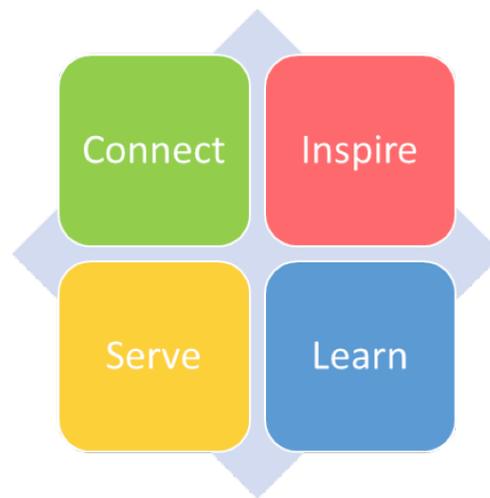




First Unitarian Church
OF PITTSBURGH CONNECT • INSPIRE • SERVE • LEARN

Annual Report

2021-2022



Board of Trustees

Heather Masterson, President (2020-2023)
Lee Carnes, Vice President (appointed 2/21; term expires 2022)
Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2020-2023)
Kate Snow, Secretary (2020-2023)
Julie Downs (2019-2022)
Sam Hens-Greco (2019-2022)
Amy DeChicchis (2021-2024)
Bob Mitchell (2021-2024)
Rob Schwartz (2021-2024)
Rev. Dr. Kate R. Walker, Minister (ex-officio)
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary (ex-officio)



First Unitarian Church

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From the President of the 2021–2022 Board of Trustees

What a year it has been! While still facing some challenges around the COVID-19 pandemic, this year has certainly been one of hope and celebration. Most notably our congregation ushered in a new era, having called our first new settled minister in over thirty years, Rev. Dr. Kate R. Walker – *our first female settled minister in our church's history*. After more than two years of lay-lead and interim leadership, Rev. Kate began her call to ministry here at First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh in August 2021. We joyously celebrated Rev. Kate's installation in a sacred service on May 15, 2022 at which our congregation and Rev. Kate pledged our deep commitments to each other. The future is indeed bright, and it is so exciting to think about all we will accomplish together.



New Partnerships, New Ideas

In January our church took part in a New Ministry Start-Up Retreat led by Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe of the UUA. The retreat took place over several sessions that spanned two weekends and included a worship co-led by Rev. Kate and Rev. Sunshine. Members of the congregation, church committee and group leaders, Board Members, and staff all participated in these thought provoking and valuable sessions that truly gave us an ability to start our new ministry well.

Several committees of the Board were established this year. Upon the recommendation from the Reimaging Fund Raising Task Force group, the Board voted to create the Stewardship Committee, with an expanded year-round focus whose

purpose is to cultivate a culture of abundance at First Unitarian Church and encourages spiritual growth and development in the congregation by providing opportunities for deepening financial generosity. The Annual Budget Drive and Planned Giving Committees were consolidated into the Stewardship Committee.

The Marketing and Communications Committee was created with a focus on facilitating communication within the church community while also expanding the reach of the church's ministry, raising external awareness, and helping to attract new visitors, in support of increasing church membership.

The Committee on Shared Ministry was formed to provide advice and counsel to the Minister, the Board of Trustees, and the congregation so as to strengthen the quality of shared ministry within the congregation. Among other responsibilities, this committee will recommend and implement a process to conduct an annual evaluation, on alternate years, of the Minister and the ministry of the congregation as a whole.

Our church entered into a Covenant of Affiliation with Rev. Stephanie Gannon in October, with the goal of connecting our congregation with Rev. Stephanie and her work outside our church in the community. Rev. Stephanie has been working with the Green Sanctuary Team and the members of the Racial Justice Task Force as we consider how our church can play a significant leadership role in addressing issues of both environmental and racial justice.

We are Back!

While we all have become very accustomed to attending church service in our living rooms, it remained a priority for the Board to find a way for us to have the opportunity to return to in-person services and gatherings with health and safety at the forefront. With that as the top priority, the Board voted, under the advisement of the Reopening Implementation Working Group, to allow in-person services beginning in January 2022. Using sound judgment, science, and health policy recommendations, we cautiously began to open our doors, allowing fully vaccinated and masked individuals to attend service in-person for the first time since March 2020 – nearly two years since the pandemic began!

We are now allowing for up to 75 (except for special occasions) people to attend Sunday service – maintaining the masking and vaccination policies and encouraging social distancing. We are also committed to permanently offering hybrid services, allowing congregants options that best suit their needs and circumstances. This is something we can thank our "Tech Team" for ensuring week after week – this amazingly talented and dedicated group of volunteers – Paul Cunningham, Brian Junker, Will Snavelly, Andrew Papal and Emily Sweeney have been working behind the

scenes, keeping us connected to one another. We are so thankful for them.

Putting our Principles into Action

Two significant efforts that put our UU Principles into action began to get underway this past year. First, in the Spring of 2022, the VIM Committee (Vision, Identity, Mission) facilitated cottage meetings with the congregation to gather input on our thoughts regarding issues of environmental and racial justice. With the intent of moving from hope to action, we as a congregation will be voting at our Annual Meeting on a proposal to commit to a year-long, church-wide focus on Environmental Justice. This vote will determine if our congregation will take on Environmental Justice – the intersection of racial justice and environmental action – as a potential unifying theme, thus, committing ourselves to take direct action to address these issues.

The second effort was the decision to install solar panels on the roof of the Mason Wing of the church. This project will begin later in 2022 and affirms our commitment to the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. This solar panel project has an even more significant meaning to this community as it will be dedicated in memory of Ray Schinhofen, a long-time church member who cared deeply about social justice issues and our church building.

Bountiful Thanks

Much gratitude goes out to my fellow Trustees who have given of their time and energy throughout the past year in so many ways. I cannot thank them enough for their thoughtful insights, support, and advice. They are Vice President Lee Carnes, Secretary Kate Snow; Treasurer Kyle Gracey; Board members Amy DeChicchis, Julie Downs, Sam Hens-Greco, Bob Mitchell, and Rob Schwartz; Rev. Kate as ex officio member; and Kurt Summersgill, who served as recording secretary.

In addition to Rev. Kate's leadership, we are so fortunate to have a dedicated and supportive staff to help keep us inspired and our church running smoothly. Sincerest thanks to Erica Shadowsong, Kris Rust, Ellen Gozion, Rita Gates, Cicely Moultrie, Dan Laity, and Kensie McElfresh for all you do for First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh.

Much appreciation also goes out to Rev. Connie Grant who served this congregation as our Interim Minister through July 31, 2021. Rev. Grant provided us with guidance, strength, and stability as we navigated through an unprecedented time. She helped us look inward and prepared us for our shift from past to future.

And finally, thanks to all of you - the members and friends of this congregation - you who volunteer your time, share your passions, and give of your skills to make our

community - both inside of our walls and out - a better, more fair, and just community for all. I have been honored to serve this past year in the role of President of the Board of this congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Masterson



First Unitarian Church
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Minister's Report to the Congregation

22 May 2022

Minister's Annual Report

First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Rev. Dr. Kate R. Walker

My heart is filled with the love and affirmation you all have given my husband and I (and two dogs), upon our arrival in this fabulous city on July 6. I feel appreciated, welcomed, celebrated and excited. On May 15, we enter into a covenant, a promise that unfolds from my call to serve as your minister. I know we will celebrate, create and at times be challenged by these promises as we cast a vision of who we all want to be together.

I offer my deep gratitude for all the genuine hospitality you have offered, and I welcome it.

Since my arrival and unpacking of boxes, we have assessed how the pandemic continues to impact our community and our capacity to minister to one another, even while our own hearts are breaking. We want to be safe, yet balance safety with the need to maintain solid connections.

In that balancing act, in that last nine months we worshipped together for the first time in person on Saturday, September 11 in a soccer field. It was a lot of work, and worth every drop of sweat. We met in pop-up meet & greets in parks around the East End of the City, where we could take off our masks and see smiles and tears of joy and sorrow. We began welcoming a very limited number of people to worship in person in January and have increased that number as infections and hospitalizations have dropped. We have held a few in person meetings, both outdoors and inside. All of these events are like tender threads reconnecting to one another.

Crucial to our reconnecting, is our connecting to new people, as visitors and then hopefully as members. Crucial to our future is our need to expand our membership. Crucial to our mission and purpose is expanding our radical hospitality. This means

examining what we look like to visitors, what we offer visitors, what we are singing, what we are saying, as well as what we are **not** showing, singing and saying. Radical hospitality means shifting our lens to the perspective of those with different races, ethnicities, cultures and physical abilities, and asking how we can connect with where they are, not asking them to connect with where we are.

Upon arriving, I heard from multiple people about how eager you were to do social justice work. With some careful listening, I launched two social justice initiatives: A congregation wide, year-long commitment to learning and engaging in Environmental Justice, and adopting the 8th Principle. You will be voting on the first at this annual meeting. Our Affiliate Minister, Rev. Stephanie Gannon, has been working with the Environmental Justice group, while I've stayed in close contact with Rev. Gannon. The 8th Principle group is dedicated and committed to a healthy process of reflection on what means it means for our church to vote on a statement holding ourselves accountable to dismantling racism and white supremacy. Please watch for more information and opportunities for dialogue circles in the fall.

In January, the whole congregation and particularly lay leaders, were invited to participate in a Start-Up workshop with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe of the UUA. We had great attendance and even greater conversation. It was helpful for members to hear each other's ideas and thoughts on a shared vision for our ministry. A summary report on this was shared in the e-newsletter and is an addendum to this report.

I've met monthly with the Pastoral Care Committee (doing extraordinary work to help maintain our connections during this stressful time), the Worship Committee, the Board of Trustees, the Fall Canvass and now the Stewardship Committee (a new committee replacing and expanding the role of the Fall Canvass).

I've been delighted to get to know the wonderful staff who have been dedicated and wonderful in their work during three years of ministerial transition and a pandemic. Cicely Moultrie, Rita Gates and Ellen Gozion each needed some time off in the fall, and volunteers offered help for me and to keep things moving smoothly. I meet two times per month with Program Staff (Ellen, Kris Rust and Erica Shadowsong), and monthly with the full staff. Dan Laity has also been wonderful with helping orient me, and responding to my requests. In June I'll be treating all the staff to a well-deserved lunch. Please offer your gratitude to each of them. They frequently go above and beyond in little known ways, and always appreciate your affirmation. I could not do my job without each of them.

In February I attended a virtual conference offered by the UU Ministers Association on ministry in the 21st century. I'll be attending the UUMA's annual meeting and

programming both virtually and in person June 20-22, and the UUA's General Assembly June 22-26, in Portland, OR. At the end of April, I attended the UUMA Regional Clergy Meeting at the Mohawk State Park, where I survived my first high ropes course with four other courageous colleagues.

Professionally, I'm currently serving as: Scribe for the Ministerial Conference at Berry Street (<https://www.uuma.org/page/berrystreet>); UUA Regional Transitions Coach; a Healthy Boundaries Trainer; an Advocate on behalf of complainants to the UUA's Safe Congregations Office; a Good Officer for regional clergy in cases of conflict. Last August I was delighted to have a book published that I was contributing author of and editor on the history of the Ministerial Conference at Berry Street (<https://www.uuabookstore.org/The-Through-Line-P18987.aspx>).

I'll be on study leave and vacation July 5-Aug. 12.

