Bonnie Gilbert revived the ESL (English as a Second Language) program that had been shut down abruptly by COVID-19.

We collected 15 boxes of diapers in 2 diaper drives for Eastern Service Workers and Homefront.

We continued to provide ESL support for members of the Syrian family who celebrated 1 year in the US.

There is plenty of enthusiasm for get-out-the-vote activities for the upcoming election.

For our UU Justice PA program, we will enhance the engagement of UUCWC PA residents participating in legislative post-carding and other statewide justice opportunities.

We plan to develop a mechanism for in-service announcements of time sensitive social justice actions. We'll strive to have a UUCWC representative on each UUJustice PA justice team - including reproductive, LGBTQIA+, economic, gun violence prevention, and criminal justice reform. Environment & Good Government are already represented.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

CFA-Faith Funding and Expression Team Ministry (FEFT)
Holly Bussey, facilitator

Members of your group:

Steve Fishbein, Bud Johnson, Jane Root, Jim Sanders, Dan Tuft

We are thrilled to have two new members who bring new perspectives to the exciting work of donating money to like-minded organizations outside of UUCWC, thus helping FEFT become an even stronger force in “Changing the World”.

FEFT continues to grow. We worked with other CFA members to organize giving and influencing worthy causes outside our walls. HomeFront has done an excellent job of bringing successful programming to Kids.

By the end of the church year, FEFT will have contributed over \$10,000 to outside organizations such as; Fisherman’s Mark, Isles, Urban Promise, I Am Trenton, Snipes Farm and Education Center, Interfaith Food Alliance, Lenape Nation, BLUU Housing Initiative, and Bucks County Opportunity Council.

Since most of our meetings are Zoomed we have not been hampered by construction. Our greatest challenge is communication; telling congregants what we do, and recruiting more people to be part of the process.

Next year, Food Ministry (FM), and Earth and Climate Ministry (ECM) spending will be from the FEFT budget. They join HomeFront, which has been part of FEFT Funding for 2 years, providing an excellent model for other groups to follow.

As our group matures, we will create a plan for the succession of leadership. We will create annual budgets and a strategy for specific giving versus donating on the fly. Transparency and accountability will remain our goal. Further, we will consider adopting the rotating leadership model used by RJM.

We welcome more congregation participation in this joyous ministry. The time required is small and the reward is HIGH!

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

CFA: Food Ministry

Michael Muccioli, Chair, and Rollie Rahn “Co-chair in perpetuity”

Members of your group:

Kelly Benson, Adam Czerwonka, Margaret De Angelis,
Judith MacLaury, Michael Muccioli, Nancy Neff, Christine Piatek, Lori Rahn, Bonnie
Ruekgauer, Bernie Ruekgauer, David Schumann, Marcia Wittmann

The Food Ministry and the Rahn family are happy to report the Rollie Rahn Memorial fund is supporting the TASK Culinary Training Program, "Emilio's Kitchen". The "Rollie" fund is donating knife kits for the graduating students of "Emilio's Kitchen" to assist them in their future careers in the food industry.

Lacking use of the kitchen, due to the renovation, we completed an extensive search for other ways to assist the people we serve. We sponsored food drives, responded to emergency needs, and made monetary donations.

When construction permits we expect to safely return to meal preparation in the newly renovated UUCWC kitchen.

We hope that the congregation will continue to support the food needs of the community with donations of food and money in collection drives sponsored by the Food Ministry.

Additionally, we plan to identify other students qualified to receive an award from the Rollie Rahn Memorial Fund.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

CFA: HomeFront Tutoring Program
Sarah Burke, Team leader

Members of your group:

Margaret Bar-Akiva, Kelly Benson, Rachel Boylan, Ronnie Dobrowolski, Michele Downie, Bonnie Gilbert, Janet Hubbard, Susan Kelly, Simone Niemczura, Ann Nugent, Lori Rahn,
Bernie Ruekgauer, Connie Schofer (meal coordinator), Jayme Trott, Marie Verna, Debbie West, Marcia Wittmann and several community members

We provided dinner and tutoring to, on average, 25 children each week. During the summer months, we ran seven weeks of recreational and educational programs. Church members and friends hosted events at their homes while others shared their talents with the children at the church.