As I reflect back on this year of transition and unpacking, I am awed by the work of Heather Masterson and the board of Trustees. They are an extraordinary team with deep dedication to this community, who have been a joy to work with. I also want to call out Claus Makowka, Margaret Noether and Kyle Gracey, for they make the finances flow with transparent greased wheels.

It is a blessing to serve as your minister. I am deeply grateful with this honor.

Startup workshop with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe
January 2022
Summary for May Annual Meeting, May 2022

Church Members: Expectations

Ten break outs described the impossible job. But able to distill down to reasonable summary:

Pastoral Care
Educator
Community in-reach
Community out-reach
Offers spiritual opportunities
Encourages church membership
Authentic relationship in times of conflict
Lead social justice
Engages different theologies
Delivers stimulating sermons
Leads community building
Good administrator
Management
Warm/loving presence in community
Inspires
Leads
Listen, know and hear us
Unifying force for and in our congregation

Then broke into Groups to talk about rules, stories, traditions and truths.

Summary:

•Group 1, 2, 3: *The Keepers of the Rules*

Your job is to talk about the unwritten rules of the congregation. For example, in some congregations, you don't use God language openly. In some others, you do. In some congregations it's ok to wear t-shirts and shorts to worship, and in others, it's not. What unwritten and unspoken rules does the congregation have?

•Group 4,5,6: *The Tellers of the Stories*

Your job is to identify the stories that people tell in the congregation that are still influencing the present. Not every story – only those that are alive now.

•Group 7.8: *The Guardians of the Traditions*

Your job is to identify the things that might be described as “sacred cows.” These are ways that you do things that are inviolable – that in fact, if you were to get up and advocate for a change in one of them, you’d probably get criticized in some way. In some congregations, this might be trying to eliminate or change joys & concerns; in others, it might be the yearly unrehearsed Christmas pageant or putting up an artificial tree.

•Group 9.10: *The Speakers of the Truth*

Your job is to say the things that no--one else will say but that everyone knows.

Church Leaders: Best Practices and Highlights

- **What can the minister do to support our work?**
 - Supporting/facilitating communication- helping us communicate with each other- especially between leaders
 - Be responsive and consistent in communications - answer emails, calls, promptly. Responsive and accessible. Can reach out to the minister.
 - Be respectful and make people feel heard and part of things.
 - Promote unity despite differences. Remind us that we are a community with shared values, even if we disagree about details.
 - Challenge, support, and unite our church community to make a difference.
 - Be honest and authentic with people about whether they should be doing certain things and offering support.
 - Hope that minister is in tuned to emotional needs of lay leaders as well as the congregation
 - Honesty about good and bad, and opportunities for improvement

- **What is one thing that could make it complicated or messier?**
 - If she steps away from leaning into conflict (which we were excited about)- and go from a mediator to a divisive force
 - Leaving us out of the loop on decisions that impact our work/contributions we’ve made
 - Not respecting lay leader roles and going over them, not having lay leaders backs, micro-managing

- Emphasizing the views of one group in the congregation without acknowledging full spectrum of diversity
- Triangulate. Take sides.
- Getting in the way ... not allowing groups to be self-directing.
- Avoiding conflict – need to confront conflicts in a non-aggressive manner and help congregants understand how to do that.
- Not Abide by UUMA code of conduct
 - **What is your vision for your work?**
 - Reimagining stewardship in order to reconnect and grow
 - Promote deeper engagement both between members of the congregation and with the community
 - “Move the needle” - make things better, to have spiritual home and healthy environment for all
 - Be helpful, productive member of the community, both inward and outward facing.
 - Do the work according to our common church mission.
 - Along with the minister, be a leader of other groups both within the church in the community.
 - Empower and encourage congregants to bring their best talents to service with understanding that there are times when life issues will get in the way and there is no judgement of that.
 - LRED - to cultivate a culture in which congregants feel confident talking about and expressing their beliefs and convictions; empower congregants and staff



Treasurer's Report – Fiscal Year 2021

2021 Treasurer's Report

We ended the year in a reasonable financial position, slightly better than we budgeted for. This allowed us to incur a smaller-than-expected net operating loss and less reliance on reserve funds than we had planned for. Although the church began to reopen in the latter part of the year, we still suffered losses due to the church being closed for longer than we had planned.

Financial Position, Budget Variance, Investments

Asset balances added up to \$263,546, a reduction of \$115,664 over the course of the year. This did not include the money in our endowments and trusts. Total liabilities were \$245,385, a reduction of \$79,668 from the beginning of 2021. A significant portion of the reduction in our available cash and long-term liabilities was due to repaying our \$71,200 PPP loan, rather than applying for forgiveness. Overall, we had \$18,161 in net assets, a reduction of \$35,996 over the course of the year.

Our income came in at 95% of the budget, for a total income of \$491,046. We mainly fell short in rental fees, Giant Eagle card sales, and some of our investment income. Fortunately, expenses were also under what was budgeted, at 93%, for total costs of \$525,885. We especially had lower building and grounds costs and music expenses. Overall, this left us with a net loss of \$34,839, less than the \$44,399 loss budgeted. As a result, we did not have to make use of as much reserve funding as we had originally planned for when the budget was approved in December 2020.

Our endowments and other long-term investments remain healthy, providing a modest source of income to our general budget, a source of funding for unexpected projects that fall outside our budget, and protection against emergencies. In most cases, we are substantially limited in how much of the balances we can access from these investments for day-to-day expenses. The appendix below provides the balance of each fund as of the end of the year, along with a brief description of how the funds can be used. The net total of our endowed and restricted funds was \$3,406,456, an

increase of \$200,634 from the previous year. A special debt of gratitude goes out to those members and friends, now passed, who took the long view of stewardship and made special gifts and bequests in their wills.

Finance Committee

In addition to monitoring our finances over the past year, the Finance Committee made substantial progress on an overhaul of our financial policies and procedures. We also researched, purchased and transitioned to new, better software for managing our accounting and payroll. This software has led to reduced time spent managing our finances, while providing greater transparency of our financial health.

Investment Committee

The Investment Committee kept a close eye on the health of our investments during a busy year for the market. The Committee also researched and began the process of transferring some of our investments to a more socially and environmentally responsible fund. We will continue to look for opportunities to ensure that our investments are consistent with our values.

A Team Effort

Thank you to the many staff and committee members who contributed their time and talents to these efforts, including: Claus Makowka, Margaret Noether, Ward Kelsey, Pat Schuetz, Gordon Hargreaves, Stuart Hastings, Randy Weinberg, Rita Gates, Rev. Kate, Rev. Connie, Bob Mitchell, Gail Pesyna and Brian Rohleder.

May 2022

Submitted by: Kyle Gracey, Treasurer

Appendix: Investment Account Balances and Key Restrictions

Investment	Balance 12/31/2021
<u>Income Restricted Funds</u>	
Core Endowment	\$1,249,134
3.5% of balance can be spent each year for unrestricted expenses.	
Harkcom Fund	\$70,103
Dividends can be spent on unrestricted expenses. Supports operating budget.	
Memorial Trust	\$64,654
Dividends can be spent on unrestricted expenses. Supports operating budget.	
Mullins Memorial Endowment	\$475,371
Dividends can be spent on unrestricted expenses. Supports operating budget.	

Simon Income Fund \$195,458
Dividends can be spent on unrestricted expenses. Supports operating budget.

Goldsmith Concert Fund \$81,386
Dividends typically spent on music expenses. Supports operating budget.

Program Grant Funds

Campus Ministry Endowment \$208,743
3.5% of balance per year can be spent as grants for campus ministry activities.

Music Endowment \$187,755
3.5% of balance per year can be spent as grants for music-related expenses.

Social Justice Endowment \$327,505
3.5% of balance per year can be spent as grants for justice-related activities.

Endowment for Ministry with Children and Youth \$44,795
3.5% of balance per year can be spent as grants for children and youth activities

Capital-Restricted Funds

Goldsmith Targeted Fund \$143,744
Dividends support operating budget. Principal can be spent on capital projects.

Goldsmith Growth Fund \$202,192
Balance can be spent on capital projects.

Simon Future Fund \$100,997
Balance can be spent on capital projects.

Unrestricted Funds

Donaldson Fund \$54,618
Dividends support operating budget. Principal can be spent unrestricted.

Note: This is only a summary of the key restrictions on each investment. It may not reflect the full range of situations where funds can and cannot be spent. For example, some investments can be spent in the case of a disaster affecting the church, with approval by the congregation.

Church Committees and Activity Teams

Connect

Hospitality Ministry

Membership Team: Joan Harvey joanhv@gmail.com
Amy DeChicchis amydech50@gmail.com
Ushers and Greeters: Rob Schwartz rob.j.schwartz@gmail.com

Pastoral Care Ministry

Pastoral Care Team: Kathy Miller kathymillerotter@gmail.com
Jim Cunningham cunni@comcast.net
Medical Equipment
Loan Program: Jim Reitz j5650r@comcast.net
Minister's Benevolence
Fund/Marion's Purse Rev. Dr. Kate Walker kwalker@first-unitarian-pgh.org

Small-Group Ministry

Covenant Groups Team: Lynne Porterfield lporterfield@yahoo.com
Addictions Ministry: Jim Pashek jimpashek@gmail.com
Gathering of Men: Jim Reitz j5650r@comcast.net
Humanist Group: Stuart Hastings sph@pitt.edu
John Hooper johnbhooper@comcast.net
WomanSpirit:
(evening group) Pat Schuetz patschuetz@verizon.net
Women's Alliance:
(daytime group) Alice Carnes alice.carnes51@yahoo.com
Kathy Fein kathyrsp@comcast.net

Nominating Committee: Jenn Layman jmeccalayman@gmail.com

Inspire

Staff: Rev. Dr. Kate R. Walker, Minister
Ellen Gozion, Director of Instrumental Music
Kris Rust, Director of Vocal Music

Worship Ministry

Worship Team: Stephanie Pawlowski sbpawlowski@gmail.com
Affiliate Minister: Rev. Stephanie Gannon communityminister@first-unitarian-pgh.org

Commissioned Lay

Minister: Stephanie Pawlowski sbpawlowski@gmail.com

Committee on

Shared Ministry: Mary Denison marydenison@gmail.com

Music and the Arts Ministry

Instrumental Music Ellen Gozion ellen@ellengozion.com

Vocal Music Kris Rust kdrust@aol.com

Art Team: Ali Masalehdan ali@masimex.com

Dance Choir: Mary Pat Mengato mpmengato@gmail.com

SongSpace

Concert Series: Brian Junker junkerb@gmail.com

Serve

Humanitarian Service Ministry

Alternative Gift Market: Karen Burns burnskaren00@gmail.com

East End Cooperative

Ministry Homeless Shelter

Meal Team: Sam Hens-Greco samhensgreco@gmail.com

Habitat for Humanity: Marty Lieb liebm38@yahoo.com

Khasi Hills Partnership

Team: Karen Litzinger litzingerkaren@aol.com

Social Justice Ministry

Green Sanctuary Team: Peg Schmidt pegchmidttoo@gmail.com

Barbara Litt brlitt@gmail.com

PIIN Core Team Sandy Woolley sandy.woolley@gmail.com

Racial Justice Task Force Sonia Wellington sonia.wellington@gmail.com

Reopening

Implementation Groups Peggy Parsons mapars4@gmail.com

UUs for Justice in the

Middle East Ali Masalehdan ali@masimex.com

UUJusticePA: Becky Studer rkstuder@gmail.com

Learn

Staff: Erica Shadowsong, Lifespan Religious Education Director

Board Committees

Building & Grounds

Endowment
– Campus Ministry
– Ministry with Children and Youth
– Music
– Social Justice
Finance
Investment
Marketing and Communications
Personnel
Safety
Stewardship
Vision, Identity, and Mission Committee (VIM)

Church Administrative Staff

Business Manager:	Rita Gates
Communications Coordinator:	Cicely Moultrie
Sexton:	Dan Laity
Building Security Provider:	Kensie McElfresh

Connect

Hospitality Ministry

Membership Team

Members: Amy De Chicchis, (co-chair), Joan Harvey (co-chairs), Nancy Latimer (through August, 2021), Lauren McVay (through December, 2021), Mark Whittaker, Marjolijn Rietsema, with support from Rev. Connie Grant and Rev. Kate Walker

As part of the Connections Council, the Membership Team helps members and potential members connect with the church community and discover and pursue their own path to spiritual growth.

The Membership Team has met by zoom monthly throughout the year, We have also followed up with the 100+ individuals who have visited and expressed interest in our church. In addition, we have held regular virtual sessions in the Path to Membership series:

- **Introduction to UU sessions** are currently scheduled the fourth Sunday of each month. Any visitors can sign up ahead of time and are placed in a Zoom group at the Coffee Hour with our minister and 1–2 members of the Membership Team.

- **RU a UU? orientation sessions** have been held 3–4 times via Zoom.

We welcomed the following people as new church members during the past church year:

In Sept., 2021:

Sherry Jones

Marjolijn Reitsema

Nancy Simmonds

In Jan., 2021

Bryan Bandli

Sonia Wellington

Douglas Penhallegon

Jolene Zywica

Matt Zywica

Jennifer Rich

We have continued to revise relevant sections of the First UU web page and the Visitors' Form. As our church reopens its doors, we have resumed our presence at the newly designed Welcome Table and held our first "hybrid" Introduction to UU session, with in-person as well as virtual attendees. We look forward to moving to our first in-person RU a UU? session in June, as well as our Pot Luck gatherings for new members where they can connect with each other and with other church members. Rev. Kate will personally reach out to those who visited First UU on-line during the pandemic to welcome them again to our church community as we begin to connect and reconnect face to face.

Volunteering with the Membership Team provides an opportunity to help others become more deeply connected to the church in a way that is meaningful to them. We welcome new members to join us! Many opportunities exist to contribute to the work of the Membership Team. Several tasks involve a small time commitment but are very meaningful. Other tasks involve overseeing particular pieces of membership or joining the leadership team in monthly meetings. Volunteer opportunities include

If you feel that working with membership could be a good match for your interests and time, the Membership Team welcomes your participation in helping people to connect, be inspired, serve, and learn within our beloved community.

—Joan Harvey, Amy de Chicchis (co-chairs)

Ushers and Greeters Team

January 2022 marked the return of in-person Sunday morning services and to the usher/greeter team becoming active again. Initially, only 1 or 2 ushers were needed, and responsibilities were very light as capacity was extremely limited and only a handful of people attended. However, capacity was expanded to 75 people beginning March 20, which necessitated a full "staffing" of the usher/greeter team.

An email was sent on January 3 to the usher/greeter volunteers on record asking who would be willing to continue in this capacity. Luckily, many folks agreed to do so, with a few volunteering for the first time. The usher/greeter team now consists of 20 folks, enough to have 4 people for every service. This is the bare minimum, as there must be a greeter at each of the three exterior doors (the Ellsworth Avenue entrance was reopened, plus the two Garden Lobby entrances), plus one person at the door from the Garden Lobby to the Sanctuary. So new volunteers are needed!

Two training sessions were conducted in February and March to refresh people on the policies and procedures, educate new volunteers, and educate about the new COVID-

related policies, which includes verifying vaccination status, ensuring the new capacity limits aren't violated, and directing people to sit in every other pew. Christine Milcarek was kind enough to create colorful "ropes" to close off every other pew. A new plate collection procedure was also established. Instead of the liturgist being responsible for the plate collection, that became the responsibility of the ushers. Two ushers are now required to count the collection from the Semple room and then deposit it into the slot located next to the copy machine.

– **Rob Schwartz**

Pastoral Care Ministry

Pastoral Care Team

Annual Report May 2022

Pastoral Care Team

Members: Chris Beregi, Jan Carlino, Jim Cunningham (co-chair), Martin Lieb, Kathy Miller (co-chair), Bob Sullivan, Rev. Kate Walker

During the past year the Pastoral Care Team continued to meet by Zoom once a month with our interim minister and now with our settled minister. We continued to share concerns of church members who contacted any team member or concerns about church members related to us by others who know them. We sent cards for joys or sorrows, made calls and shared our concerns about ourselves with each other.

Prior team member, Julie Childers left the Pastoral Care Team in February 2022 after being with us for two years. We will remain aware of our time and when it may be appropriate to leave. We want to continue to seek new team members as part of our mission to work with the minister to support the congregation. Team members have visited church members and some of us have helped church members to shop. Rev. Kate is passionate about pastoral care and she instituted her Care and Connections email sent out weekly starting August 2021. She helped initiate our monthly pastoral care record to keep the Pastoral Care Team advised of the needs of congregants also in August 2021. She encourages our team to be active and to expand our roles and to clarify when necessary if our contacts are related to pastoral care or to contact someone as a friend. Rev. Kate wishes to support congregants with pursuing all issues that impact their pastoral well-being.

We help to prepare a list of congregants who have passed as well as relatives and friends of congregants to share those names on All Souls Sunday.

Contacts for the Pastoral Care Team members are on the church website and listed in the weekly newsletter.

Future Projects:

We will seek to recruit new members for our team. This year we were joined by Martin Lieb.

Obtain state and federal clearances for all Pastoral Care Team members.

Seek congregational support for our mission statement: To assist the minister and congregation in providing a circle of confidential loving support to members and friends of First Unitarian Church.

Reopen our Caring Table in the Undercroft Gallery.

The following members of the First Church have passed away since November 1:

Phyllis Genszler: passed Nov. 18, 2021

William Myerburg: passed Dec. 19, 2021

- Jim Cunningham

Medical Equipment Loan Program

The Medical Equipment Loan Program has been in existence for 8 years and has helped a great many of our church members, friends, and family members.

Currently we have the following equipment available: 7 walkers, including one with a seat; 1 nebulizer; 1 plastic bed pan; 2 shower/bath seats; 4 canes; 5 sets of crutches; 2 portable potty chairs; 1 raised toilet seat; 1 plastic bed pan; 1 air cast for a left foot, size medium; 1 sling; 1 adjustable bedside table; 1 tub-side, clamp-on handle; 3 regular-size and 1 child-size wheelchairs; 1 back stabilizer with straps; 1 long-handled grasping tool (for, e.g., a sock-aid); 1 device for icing a swollen knee; 1 glucometer; and additional items are added from time to time.

When someone is in need of a medical assistance item, they can contact Jim Reitz, J5650R@comcast.net. They will be provided the name(s), telephone number(s) and email address(s) of the person or persons who have such items to loan. It is up to the person making the request to arrange to pick up the item(s) at the owner's home. The persons receiving the loaned item(s) are asked to report when they have returned the items to the owner, so the list can be kept current.

Several basic items are kept at church (a wheelchair, walker, cane and crutches) in case of sudden need during a service or event. It's important that members know where these items are kept. They do get moved around from time to time. When last located, the walker, cane, and crutches were in a cabinet in the Schweitzer Room; the

wheelchair, under the coat rack in the basement, near the restrooms.

From time to time when people have medical assistance items that they cannot keep at their homes, the items are brought to church and then taken and donated to Global Links, which distributes them to countries in need around the world.

- *Jim Reitz*

Minister's Benevolence Fund/Marion's Purse

The Minister's Benevolence Fund, known as Marion's Purse, is used to help congregants in temporary financial need, to help with such things as a utility bill or emergency car repair. The Minister maintains an overview of needs in the congregation in order to make an equitable distribution of funds.

Formerly known as the Minister's Discretionary Fund, the account was revived in 2012 with a significant donation from the Women's Alliance to honor the participation and financial contribution of longtime member Marion Schnurer. The fund continues to be supported by individual congregants and by periodic allocations from the Women's Alliance.

Donations may be made to the fund

- By writing a check to the church with "Marion's Purse" or "Minister's Benevolence Fund" in the memo line;
- On the church website at <https://www.first-unitarian-pgh.org/make-a-donation.html>; select "Marion's Purse/Minister's Benevolence Fund" from the dropdown list; or
- By texting "give" to 412-435-1050 with the designation "carefund."

As of May 2022 the fund has a balance of \$6619.24. No requests have come into the fund since August 1, 2021. However, funds have been used to purchase Giant Eagle cards for those in need. In an effort to promote the existence of the fund, regular announcements are being put in the e-news and in worship.

- *Rev. Dr. Kate Walker*

Small-Group Ministry

Covenant Groups Team

Connecting, caring, sharing are three pillars of Covenant Groups.

That is precisely what Covenant Groups at First Unitarian Church report they have been doing throughout this past year.

Covenant Groups have been part of the First Unitarian Church community for over 20 years. One group has been meeting to explore spiritual growth for 22 years, before the introduction of Covenant Groups to the congregation.

Connecting

During the difficult times of the pandemic, Zoom has made it possible for groups to continue to meet. Unanimously they reported how important this connection has been for their members during the isolation of the pandemic when having supportive connections has been more important than ever. Looking toward summer, several groups are planning in-person meetings as the weather allows them to gather safely outside.

Meetings, which always include a check-in, connect members on a more personal level. At least one group opted to meet more often during the past year. Most groups meet once per month, some twice.

Sharing

Drawing on inspirational resources for spiritual growth, groups have used Soul Matters, Small Group Ministry Archives, UU Bookstore recommendations, books on liberal theology, and books/resources about numerous beliefs and practices from world religions.

Caring

All Covenant Groups are encouraged to engage in a service project each year, either in the church or in the community. Understandably the pandemic has made this more challenging to do in person, nevertheless groups have reported on service projects during the last year; these have included preparing a meal for the East End Cooperative Ministry Shelter, supporting various projects related to UUJusticePA, including fair elections, voter rights, reproductive rights, and racism.

Some groups have donated time to caring for the environment, to sending books to incarcerated people in PA, and to Habitat for Humanity, PGH. One group has initiated a relationship with the Birmingham Free Clinic on the Southside, through one of the members who volunteers there.

Status

Ten Covenant Groups sent data for this report. One group has not continued to meet. One start-up group began to meet regularly this year and have committed to continuing.

Groups that have been together for years, have shared many life joys and sorrows, giving comfort and support to one another. The longevity of some groups makes it more difficult to add new members, but openings do occur.

A Covenant Group composed of new members offers an opportunity for deeper connections to our church community. If you are a new member or are interested joining a group, please complete and send the Interest Form on the website under "Connect"

- *Lynne Porterfield*

Addiction and Recovery Ministry

The Addiction and Recovery Ministry of First Unitarian Church serves the needs of those in the congregation, including family members and friends, who have been touched by addiction. We understand "addiction" in its broadest sense to include both substance abuse and behavior addictions. About 1 in every 6 people is struggling with some form of addiction. Our group at First Church is not a 12-step program but rather a listening group that shares experiences.

We have not met since the closing of the church in the spring of 2020 but are looking forward to returning to face-to-face meetings soon. We are a small group of about half a dozen regulars and an equal number of others who attend occasionally. We meet on the 4th Sunday of the month about 30 minutes after the church service. We meet to be there when the next person needs to talk about the impact addiction is having on their life.