Recruiting UUCWC members to tutor has been a challenge.

We want to increase the number of volunteers, both tutors and those who provide food. When construction is complete, we will return the program to the UUCWC building.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

CFA: Racial Justice Ministry
Rotating Leadership

Members of your group:

Kelly Benson, Victoria Locane, Denny Rodgers, Sue Saddlemire, Joe Schenk (new attended), Dan Tuft, Regina Zilinski

We brought back the RJM Book Table (usually the third Sunday of the month) with new titles added routinely. We affirmed the Racial Justice Covenant at the last annual meeting

We took part in *NJ Faith Allies for A Reparations Task Force* We met with NJ's Lt Governor and legislative staff to show our support of informed repair for NJ's history with chattel slavery

We held monthly discussion groups on the public hearings of the *NJ Reparations Council*, a private group that is doing the work that the state government is ignoring at this point. These have been wonderful learning experiences about the role of slavery in NJ's development.

We facilitated two well-attended book discussions focused on racial justice. We edited website information with revisions and updates for clearer navigation. We announced local Trenton events for congregational engagement and have been a noticeable presence at *Freedom Fridays* at the *Ellarslie Museum* in Cadwalader Park.

There is so much happening in the congregation making it difficult to find the best communications channels for our efforts/events. Engaging others in this work continues to

be a slow process but we can see the energy building and our progress in being a role model of beloved community.

We plan to hold a major public event with a well known guest speaker and a panel of local experts on the topic of reparations.

We will engage more congregants in attending/supporting diverse local events and being good allies in the work of antiracism.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

CFA: Social Action Ministry/Team
Ronnie Dobrowolski, Team leader

Members of your group:

Ed Dobrowolski, Christine Piatek, Debbie West

We partnered with our Food Ministry and UUC Princeton for *Loaves and Fishes 2024*. We made hot meals, take-home meals, and bagged lunches for homeless and working poor families. Our Food Ministry cooked and delivered more than 250 Southwest Chicken Thighs to *St Mary Cathedral* in Trenton. 12 volunteers from Princeton and four from UUCWC made PB&J sandwiches and packed the bagged lunches given out on Saturday after the *Loaves and Fishes* hot lunch is served. 20 volunteers from UUCWC and UUCP served hot lunches to about 250 guests at *Loaves and Fishes*. Several volunteers stayed after serving the meal to help with clean up.

Despite construction constraints, we were able to use our kitchen to prepare, cook, and deliver the Southwest Chicken to St. Mary Cathedral in Trenton. We used the facilities and volunteers at the UU Princeton Congregation to make the PB&J sandwiches and pack the bagged lunches to be delivered to St Mary Cathedral.

Social Action and the Food Ministry's goal is to be able to use the Crossings Room for *Loaves and Fishes 2025*. Adults and children will volunteer to make sandwiches, wash fruit, bag cookies, and pack the brown bag lunches on the last weekend in March.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

Denominational Affairs

Holly Bussey, Liaison

Congregational interest in the General Assembly (GA), voting, and the Article 2 proposition has been an eye opening experience. We have six delegates, two registered for full participation in GA. Scholarships were granted to two fully participating attendees. All other delegates paid their way.

I posted UUA information, messages from the UUA President, and other groups on our church's FaceBook pages and received a positive response.

I was disappointed that we could find no way for our congregation to watch key GA activities as a group.

My greatest challenge is that, despite help from Rev. Kim and Robin, it's hard to get issues on people's radar.

Baltimore, MD, is the next site for an in-person General Assembly. It would be wonderful to have a train car filled with UUCWC-ers attending! We are looking for someone to liaise between our Association and this congregation.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

Endowment Committee

Bonnie Gilbert and Mike Hanson, Co-Chairs

Members of your group:

Janet Hubbard, Sandy Muccioli

We are pleased to report the Endowment Funds have grown from \$277,501 to \$320,998 during calendar year 2023. The growth in the Fund enabled us, once again, to distribute a small portion of the Fund to grants for special projects, events, and purposes for the coming year.