The meeting coordinator is Jim Pashek. You can reach him at 412-606-1813 or jimpashek@gmail.com.

- *Jim Pashek*

Gathering of Men

The men's group at the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh is now in its 30th year. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., usually in the Priestly Room, although during the past year all meetings have been on Zoom. Attendance averaged 16 members per meeting. Usual summer activities such as hiking and other field trips were cancelled this year.

At each meeting one attendee volunteers to lead a discussion. Volunteers also plan the program. Discussion topics are wide ranging and always very interesting. There is no pressure to be a discussion leader.

Occasionally men who are not church members or do not attend our church attend the men's group meetings. This is one way in which we reach out beyond our members.

Although not a “support group,” the men’s group is definitely supportive, which I believe is one of the reasons many men have attended regularly for years. Members also serve one meal a year at the East End Community Ministry homeless shelter. Jim Reitz is the group’s contact person and coordinator, J5650R@Comcast.net.

-Jim Reitz

Humanist Group

The Humanist Group has had a successful inaugural year. Our steering committee, consisting of Lucinda Beattie, Amy De Chicchis, Stuart Hastings, John Hooper, and Audrey Masalehdan, has presented nine programs, with attendance ranging from 16 to 30 and an average above 20. The first seven programs were entirely on Zoom, while the last two were hybrid, with a live audience as well as remote viewers via Zoom. Here is a list of our programs:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| September | Inaugural Meeting, presented by the committee with special guest Rev. Dr. Kate Walker |
| October | Some important Transcendentalists you may never have heard of, and how they led to today’s UU social activism, presented by the committee |
| November | Is there a dark side to humanism, with Dr Andy Norman |
| December | A Humanist view of gene editing and CRISPR, with Professor Christine Milcarek |
| January | Some early 20 th century Unitarian humanists, presented by the committee. |
| February | Promise and Perils in Artificial Intelligence, with Professor Illah Nourbakhsh of CMU and Dr. Jennifer Keating of the University of Pittsburgh |
| March | Risks and Benefits of Scientific Research: Two Case Studies, presented by the committee |
| April | Welcome to All? Is there a UU Culture of Elitism? Presented by Reverend Mark Harris |
| May | Democracy vs Theocracy: The Christian Nationalist Assault on Church-State Separation, presented by Rob Boston, Editor of Church and State magazine. |

We expect to continue to offer hybrid programs, and hope that more people will feel comfortable in attending in person We believe that the in-person experience is much richer than remote viewing, while recognizing that it is difficult for some to get to church. We also hope that church members with even an occasional interest in our activities will suggest topics and speakers for future programs.

We have made recordings of each of our programs. A number of these are available online and the rest will be available soon. However the site where they are posted is not connected with the church, and we wish to explore whether a more formal church relationship is possible, one which includes links from the church website and Facebook pages.

Another initiative which we wish to expand and regularize is promotion to area UU congregations. So we have a busy summer agenda ahead of us, the principal item of which is arranging programs for the coming church year.

- **Stuart Hastings**

WomanSpirit

WomanSpirit is the evening women's group at First Unitarian Church. Currently we have over 150 church members and a few friends on our email distribution list. Our goal is to meet on the second Wednesday of every month.

In "normal" times we met for a potluck dinner in a member's home, often followed by a group discussion on a topic proposed by the host. This past year, we have been meeting via Zoom for conversation and to support each other during, and we had several meetings on Eleanor Mayfield's front porch.

We look forward to resuming regularly meeting in person once it's safe to again congregate in groups.

We periodically engage as a group in a social service project and occasionally we devote an evening to political action. We welcome new members and friends of First Unitarian. A WomanSpirit dinner is an easy and entertaining way to meet other women of a broad range of ages and interests.

- **Pat Schuetz**

Women's Alliance

Introduction: The Women's Alliance (WA) of the First Unitarian Church was founded in 1891, funded by bequests from Irene H. Haney and the Semple Family. Those, and subsequent additional funds obtained by bequest, are administered by the Bequests Committee of the Women's Alliance, according to the provisions of the bequests. The Women's Alliance, a dues-paying organization, was granted 501(c) (3) status under the Internal Revenue Code and is thus entitled to the tax benefits available to charitable organizations, pursuant to the regulations of the Internal Revenue Service. We currently have 32 members and 73 members and friends on our mailing list.

Mission Statement: The Mission of the Women’s Alliance is to enable Unitarian Universalist women and those who share our values to join together for mutual support, personal growth, and spiritual enrichment. Through our combined strength and vision, we work toward a future where all women will be empowered to live their lives with a sense of wholeness and integrity in a world of peace that recognizes the worth and dignity of each individual.

Members of the Board:

Alice Carnes – Chair
Linda Fleming – Co-Chair
Madeline Darnell and Margaret Fuhrman – Secretary
Margaret Stevens—Treasurer
Denice Galpern and Louise Jencik – Programs
Alice Bright – Membership
Delia Parks –Social Responsibility
Linda Fleming and Peggy Bonnell – Hospitality
Pat Schuetz – Bequests
Christine Michaels – Poet in Residence

Women’s Alliance Meetings: Our calendar runs from July1 to June 30. This year we again followed a modified schedule on Zoom due to covid. Our meetings were on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays from 10:30 am until noon, with the first 30 minutes being a business meeting. Once a month the Program Chairs arranged for a speaker. The other monthly meeting was a Member Check-In that included a prompt for reflection that provided the opportunity for mutual support and spiritual benefit.

Women’s Alliance Programming for 2021-2022

- **May 2021** – Marianne Jew, who is in the process of becoming a Commissioned Lay Minister at East Suburban UU Church, spoke about suddenly realizing she was a Brown woman in a largely White congregation and faith community. She shared how she experienced racism, and then recognized her own prejudices. She gave advice and encouragement about challenging racism. [This program occurred after last year’s deadline for this report.]
- **October 2021-** We happily welcomed newly called Rev. Kate Walker to our meeting. She steered the conversation deftly from asking what about our congregation are we most proud, to what are hopes and dreams for the congregation’s future. Reverend Kate is an excellent listener!
- **November 2021** - Sue Fritsche, of the Women’s Law Project, discussed the changing political landscape for women’s reproductive health and rights.
- **December 2021-** Later in the month our program was a Check-In where a discussion started as Recollections of Beauty, and quickly shifted to Christmas

memories and was a very warm discussion. On Christmas Eve, as last year, WA prepared and delivered to POWER (Pennsylvania Organization for Women in Early Recovery) the fixings for Christmas Dinner for POWER's residents and staff, with ample leftovers.

- **January 2022** - Church member Mary Denison, as part of the Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF), came to lead our annual book discussion. This year it was *Waking up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race*, by Debby Irving. Many members later joined the RJTF's in-depth study of this book.
- **February 2022** - Our own member Joan Adibi wowed everyone with her photos and honest description of her recent time spent walking the Camino Frances, part of the Camino de Santiago in Spain.
- **March 2022** - We heard from Alina Harbourne of Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS) about the world refugee situation, and about her agency's role in resettling immigrants in Pittsburgh. Christy Lagnese, friend of member Betsy Martin, described her family's recent experiences hosting an Afghani family. (Several of our members had been coordinating monthly collections of supplies for refugees, during the past year.)
- **April 2022** - Mary Herbert, Clinical Director, spoke about the Birmingham Free Clinic (BFC) history, mission, and programs. BFC provides a safety net of care for homeless, uninsured, and medically indigent individuals. All services are provided at no cost to any patient by a volunteer team of physicians, pharmacists, nurses, physical therapists, health professional students, AmeriCorps National Service Members, and other healthcare providers. The Women's Alliance is exploring how we can help establish an ethnic spice pantry to supplement the Clinic's Food Pantry.
- **April 2022** – 1.) Small groups of Members visited the Westmorland Museum of American Art to experience the exhibit, *Stephen Towns: Declaration & Resistance* which examines the American dream through the lives of Black Americans from the late 18th century to the present. 2.) In anticipation of in person church, Mary Schinhofen, Becky Studer, Margaret Fuhrman, and Mary Alice Drusbasky emptied the magazine recycling rack outside the Library, repainted it, repurposed a bookshelf for shared books, and created signage.

Women's Alliance Committees

Social Responsibility. Each year we make donations from our dues to organizations that support our mission of serving women and girls. This year we also considered the intersection of women and children with environmental justice. After soliciting suggestions from the Membership for potential recipients, the Social Responsibility Coordinator researched which organizations were the best match and had the greatest financial need, creating a short list. The Membership voted to donate \$300 each to GASP (Group Against Smog and Pollution), Birmingham Free Clinic, Women's Law

Project, and Grow Pittsburgh. At our Holiday Joy Party in December, the four winners of our party games each chose a charity to which Women's Alliance donated \$25: Reading Ready Pittsburgh, Doctors without Borders, Global Links, Student Conservation. Total Social Responsibility Expenditures from dues: \$1,300.

The Bequest Committee recommends contributions for congregational needs, from bequest funds held in investment accounts, in accordance with the terms specified in the individual bequests. There were no requests for endowment funds this year. Funding the Jewish Family and Community Services' (JFCS) Afghan relocation project was considered. However, currently WA members individually participate in the Afghan project in large numbers monthly.

Hospitality Committee Highlights

- **Porch Party, August 5, 2021** – Due to concerns over the Delta variant, there was only one "porch party" this summer: Fifteen vaccinated members of the Women's Alliance gathered on Peggy Bonnell's deck for a grand potluck brunch. (Masks were worn in the house.)
- **Fall Potluck, September 16, 2021** – A Women's Alliance Fall Potluck was held in the church garden. Approximately 30 members attended including Reverend Kate.
- **Holiday Joy Party, December 9, 2021** – The Women's Alliance distributed 55 bags of cookies and treats to members and friends on Dec. 7th and 8th. Then, thirty-two members joined in a Zoom Holiday Joy Party on Dec 9th to eat their treats, make cards, and play games. Four game winners chose a charity to receive a \$25.00 WA donation. Rev. Kate declared this to be the most fun Holiday Party she had ever attended! We agree!
- **Rev. Kate Installation, May 15, 2022** – The WA, under the leadership of Peggy Bonnell and supported by Alice Carnes, will provide the beverages and luscious desserts for Rev. Dr. Kate Walker's installation as our first woman settled minister. Peggy will create table centerpieces that guests can take home. Christine Michaels, our Poet in Residence, will read her poem to commemorate the Installation. Linda Fleming represented the WA on the Installation Planning Committee.

Looking Ahead

The Women's Alliance Bequest Committee is interested in financially supporting a church effort to purchase equipment that could support multi-platform meetings for the long-term. We anticipate that as members of First Church age, it is more difficult to

participate in in-person meetings. We can also realize a time savings and decreased environmental impact due to less travel.

Women's Alliance looks forward to resuming a full program of activities in the months ahead, as public health requirements and church policy permit.

Respectfully submitted,
-Linda Fleming, Co-Chair

Nominating Committee

Members: Jenn Layman (co-chair), Martin Schmidt (co-chair), Heather Cunningham, Linda Fleming, Christine Milcarek, Sue Oerkvitz, Melody Platz, Susan Regan

Traditionally, the Nominating Committee begins their work in the early part of the calendar year, identifying potential new members of First Unitarian's Board of Trustees and filling spots on the Nominating Committee itself in preparation for members rolling off each year after their three-year term concludes, in preparation for the church's annual meetings. This year saw the committee with expanded responsibilities, filling spots for two newly-created committees, Stewardship (fundraising) and Safety.

It wasn't easy this year. It never is, asking our congregants to give even more of their time in service to our beloved community, but after two years of the pandemic; virtual services; and the exciting (and often time-consuming) volunteer work that went into ensuring Reverend Connie's time with us was successful and fulfilling for both her and our congregation as well as the search for our settled minister, Reverend Kate, and making her transition to Pittsburgh and First Church as successful as possible, has taken its toll. For some of us, it's the kind of tired that happens after a long hike, where you just need a little bit to recover and then you know you'll be right back out there. For others, it's going to take longer, and that's okay.

And that's the true work of the Nominating Committee: meeting our congregants where they are, finding ways to plug them into our church community that both utilizes their skills AND passions, and bringing balance to the volunteer leadership force that makes our church thrive. Thank you to everyone who took the time to speak with us and truly consider their physical, emotional, and spiritual availability to serve this year.

A special thank you to our hard-working Nominating Committee members who took on more than expected and delivered exceptionally.

The 2021-2022 Nominating Committee is pleased to present to you our slate of nominations for the 2022-2023 First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh Board of Directors and its Nominating Committee:

Board of Directors

Nick Izzo
Raeann Olander-Murray
Christine Milcarek

Nominating Committee

Cathy Rohrer
Mary Pat Mengato
Margaret Fuhrman
Stuart Hastings (two-year term)

-Jenn Layman

Inspire

Worship Ministry

Worship Team

Worship Team Members: Stephanie Pawlowski, Commissioned Lay Minister (chair), Bryan Bandli, Alice Carnes, Kathy Fein, Ward Kelsey. (Members who resigned from the committee within the past year: Louise Jencik and Melody Platz)

The Worship Team works with the minister to support Sunday worship services. We meet on the first Wednesday of the month to discuss ideas for future services. We work as a team to invite guests to the pulpit and assist guests with planning and presenting the remainder of the service. Currently, all of our members act as liturgists on a rotating basis. This past year, the team worked together to create and present several complete services to the congregation.

Within the past few years, the Worship team has gone through a number of transitions: moving from a briefly lay-led congregation, to having an interim minister and to now working with Rev Kate, our settled minister. We assisted in planning for people to return to the building after two years of remote services. Hybrid services have added new challenges in ensuring both people in the building and watching online can have the best experience.

The Worship Team has been excited and inspired by Rev. Kate's creative, engaging and collaborative style. We are looking forward to continuing to grow together through worship.

- *Stephanie Pawlowski*

Affiliated Community Minister's Report

I began my community ministry at First Church last fall. I serve full-time as a clinical staff chaplain at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System in Oakland, where I am the main chaplain covering the ICU's and medical units. My specialization is in mental health and addictions, but I provide spiritual care to veterans coping with all sorts of medical conditions, including supporting end-of-life care. In addition to serving on the VA Pittsburgh Caregiver Support Steering Team, I mentor Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) interns and residents. As a UU minister, I am proud to serve a vulnerable population with my liberal interfaith approach and to bring our UU values and principles into daily practice in my clinical work by honoring diversity and working for greater health equity.

My focus at First Church has been in support the Green Sanctuary Team as they develop a broader vision of climate justice work. Our goal for this year has been to craft an Environmental Justice statement, which will be voted on at the Annual Congregational Meeting in May. I participated in a number of meetings to help shepherd this work, including my attending at least three monthly Green Sanctuary Team meetings and participating in the following:

- November 6, 2021: attended the PA Interfaith Power & Light Annual Conference with Bob Mitchell
- November 20, 2021: attended meeting of key First Church Environmental Justice (EJ) stakeholders, including board members and members of Green Sanctuary Team and Racial Justice Task Force
- January 9, 2022: co-facilitated Environmental Justice Town Hall meeting with Rev. Kate using Joanna Macy's Work that Reconnects spiral
- February 5, 2022: attended VIM Cottage Meetings Kickoff for upcoming EJ gatherings that were held in March
- April 10, 2022: helped to coordinate the annual Earth Day worship service with members of the Green Sanctuary Team and liturgist Alice Carnes
- April 20, 2022: attended Pittsburgh Episcopal Diocesan Environmental Workshop on behalf of First Church

Besides these things, I led the Fire Communion worship service on the first Sunday of the new year, January 2, 2022, and, as a staff member, I also participated in Rev. Sunshine Wolfe's Leadership Summit for the congregation on January 22nd.

Finally, as I continue in my last year of Preliminary Fellowship with the UUA, I have been convening monthly Ministerial Formation Network (MFN) meetings to discuss my professional development plan and to receive support and feedback on my ministry. Two of my fellow VA chaplain colleagues serve on the committee as well as two members of First Church: CLM Stephanie Pawlowski and Chris Beregi from the Pastoral Care Team. We have been reading Resmaa Menakem's *My Grandmother's Hands* and reflecting on how we might integrate his body practices into our respective ministries as we continue to try to dismantle what he calls "white body supremacy" wherever we encounter it.

I am grateful to be your Affiliated Community Minister and look forward to our continuing to learn from each other and to my supporting your Environmental Justice ministry as much as possible.

In faith and with active hope,
- **Rev. Stephanie**

Commissioned Lay Minister Report

I am First Unitarian Church's commissioned lay minister (CLM). CLMs undergo an intensive 2-4 year program run through the Central East Region of the UUA. It is a program that strengthens lay leadership so that individuals can serve their congregations in deeper ways.

My focus has been on worship. This past year I presented two sermons. On August 1st, I presented a sermon entitled *How Does Your Garden Grow* and on December 26th, I presented a sermon entitled *the Quiet In Between*. I continued as chair of the worship committee and assisted in creating and presenting two team led services.

I meet monthly with Rev. Kate and regularly with a group of other CLMs. I also participated in a CLM retreat presented by the CLM committee. Due to the pandemic, I did not officiate any weddings or child dedications this past year but I do have two scheduled for the fall. I am also a member of Stephanie Gannon's Ministerial Formation Network.

All CLMs must be re-commissioned by the Central East Region every 3 years. I was due for recommissioning in October of 2021. The recommissioning process included the following: review my self-discernment document; re-state commitment to CLM status and areas of focus; create a new Letter of Agreement between the CLM and the Board/Congregation; and create a new covenant between CLM and covenanting Partner/Minister.

I had to answer two questions for the CLM committee prior to being recommissioned. 1) What would you consider to be your major accomplishment as a CLM? 2) What are your goals for the next 3 years as a CLM?

I believe my major accomplishment was adjusting successfully to a continuously changing role. Two months after I was commissioned, First Church became lay led. Then we transitioned to an interim minister, and finally our settled minister. During each period of time, my role and responsibilities shifted. Although this was challenging at times, I believe I was able to serve the congregation through each transition. My goals for the next three years are to continue to develop my skills in writing and presenting sermons and to continue to develop how I officiate weddings.

I am very excited for the upcoming year and look forward to continuing to collaborate with Rev. Kate, the worship team, and the music and art team, to present inspiring, creative and meaningful worship services.

- *Stephanie Pawlowski*

Committee on Shared Ministry

Members:

Sue Oerkvitz

Jim Reitz

David Doorley

Gretchen Aiyengar

Michael Safran

Kate Walker

Chair: Mary Denison

The Committee is newly established since February 2022. We have been approved by the board and have established a monthly meeting schedule. At our first meeting the committee approved our Charter. We have established a format for our meetings and a time line for our first assessment of the shared ministry in the church to start in January/ February and complete and submit to the board by 3/1/23. We are excited about the potential for a strong and healthy shared ministry at First Unitarian Church in the coming years.

- *Mary Denison*

Music & the Arts Ministry

Director Of Instrumental Music Annual Report

Just before submitting my 2021 Director of Instrumental Music Report I had the pleasure of playing for two candidating services with our new soon-to-be-installed minister Rev. Kate Walker; I also presented music for a remote farewell service for Rev. Connie Grant.

In the Spring of 2021 I planned collaborated on a service with guest educator and musician Mark Williams. Other paid guest accompanists and instrumentalists throughout the year have been Nanette Solomon and Kazumi Petinaux and Amaury Morales, piano; Brad Yoder, singer- songwriter, guitar, and soprano sax; Hugo Kruz, drums, percussion; David Fitzpatrick, oboe. Members and friends of the congregation who have contributed music for Sunday services have included Danny Rectenwald, guitar and mandolin; Brian Junker, voice, guitar and banjo; Kate Snow, voice and guitar; Sarah Benson, fiddle; Maddy Izzo and Ebe Emmons, flute; Barbara Litt, violin; Mary Denison, recorder and wooden flute; Kiki Barley, piano, with flute player Tara Yaney; Kate Snow, voice and guitar.

Well into 2021 I continued creating choir videos and other ensemble videos for virtual services, several of which included singers and musicians outside the First UU congregation, including folks from Allegheny UU. I participated in planning and accompanying the outdoor service on the grounds of Winchester Thurston school, which was our first in-person gathering since the Covid shutdown in March 2020. This service welcomed the return of the choir and guest singer-songwriter and friend of the congregation Brad Yoder.

I continued planning and accompanying services through 26th September 2021; I took a period of unpaid family leave in October, November and December, during which time I did not attend staff meetings, plan services, hire substitute accompanists or schedule any other guest instrumentalists. I returned to my position on 9 January, along with congregant Maddy Izzo, flute.

Since January I have attended twice-monthly program staff meetings, worked with guest musicians, including both hired players and members of the congregation and scheduled substitute accompanists for three Sundays.

Music by female and BIPOC composers has been presented this year, including works by Florence Price, Pittsburgh composer Gay Kahkonen, Fred Onowwerosuoke, Nkeiru Okoye, Alain Pierre Pradel, John W. Work III, Miles Davis, among others. Music from

outside the western classical canon has included Hasidic and African folk songs and Indian Ragas arranged for piano; traditional and original folk songs from the Southern Appalachia and the Ozarks by Jean Ritchie, Frank Proffit, Sarah Ogan Gunning, Iris Dement. Over the course of the year I have played the organ on a several occasions, and I have accompanied myself on banjo and harmonium.

– *Ellen Gozlon*

Director Of Vocal Music Annual Report

The UU Pittsburgh Community Singers began limited in-person activities in 2021.

We participated in the recording of *Songs from the Stone Hoop* by Miguel Sague during July 2021, and the CD release Concert was November. I created this music video of the track “Vasija de Barro” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plU9mZEnmB4> Miguel & I led a sort of “All Souls” service on Oct 31 featuring Taino philosophy and music, including songs from the album.

The Community Singers also participated in our outdoor service in September 2021. And we produced the 15th annual Let Freedom Sing Concert in January 2022, in collaboration with area choirs and solo vocal artists and with the support of UPMC and the UU Pittsburgh Social Justice Endowment.

Soloists and small groups of singers began leading hymns on Sunday mornings in Oct 2021. Small groups of singers sang for Christmas Eve and for a service during black history month.

The Community Singers began regular rehearsals in March of this year and have sung for services in March and April and are preparing for Rev Kate’s installation service May 15, 2022.

As Director of Vocal Music, in addition to leading the UU Community Singers, I have participated in planning services, including the choosing of hymns and organizing hymn leaders, and have contributed my views on the reopening and expansion of our church life.

I have been working with Chantal Braziel and Gizel Rodriguez to put on concerts in our sanctuary for the larger community.

I continue to be excited about the ministry I have been able to co-create with the staff, lay leaders, congregation and community leaders at and around First Unitarian Church. I am so grateful for the opportunity.