With \$16,761 available for grants we reviewed the requests, and decided as follows:

- \$3,600 for Racial Justice Ministry's speaker program
- \$3,250 for Earth & Climate Ministry - mechanical room & solar energy data acquisition
- \$3,000 to fund the ministerial intern
- \$7,000 reserved for use next year to improve accessibility of the dais

The church construction did not impact our work directly because our meetings have been on Zoom.

Since the UUA manages investment decisions for our Endowment, our challenges have been the following:

- Keeping the congregation aware of the Endowment Fund: what is its purpose and how to include bequests to the Fund in one's will.
- Updating the grant amount calculation process. We plan to switch from a calendar year to a church year, and to revise the formulas to avoid large fluctuations in the amounts we can grant.
- Deciding how to distribute the grants. Many excellent purposes and projects were included in the applications, but we had more grant requests than money to grant. We want to support the "extras" that are not part of the operating budget but enrich the life of our church.

For next year,

- We hope the strong growth of the Endowment Fund will continue.
- We want to improve the congregation's awareness of the Fund and make more information about how to make a bequest to the church readily available.
- We plan to improve and simplify the formula for determining the amount available for grants.
- We look forward to replenishing our committee with new members—and acknowledging, with great appreciation, the work of long-term members.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

Finance Committee
Jim Sanders, Chair

Members of your group: Scott Blaydon & Jane Root, Stewardship; Barbara Drew, Auction;
George Faulkner, Capital Project Treasurer; Bonnie Gilbert & Mike Hanson, Endowment; Denny Rodgers, Treasurer; Nathalie Edmond, John Unger, At-large members

We decided to stagger the terms of Treasurer and Finance Chair. To this end, Jim Sanders served a one-year term while identifying and training a new chairperson, Sandeee Steinberg, who will serve through FY 24/25 and 25/26.

Another goal was to re-imagine the finance team as a resource, supporting each of its member teams. Building on the success of our predecessors – with controls in place, and Controller Lynne Quinto performing day-to-day bookkeeping, we were able to manage our tasks and responsibilities efficiently.

A practice we added this year is a month-to-month calendar that gives us a roadmap for the year. It forecasts when each subteam will need focused attention. This approach encourages members to work, not in silos, but to support each other whenever needed.

We are grateful for a strong mix of “first termers” and “seasoned members”, instrumental in setting us up for the future. We also hold up our at-large members, Nathalie Edmond and John Unger.

With the combination of Zoom meetings and some power lunches, we were able to continue our work seamlessly. The ability to share agendas, documents, and assignments via the church’s Google account was invaluable.

Because construction started more than three years after our original paperwork was approved. Denny Rodgers, George Faulkner, and Jim Sanders worked with our bank to re-qualify the church for construction loans.

We anticipate a smooth transition for the new finance leadership and, when the construction project is complete, there will be a lighter schedule. The team will continue to build on the “holistic” style that we modeled this year and will bring on new at-large members who have the skills and knowledge to help the church move into what will be a post construction, post-pandemic era.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

Personnel Committee

Lynne Molnar, Chair

Members of your group:

Andrea Ferrenz, Lynne Molnar, Andi Ferrenz, Scott Drew, Sue Saddlemire

Ex Officio:

Jim Sanders, Finance chair

Maria Barratta, Board Rep

Rev Kim Wildszeweski, Head of Staff

We completed the final edits of the Employee Handbook that the former Committee members (Joe Schenck and Marty Friedman) worked so hard to update.

Anticipating Susan Irgang's retirement, we recategorized Susan's current position and approved a job description for a full-time Church Administrator for September 2024.

Despite having only one full-time member, i.e. Rev. Kim, the staff kept church operations running seamlessly. From the Personnel Committee perspective, we know the efforts all staff have put into working to meet the congregation's needs.

Staffing decisions have to be made within the funds available, yet meet the needs of the congregation. The Board has recommended, and the congregation has approved, a budget with a small deficit to pay for a full-time Church Administrator and cost of living raises. The church needs a long-term plan to stabilize staffing levels.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

Right Relations

Eileen Spedding and Pete Rafle, Co-Chairs

Members of your group:

Marianne Alt, Alison Baron, Mike Gianelli, David Thomas

We celebrate good work together on a new covenant based on the principles of Healthy Relationships. For 6 months we worked with Rev. Scott Tayler on a new creation and review process and developed PowerPoints that are self-guiding. We have also been reworking the church-wide Right Relations Covenant.