– *Kris Rust*

Art Team

Team members include: Ali Masalehdan (Chair), Linda Kaufmann, Mary Weidner, Ralph Gurley, Kirsti Adkins, Alice Lieb, Mary Schinhofen, Mary Kostalos, Charlotte Toal, Joe Jencik, Audrey Masalehdan

The Art Team has been on hiatus while the church building remains closed due to the pandemic. We look forward to again being able to bring wonderful art to the Undercroft Gallery once it's safe for the community to gather again.

– *Ali Masalehdan*

Dance Choir

- June 5, 2021 - Shared a prerecorded dance for a Memorial Service
- June 20, 2021 - Summer Solstice Service with Erica Shadowsong
Shared 2 new dances recorded on Zoom
- Dec 18, 2021 - Some members led and participated in dances for a
Solstice event with East End Song Studio
- Dec 20, 2021 - Winter Solstice Service on Zoom
Led live online movement and meditation
Shared 2 recorded pieces from past Solstice services
- Mar 27, 2022 - Met for Sacred Circle Dance over Zoom for Equinox
- Apr 3, 2022 - Led children and adults in movement to a hymn for
Time For All Ages - live in the sanctuary!
- June 2022 - Hope to meet in person for Sacred Circle Dancing
for Summer Solstice
Possible participation in Summer Solstice Service?

Dance Choir is open to sharing movement for services upon request when possible.

Current members. - Tory Butterworth, Alice Carnes, Linda Fleming,
Jennifer Halperin, Karen Litzinger,
Mary Pat Mengato, Cathy Rohrer

– *Mary Pat Mengato*

SongSpace

SongSpace at First Unitarian (uusongspace.com) is a celebration of folk, Americana, bluegrass, singer-songwriter, old-time, and world music, featuring local, regional and national artists. We are a non-profit series dedicated to establishing a welcoming and

meaningful space both for making and listening to quality music. Our shows are open to the public.

In Summer 2021 we presented two live shows at Baum Grove parklet (400 Roup Ave in the Friendship neighborhood):

- The Lonesome No More Trio (Pittsburgh folk trio), Sunday July 11, 3:00pm
- Alice Howe & Freebo (National folk/pop duo), Thursday August 26, 6:30pm

We also presented (or will soon present) a slightly smaller slate of concerts during the 2021-2022 season:

- Alex Hamburger Trio (woman-fronted, national jazz trio), Thursday November 11, 7:30pm
- Kate Snow (Pittsburgh folksinger), Saturday November 27, 7:30pm
- Phat Man Dee (Pittsburgh chanteuse with social justice theme), Saturday January 22, 7:30pm
- The Early Mays (National folk trio with roots in Pittsburgh and Albany NY), Saturday, June 25

The location of the first three shows was the church sanctuary; for the fourth show we may try to present at Baum Grove again (with the Sanctuary as a rain location), if Baum Grove is available. The Phat Man Dee show was live-streamed to Instagram; the other shows were purely live performances.

For the 2022-2023 season we have tentatively lined up Rupert Waits (November, national folksinger), the Squirrel Hillbillies (January, Pittsburgh folk duo) and The House of Hamill (April, Philadelphia Celtic duo). We are tentatively anticipating one or two more shows at Baum Grove, as well as September 2022 and May/June 2023 shows in the Sanctuary, as opportunity permits.

– *Brian Junker*

serve

Humanitarian Service Ministry

Alternative Gift Market Team

The AGM committee decided to limit donations to online. There were four causes that were funded by AGM this year: Khasi Hills, \$685; Reading Ready Pittsburgh, \$725; Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light, \$70; and JCFS Refugee and Immigrant Services, \$270. Members were extremely generous with the total AGM amount reaching \$2,250.

East End Cooperative Ministry Homeless Shelter Meal Preparation Coordinating Team

<https://www.first-unitarian-pgh.org/east-end-cooperative-ministry.html>

The First Unitarian Church's East End Cooperative Ministry Shelter Dinner Team provides a dinner for approximately 50 residents of the on the East End Cooperative Ministry Shelter on the first Sunday of every month.

This past year, over 50 members of First Unitarian Church participated in preparing and cooking the dinners.

Each month, a dinner coordinator is responsible for planning the menu and assigning the preparation of the different dishes with the various volunteers. Normally, about 5 or 6 volunteers help with each dinner.

In addition, certain church organizations have offered to be responsible to the monthly meal. This year, members of the Board of Trustees prepared the February meal and the June dinner is traditionally prepared by the Men's Group.

We usually try to join the residents for dinner, although during the past year we were not able to enter the EECM building. During Covid, the Shelter Dinner Team has been cooking and delivering the dinners, but the EECM staff has been serving the meals. It is anticipated that this will change soon and that we will again be serving the meals.

The East End Cooperative Ministry is dedicated to helping vulnerable adults and at-risk children and youth throughout Pittsburgh. As an interfaith ministry, EECM seeks to make a difference in the lives of the individuals and families it serves by tending to their needs for today as well as their hopes for tomorrow.

– Sam Hens-Greco

Habitat for Humanity Team

The First Unitarian Habitat Team has been active since 2014 serving the eastern suburbs of Pittsburgh. The area we serve is in close proximity to our church location. It is as if we are helping our neighbors. The participation grew last year with 53 different people volunteering by giving 760 hours to aid 31 different people to have a safe and energy efficient home.

We had scheduled several work parties but our volunteers were skeptical about safety precautions regarding COVID-19. Therefore, these work parties were cancelled by us until November 13, 2021 when six of us felt the safety policies were strong enough to guard our health. We went to 520 N. Braddock Avenue and worked in three new

homes finishing interior painting. On March 31, 2022 there was an open house sponsored by Habitat to show off the beautiful construction. One home has been occupied by a family of five who moved from a one room apartment to this new home of six rooms with three bedrooms, three bathrooms, living room, dining room and a kitchen.

We are fortunate to be connected to Pittsburgh Habitat as they received a \$2.5 million gift from MacKensie Scott in late March 2022, to continue their work. These monies assure a solid future for Habitat Pittsburgh and our working relationship with them. The participation by the 1UU congregation is strong and has been found to have fun and feel the work is rewarding.

Many sincere thanks to those who have volunteered. The homeowners value your work.

– *Marty Lieb*

Khasi Hills Partnership Team

Khasi Hills Partnership Team, Annual Report, 2021-22

Members: Karen Litzinger (chairperson), Linda Fleming, Lois Hurt, Mary Pat Mengato, Maureen Porter, Shelley Ross, Anne Van Cott, Carol Washburn

Highlights:

- Funding Two Teachers – For the new Higher Secondary school we funded since 2015-2016, we raised \$7030 of the \$9,600 goal of sponsoring the two teachers which we had done the last four years. We hope to raise the remaining \$2570 in the last couple months of the church year.
- School Expansion – Our school contact keeps us updated about the expanding enrollment with a record 32 students enrolling this spring for grade 12. Record enrollment resulted in three grades needing to split into two sections. The pipeline for the school indicates it will be bursting at the seams with a record 85 students enrolled in Grade 6. A new basketball court was built and inaugurated this year, which is a requirement for government accreditation. The accreditation of the school and government funding of the teachers that we expect has slowed down due to changed government regulations and the pandemic.
- September Founders Day Message – This was the second year acknowledging Khasi Hills Founders Day, their most important holiday. Anne Van Cott gave brief remarks that highlighted the founding story.
- Fall Fundraising - This year we did a “soft” sponsorship funding appeal through newsletter and web articles which resulted in one contribution of \$50.

- Holiday Card Donor Outreach – Because of the anemic fall sponsorship results, we did a direct appeal with a sponsorship form in a holiday card to past donors which raised a successful \$3588.
- Alternative Gift Market – We were pleased to be one of four causes this year and which brought in \$685.
- Share the Plate with Campus Tour Video Plus Teacher Greetings: We were delighted by Rev. Kate’s unexpected Christmas Eve Share the Plate opportunity and personal pledge/contribution of \$100; an additional \$253 were contributed by others. The planned February Share the Plate Month kick-off featured a video tour of our school campus plus excerpts of letters from the two teachers we sponsor; \$825 was collected from a generous five donors.
- May Khasi Hills Sunday and Khasi Indigenous Festival Recognition – As a new initiative in the spirit of cultural exchange and honoring holidays most important to our partners, we focused the annual Khasi Hills Sunday to be on the spring festival of Shad Suk Mynsiem. It honors the agrarian roots of the Khasi tribe that our Unitarian friends celebrate as part of their cultural roots. It will feature a homily by Maureen Porter and also local Nanandik Dance Troupe during the service plus a dance after the service slated for the garden as a mini festival recognition.
- Religious Education Collaboration – We are pleased to have Erica Shadowsong’s participation in the May 22 Khasi Hills Sunday Service.
- Team Zoom Meetings including with India Partners – Zoom planning meetings have worked well and twice we were able to include our India partners.
- Denomination Involvement – Team members participated in the meeting and vote of the reorganization of international partnerships through the UUA. The existing Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council is now part of the UUA International Office. Members of our team participated in the first India partnership Zoom meeting organized by the new transition leadership.
- **Next year:** We expect to continue with two Higher Secondary School teacher sponsorships, fall Founders Day recognition, Share the Plate, and annual Khasi Hills Sunday. We want to expand the spring Shad Suk Mynsiem festival, possibly collaborating with the Green Sanctuary and Grounds teams and RE. We hope there will be an opportunity for travel to India through the UUA or privately with partner congregations.

- Karen Litzinger

Social Justice Ministry

Green Sanctuary Team

Current members: Robert Baron, Linda Fleming, Margaret Fuhrman, Reverend Stephanie Gannon, Whitney Granger, Eileen Kraus-Dobratz, Barbara Litt (co-chair), Chris Milcarek, Bob Mitchell, Mary Redford, Peg Schmidt (co-chair), Becky Studer.

Meetings: Our monthly meetings continue on Zoom and usually last an hour, though discussion sometimes continues.

- Current projects in progress are usually presented by the project lead.
- Current issues are discussed briefly.
- During the summer months, we “Check-in & Chat” to stay in touch.

Activities During the Church Year 2021–2022

- **Open letter to Rich Fitzgerald re: petrochemical industry, June 7, 2021:** The Green Sanctuary Team agreed to sign Maren Cooke’s open letter to Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. The letter urged him to withdraw his support from the fracking and petrochemical industries.

<https://marenlisresources.blogspot.com/2021/06/stand-with-science-calling-on-rich.html>

- **Meeting with Reverend Kate Walker, August 22, 2021:** Our team met with our new minister to discuss our current status, ideas, and transitions.

- **Fall 2021, Identification of actions that support a just and sustainable future:**

During our fall 2021 meetings, Green Sanctuary members developed a detailed list of actions we and our fellow church members can take to support a just and sustainable future. After much discussion and with input from other congregants and groups, Bob Mitchell compiled a list of seven action categories:

- Reduce church carbon footprint
- Encourage reduction of our individual/household footprints
- Give public testimony to our climate commitment
- Explore climate action in the broad context of social justice
- Work and partner with entities outside the church on climate/environmental justice
- Provide education about climate/environmental topics
- Pursue other climate-related environmental initiatives such as air quality and plastics

These action categories helped shape a proposal for our church to undertake a one- or two-year Environmental Justice initiative. The proposal is scheduled to be presented to members for a vote at the Annual Meeting on May 22, 2022.

- ***Unitarian Universalist Church of the North Hills Green Sanctuary Team meeting, December 5, 2021:*** Margaret Fuhrman, Bob Mitchell, and Peg Schmidt attended by invitation.
- ***Pittsburgh Blueberry Project at the Alternative Gift Market 2021:*** Through Bob Mitchell's interactions with Pittsburgh/SWPA PA Interfaith Power & Light Chapter, our congregation donated \$550 to the **Pittsburgh Blueberry Project (PBP)**. The goal is to plant 500 high top blueberry bushes in city neighborhoods that will provide local cooling through Nature's process of transpiration.
- ***Winter Solstice Service, December 20, 2022:*** Coordinated by the Dance Choir, this Zoom service included meditation, movement, and videos from past Solstice dances. Linda Fleming participated with the Dance Choir in this earth-centered and lay-led annual service.
- ***January 9, 2022 Testimonial in Sunday Service:*** In advance of the Community Dialog, Barbara Litt gave a 5-minute testimonial on climate justice entitled, "Why I see climate justice, environmental justice, and racial justice as the same thing."
- ***January 9, 2022 Community Dialog on climate justice:*** Called by Reverend Kate, many of us participated in this discussion on moving forward with environmental justice and racial justice.
- ***Earth Sunday Service, April 10, 2022:*** Coordinated by Bob Mitchell, this lay-led celebration entitled "Harvesting Rays of Sunshine" featured a homily in four parts from Bob Mitchell, Martin Schmidt, Becky Studer, and Will Snavely. The service included the Story for All by Erica Shadowsong, Alice Carnes as liturgist, readings by Mary Schinhofen and Mary Alice Drusbasky, and music provided by Kris Rust, Dave McLaughlin, Brian Junker, and the UU Community Singers.

This service kicked off fundraising for the Ray Schinhofen Solar Array, honoring Ray who co-founded the Green Sanctuary effort with his wife Mary.

- ***Classes on climate change:*** Bob Mitchell continues to offer classes on climate change through Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Pittsburgh.
- ***Racial Justice Task Force:*** Barbara Litt acts as the Green Sanctuary liaison, joined by Becky Studer.
- ***UUJusticePA:*** Becky Studer is our congregational liaison, currently heading the POSTCARDS project. Bob Mitchell and Becky Studer continue their participation with

the Environmental Justice team.

- ***Light It Forward:*** Project lead Bob Mitchell coordinates this effort that we hope to have approved and enacted through the Building & Grounds Committee. Originally introduced at the 2018 Summer Institute, this program combines updating lighting fixtures at church to reduce electricity use *and* using rebates we receive to seed the same program at another non-profit. Reducing our electric use/bills may enable a future switch to clean power sources.
- ***Urban EcoStewards:*** Project lead Becky Studer continues our maintenance of a plot in Frick Park. During 2021 and through May 2022, she held 3 work sessions of 2 hours for a total of over 24 woman-hours. 6 congregants and friends participated during this period. The group communicates by email and gathers 3-4 times a year during the growth season to remove invasive species, plant native species, and clean the stream bank near our area.
- ***Conference attendance:*** Becky Studer attended the Greater Pittsburgh Unitarian Universalists Annual Conference on November 6, 2021. Bob Mitchell and Reverend Stephanie Gannon attended the PA Interfaith Power & Light (PA IPL) 2021 Annual Meeting on November 14, 2021. Reverend Stephanie attended the Diocesan Environmental Workshop on April 20, 2022. Bob Mitchell and Barbara Litt attended the Quarterly Meeting of Pittsburgh/SWPA PA IPL Chapter via Zoom on April 27, 2022.
- ***Citizen's Climate Lobby (CCL):*** Several Green Sanctuary members and congregants continue to work with this organization. CCL specifically advocates carbon pricing, which is widely recognized by scientists and economists as essential to meeting the goal of net zero greenhouse emissions by mid century.
- ***Certification As a Green Sanctuary Congregation:*** The report for accreditation is in progress.

– ***Peg Schmidt***

Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN) Team

PIIN is a faith-based organization focused on equity and social justice in the Pittsburgh region. It is a coalition of many local faith communities. Working with other organizations, PIIN can add a moral foundation and voice to support justice issues. First Church was one of the founding members of PIIN over 21 years ago. During COVID PIIN has been a volunteer led organization meeting monthly on zoom the 2nd Thursday, 7-8:30 p.m. Any interested First Church member or friend is encouraged to

attend Board meetings. For information about PIIN or a link to the Board meeting, contact Karen Burns Rutigliano or Sandy Woolley or go to this link: <https://piinpa.org/>

In the past year PIIN has continued to focus on criminal justice reform allying with the Alliance for Police Accountability (APA) and initiating an E.X.P.O program to provide formerly incarcerated individuals (also known as returning citizens), with support as they re-enter society, and provide leadership development, educational opportunities, and advocacy training. Also, the PIIN Integrated Voter Engagement Committee has worked to encourage participation in the PA primary.

PIIN is thrilled to have recently hired our [newest team member, Community Organizer Leah Kozak](#). Prior to working with PIIN, Leah was the Associate Director of The Micah Institute at New York Theological Seminary and was an active member of South Bronx Unite and Greater NYC for Change. Leah obtained her Master's of Divinity from NYTS in 2016, and moved to Pittsburgh in 2017. Leah feels a vocational call to faith-based organizing and has a strong desire to work alongside people of faith in the biblical call of justice. She resides in Homestead PA with her husband, Nathan Dyrud. A PIIN Book Study Group just completed a discussion of Caste by Isabel Wilkerson and is planning to form a new group to discuss The Sum of Us by Heather McGhee on June 13.

- *Sandy Woolley*

Racial Justice Task Force

This year the Racial Justice Task Force continued to work on our current goal to encourage and organize the development of resilience, courage, activism and leadership for stronger and more cohesive racial justice identity, values, and action at First Unitarian Church. We worked on digging down into what that truly means to us as a group and us as a congregation and came up with three areas of focus: education, conversation and action. We are hoping to begin creating more active partnerships with community organizations once we have a more flushed out understanding ourselves of what we can offer as potential allies. We also acknowledge and respect the amount of work we still have to do "in-house" and are working on ways to begin and continue that work.

This year we had a very successful book club that read "Waking up White" by Debby Irving. This group inspired a second and a third group and reached out to folks beyond our current members. We created an 8th Principle Working Group to focus specifically on the 8th Principle at First UU and continued to deepen our ties with PIIN, Pittsburgh Freethought Community and other community organizations as well as being vocal and active around the police murders of several black members of the Pittsburgh

community. Many of our members attended Jubilee 3 Anti-Racism training and we are working to encourage and support more members of our congregation to do so. We welcomed new members to our group while retaining our original folks. Finally we began connecting and building ties with the Climate Justice Initiative being worked on within our community, understanding the deep interconnectedness between climate and racial justice and recognizing the power of working together as a beloved community to dismantle all means of social injustice in our community and our world. The work is massive but our dedication is sound.

The Racial Justice Task Force currently meets the third Sunday of every month from 3 - 4:30 pm ET via Zoom. For more information please contact Sonia Wellington at racialjustice@first-unitarian-pgh.com .

- *Sonia Wellington*

Reopening Implementation Groups

Church Groups Addressing Safety Considerations in the Pandemic 2021-2022

In the spring of 2021, Rev. Connie Grant convened a Safe Reopening Task Force, which consisted of an expanded Safety Committee. The Task Force provided scientific information to the Board, and made several recommendations regarding staying closed while community infection rates were still quite high and vaccination rates low.

As Rev. Grant was leaving at the end of her two-year interim ministry, the Board assumed control of generating recommendations for reopening, and formed the Reopening Implementation Working Group, with members from the Board. They made recommendations regarding decision-making parameters for re-opening, which resulted in the church staying closed during the fall Delta wave, and into the early part of the winter flu season and the Omicron wave.

Finally, in January of 2022, the RIWG (above) was transitioned to the Reopening Advisory Panel for our new settled minister, Rev. Dr. Kate Walker, who assumed a decision-making role in this area. The Panel met twice with Rev. Kate in Feb and March, and advised her on mitigation measures when re-opening for services--such as limiting attendees, physical distancing, and requiring masks and vaccinations--and implementing these measures. The Panel also advised exploring the improvement of indoor air quality. After the Board approved hiring a consultant for this purpose, and the Panel met with the consultant, an ad hoc group drawing from the above groups and the Building Committee continued exploring with the consultant possible solutions to the problem of low air exchange in the sanctuary.

- *Peggy Parsons*

UUJusticePA (formerly UUPLAN)

UUJusticePA has been in existence for many years (as UUPLAN) and involvement by members of 1st Unitarian Pittsburgh has waxed and waned during this time. Their goal is to "Bring UU Voices to the Public Square in PA" and the Mission is "Pursuing justice by voting, advocating and making just public policies". The organization represents ~6000 UUs across the commonwealth. You may remember when Liz Perkins co-chaired the Reproductive Justice group that collaborated effectively with the Women's law Project and other groups to put forth legislation supporting women's rights, some of which is now PA law. Others have worked with the Environmental Justice Team.

Current 1st Unitarian participation includes 14 individuals "Postcarding", an activity that supports visits to Legislators to educate them on issues chosen by the various Justice Teams and support or oppose legislation as it relates to UU Values in general. in Feb. we opposed SB 527 which would move support from public to private and charter schools. Also in Feb. we were encouraged to make phone calls to Senator Bob Casey in support of the Women's Health Protection Act that would protect abortion access nationally. We have 'postcarded' in opposition to SB956, the PA constitutional amendment that would prevent funding and the right to abortion in PA, in response to the Reproductive Justice Team action alerts and in support of their April education/lobbying visits to PA state Senators.

In support of the Gun Violence Prevention Team and their joint lobby day on April 26 with Cease Fire PA, we postcarded key state representatives to move HB 1903 out of committee and into law where it would address multiple gun violence issues, including allowing Extreme Risk Protection Orders in PA.

Lobby days in May include Equitable Education legislation (May 24) and Criminal Justice Reform w/CADBI (Citizens Against Death by Incarceration) (May 25).

To become active in this public advocacy, contact me at rkstuder@gmail.com and I will help you get started. Go to www.ujusticepa.org for more information about the work of all the Justice Teams, join to support their work, and register for the Annual Meeting, in person and on Zoom, the evening of May 20 and all day on Saturday May 21.

-Becky Studer

UUs for Justice in the Middle East (UUJME) Team

<https://www.first-unitarian-pgh.org/justice-in-the-middle-east.html>

<https://uujme.org/>

UUJME is dedicated to a peaceful and just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The team has been on hiatus during the closure of the church building during the pandemic, but looks forward to resuming its regular activities – including sales of olive oil in the Undercroft Gallery and handing out leaflets about the Palestinian situation – once it's safe for us to gather again.

– *Ali Masalehdan*

Learn

Lifespan Religious Education

Children & Youth Religious Education

Overview:

This year saw a simplified lifespan program with perhaps fewer options in programming, but more consistent, solid participation at all ages in what was offered. It has been very encouraging to see the number of families with children and youth returning and attending on a regular basis. I think we can hope to see growth here.

Looking ahead, our biggest challenge and priority will be to begin a revitalized volunteer community again. We are jump-starting this with a gathering especially for parents on June 12th that will be attended and led by the LRED and the minister. This will serve as a visioning gathering to get parents excited about imagining the future of RE at the church and inspire them to take on some leadership roles to help bring our dreams into reality.

The young adults did not meet as a group this year and have been inactive. I believe we are now ready and ripe for a new coordinator specifically for campus and young adult ministry, and am working on drafting a position with the minister with the hope of hiring in August.

The increase of in person events at the church has created an immediate need for child care providers again, as we do not yet have a pool of such providers. My goal in the next month is to screen a number of potential providers and compile a list for event coordinators to contact.