We lost a member and we're down a member. It was challenging to find people to fill these roles.

We plan to continue helping committees with their covenantal work. We plan to learn more about conflict resolution and provide another church resource supporting healthy relationships.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

Stewardship Committee

Scott Blaydon and Jane Root, Co-chairs

Members of your group:

Leon Brooks, Anne Godlasky, Ron Ianacone, Denny Rodgers, Klaus Zechner

We celebrate and give thanks for a talented, creative & committed team. We used processes that allowed us to track our progress, priorities, and deadlines. We met our goal of raising \$25,000 for the end-of-year campaign and 99% of our goal for the pledge campaign. Print materials and testimonials were well done and effective. Special thanks to Susan Irgang for her guidance and support.

Because of the nature of our work, construction had little impact on the team. An exception was the distribution of pledge packets on Stewardship Sunday which was hampered by crowded conditions in the sanctuary. All of our meetings occurred on Zoom, which is very convenient, but limits opportunities for connecting and team building. Having the capital campaign, end-of-year donations, the pledge campaign, and the auction occurring back-to-back and in some cases overlapping was a challenge.

In our debriefing of the year, we reached a consensus on our work going forward. We want to begin our planning earlier for both the end of-year and the pledge campaigns. Communication with members can always be improved, especially with new members. We plan to build opportunities to get feedback from members. We will continue to implement the concept that stewardship is what we do throughout the year with many giving opportunities that support UUCWC ministries and strengthen our spiritual relationship with giving. We will examine 'best practices' in stewardship and incorporate them into our work, continuing to challenge ourselves with fresh ideas. We hope to attract new members to the Stewardship team.

Name of Committee/Ministry/Team:

Worship Tech Team

MJ Hansen, John Harvi, co-chairs

Members of your group:

Ariel Schwartz (staff), Karen Coleman, Mj Hansen, Simone Niemczura, Michelle Zechner,

Mike Gianella, Nick Mellis, Chris Bensen, Robert Alan Bell

Once again we celebrate our ability to Zoom Sunday services live from the sanctuary to remote congregants. Moreover, those in attendance in the sanctuary can, at selected times, see and hear their fellow members and friends who are attending remotely.

The Worship Tech Team is lucky that the sanctuary is not part of the construction project. So far, construction has had little effect on our work. As construction moves into the interior things may change, but we expect its impact will remain minimal for us.

We look forward to continuing the work we have been doing. We hope new members will join our team and add support to what we are already accomplishing.

ADDENDUM

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing

Financial Summary Actual vs Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

July 2023 - June 2024

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Revenue				
A1. Plate Collections	36,220.17	31,248.00	4,972.17	115.91 %
A2. Operating Pledges	420,400.33	430,840.00	-10,439.67	97.58 %
A3. Other Misc Gifts/Contribs	51,767.75	50,000.00	1,767.75	103.54 %
B. Fund-Raising	39,637.10	32,550.00	7,087.10	121.77 %
E. Other Income	30,527.28	20,800.00	9,727.28	146.77 %
Total Revenue	\$578,552.63	\$565,438.00	\$13,114.63	102.32 %
GROSS PROFIT	\$578,552.63	\$565,438.00	\$13,114.63	102.32 %
Expenditures				
A. STAFF	351,941.59	361,160.00	-9,218.41	97.45 %
B. OPERATIONS	88,672.69	95,164.04	-6,491.35	93.18 %
C. PROGRAM	46,527.44	46,387.00	140.44	100.30 %
D. DENOMIN	22,759.00	22,759.00	0.00	100.00 %
E. DEBT SERVICE	25,464.96	39,952.96	-14,488.00	63.74 %
Total Expenditures	\$535,365.68	\$565,423.00	\$ -30,057.32	94.68 %
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$43,186.95	\$15.00	\$43,171.95	287,913.00 %
NET REVENUE	\$43,186.95	\$15.00	\$43,171.95	287,913.00 %