These will not be supervised directly by me, as we do not yet offer child care for Sundays due to COVID vaccine restrictions. Rather, this is to support events and needs throughout all church ministries. This should help mitigate our needs going forward, and allow event leaders to have direct control over contacting and hiring providers without going through the LRED.

Over the summer, it is my hope and intention to hire some part time assistance not for a permanent position, but just to help ready the spaces again for more in person gathering and RE programs to come.

I will be taking study leave for the first two weeks of June (May 29 - June 11), which I have never formally taken. I plan to take summer time off in July as usual. I am working on lining up Summer RE to be directed by one-time volunteers to lead activities as has been the case in the past.

Children & Youth Religious Education

Programs:

- Sunday Morning RE - Tabletop Roleplaying Game "Principles & Paragons," special events such as the Pysanky Egg Decoration for Easter and Tree Activity for Earth Day service.
- Heeding the Call (Jr/Sr High Group): A UUA *Tapestry of Faith* curriculum that focuses on social justice. Meets every other week.
- Youth Group - *Dungeons and Dragons* tabletop RPG group that meets monthly on Saturdays, usually the 3rd Saturday. This program began in January. We had 2 general social gatherings outdoors in the fall.

Number Registered

- Children - 23
- Youth (Junior High) - 6
- Youth (High School) - 4

Total: 33

- RE Volunteers Currently Active: 2

Attendance: This year, children and youth attendance coincides with the number registered. That is, those who are considered registers are only those who have attended in the past year.

Sunday morning religious education had an average attendance of about 4 from September to December, with most attendance dropping off completely during November and December.

Beginning in January, when we began our tabletop roleplaying activity, average attendance was about 13.

The two youth groups have some overlap between those who are in junior high grades and those in senior high; one of the senior high meets with the Heeding the Call group instead of the monthly youth D&D group, and one of the junior high meets with both groups.

Adult Faith Development

In the fall, we offered the UUA *Tapestry of Faith* curriculum "Spirit in Practice." This was a virtual program. We had 8 participants of the 11 who registered. A few of the participants had also taken the *Building Your Own Theology* class the prior May. About 4 have continued to meet as a small group since the end of "Spirit in Practice."

We had a number of people sign up for several book groups, which are self-directed among those who sign up. *Yes to Life in Spite of Everything* (5), *Elite* (4), *Braiding Sweetgrass* (4) and *Being Mortal* (6) were the books with the most signups. We had only two sign ups for the Common Read, *Defund Fear*.

Professional Development

The second half of this year has been a busy one for professional development! I have taken a number of online seminars including *UU Theologies*, a UUA Renaissance Module (counts toward the credentialing program for religious educators). I am also taking a number of short courses of personal interest through the Cherry Hill Seminary, which focuses on pagan theologies and worldviews. One of the courses was especially timely, called "Ritual and Play in Game Design." I also attended the *Finding Our Way Home* conference online, which is for UU religious professionals of color, and met with my regional colleagues at the first meeting we've had in two years.

– **Erica Shadowsong**, Lifespan Religious Education Director

Board Committees

Building and Grounds

Annual Report from the Building Committee
Church year: 2021-2022

Members

Jim Pashek, Brian Rohleder, Bob Mitchell, Gordon Hargreaves, Martin Schmidt (chair)
Sam Hens-Greco (Board Liaison)

Our Mission:

- Plan and oversee the repairs and improvements to the building and grounds of the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh.
- Respond to maintenance and repair issues that are brought to the Building Committee.

Completed Projects for 2021 – 2022

1. Welcome Desk. We supervised the design and installation of the new Welcome Desk in the Garden Lobby. Thank you to Christine Michaels for her generous support of this project.
2. Garden Lobby Ceiling. We replaced the water damaged ceiling over the Garden Lobby stairs
3. Garden Shed. We removed the old, dilapidated garden sheds. Installed new shed with brick walkway.
4. Retaining wall. We and our neighbor shared the cost of repairing the collapsed retaining wall that runs along our driveway.
5. Minister's bathroom. We replaced the damaged flooring in the Minister's bathroom.
6. Pulpit. We re-stained and refurbished the pulpit.
7. Mason Wing Bathroom Doors. These doors could no longer be closed. We adjusted and reset the hinges so they close properly.

On-Going Projects

1. Schinhofen Solar Array. We obtained multiple bids for installation of a solar array for the Mason Wing roof. We proceeded with the bid from Envinity. Contact has been signed and installation scheduled for September 2022. Fund raising for this project is on-going April till the end of June 2022. This project will provide 40,000 kilowatt hours per year, about one third of our electricity use.
2. LED Lighting. We obtained a bid from Bottom Line Systems to replace our energy inefficient fluorescent and incandescent lights with energy efficient LED lights. The cost is \$10K for the installation. We expect to save about \$3K per year in electricity costs.
3. Dishwasher. The commercial dishwasher in the basement kitchen needed to be replaced. We obtained bids and a new dishwasher is on order.
4. Backflow Protector. We have a bid and are proceeding with installation of a city-mandated backflow protector for our water supply pipe.
5. Downspouts. We are in the process of replacing two downspouts that are not functioning properly.

6. Mason Wing carpet. We have tried to repair the carpet attachment in the Mason Wing. We have 2 bids for carpet replacement if the repair fails.
7. Geothermal. We met with a representative of Sentry Mechanical to review our maintenance procedures for the geothermal system.

Future Projects

1. Morewood Entrance Masonry. We are in the process of getting bids to repair the degraded stone masonry on the steps and wings of the Morewood entrance and garden walls.
2. Sanctuary Air Quality. We are currently investigating options for improving sanctuary air quality with a focus on reducing viral transmission.
3. Keys and Locks. We are working with the Safety committee to change and re-key our locks in an effort to enhance building security.

Respectfully submitted,

-Martin Schmidt

Building Committee Chair

Program Endowments

Social Justice

Committee members in 2021: Margaret Noether (Stevens) Chair, Irma Tani, Delia Parks; ex officio members: Kyle Gracey (Treasurer), Connie Grant (Interim Minister), Kate R. Walker (Minister)

Mission: The Social Justice Endowment Committee considers requests for grants that will enable an individual or group to pursue a project that serves a social justice purpose of broad effect. Grants from this fund are not given to pay for a one-time benefit, but rather to fund an effort that will have a longer-term benefit with broadly felt implications.

Method: The committee members carefully considered the suitability of each application to the guidelines of the Endowment. We weighed the purposes as described in each application, the intent of each applicant, and the expected outcomes of the effort proposed.

Social Justice Endowment awards in 2021:

- 02/18/2021: \$280 to Ebe Emmons to pay \$20 to the UUA for each church member who registered to attend the UUA sponsored New Day Rising conference on racial justice. Fourteen (14) church members attended the conference. Many of them are members of the First Unitarian Racial Justice Task Force.

- 12/3/2021: \$1,000 to Shelley Ross to buy 50 \$20 Giant Eagle gift cards to donate to the Matilda Theiss Health Center. The gift cards supplement the toys donated by church members and given to children at Christmas by the Matilda Theiss Health Center.
- 12/28/2021: \$1000.00 to Kris Rust to help defray the cost of producing and performing the 2022 Let Freedom Sing Concert, which has the mission to bring together diverse groups of people from various choirs in the city and to convey Dr. King’s message of love in song and spirit to audiences across the lines of race, religion, class and culture. Due to the spread of the Covid Omicron variant, the performance will be live-streamed with no in-person attendance. (Note: funds are being reimbursed in 2022)

Summary of funds awarded in 2020:

- The Annual Draw available to this committee for 2021 was \$8,644.85
- The total funds awarded in 2021 came to **\$2,280**

The remaining balance in the fund for 2021 was \$6,364.85 (will return to the fund).

– **Margaret Stevens**

Music

As you might imagine given the pandemic, 2021 was a slow year for the Music Endowment committee. Here is a description of our activity:

Beginning balance:	\$4,977.48
- Grant #1: Kris Rust	\$1,000.00
- <u>Grant #2: Kris Rust</u>	<u>\$1000.00</u>
Ending balance:	\$2,977.48

Grant #1 was a \$1000 request by Kris Rust to support the recording of work by indigenous musician and longtime First UU occasional guest musician, Miguel Sague.

Grant #2 was a \$1000 request by Kris Rust to pay professional musicians for our annual Christmas Eve service.

Additional information:

- Our chairperson for 2021 is Kiki Barley. Corey Layman remains as a committee member. I am rotating off of the committee. Rev Kate and Ellen Gozion remain ex-officio.

Respectfully submitted,
- *Heather Cunningham*

Ministry with Children and Youth

The Endowment for Ministry with Children and Youth provides financial support for our church's religious education program (infancy through the end of high school). No grants were requested in 2021.

Campus Ministry

The Campus Ministry Endowment extends the ministry of the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh to local universities and colleges. No grants were requested in 2021.

Marketing and Communications

Our committee was officially recognized in October 2021 and began meeting in November. We meet once a month on the third Thursday via Zoom. Members include:

- Nancy Latimer (Chairperson)
- Maria Lauro
- Michael Safran
- Mark Whittaker
- Rob Schwartz (Board Liaison)

Our goals are:

- Attracting new members
- Expand the reach of the Church's ministry
- Raise external awareness of the Church's beliefs, values, and identity
- Facilitate communication with the church community/congregation

We aim to meet these goals with these near term actions:

- Expand social media channels
- Develop press releases for publicity starting with Rev Kate's installation
- Encouraging website use by the congregation as a means of communication and advertising

We do not have data yet to determine our success and next steps.

- *Nancy Latimer*

Personnel

Members: Mary Denison, Peggy Parsons, Bill Schuetz, Jane MacLeod, Sue Oerkvitz

The role of the Personnel Committee at First Unitarian is to advise and support the leadership and staff in the church in regards to personnel issues. A major role in the past has been to compile an updated Personnel Manual to clarify the church policies for staff in regards to their employment.

The Personnel Committee has been in flux over the past three years. During Reverend Connie Grant's stay at First Unitarian Church the committee continued in name but was only minimally involved. Upon Reverend Kate Walker's arrival, the Personnel Committee has started to meet again. The committee will return to its original status to the minister in regards to personnel concerns, communication, and other needs.

Since September 2021, the committee has met 3 times. We will begin working on updating the Personnel Manual to make it more compatible with the UUA Personnel Manual at our regularly scheduled monthly meetings as well as continue to serve as a support for Reverend Kate Walker, as needed about other personnel concerns.

- *Mary Denison*

Safety

Purpose

Our committee is charged with overseeing the safety and security domain at our church. We were formed in 2018 as an ad-hoc committee under the Minister, but in 2022 we were formally approved as a committee under the Board of Trustees. Committee oversight includes auditing security measures, mitigating security vulnerabilities, supporting grant requests related to security, addressing safety concerns, developing policies such as usher security, day-of-services security protocol, formulating and auditing safety for the religious education program, providing training and conducting exercises annually.

Membership and Meetings

Kirk Striebich is the current Chairperson, and Susan Whittaker and Rob Masterson are Members. We would like the membership to be at least four (4) persons, so we continue to work with Membership Committee to identify more candidates. If you have medical, mental health, fire or public safety experience or have a willingness to

contribute to your church by increasing the safety for its members, please contact the committee or Membership committee of your interest.

Summary of Work

This year as the committee re-formed, our focus was making application to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for the Non-Profit Security Grant in February 2022. In late April 2022, we were notified of a preliminary award of a monetary grant to purchase equipment needed to cover some of the vulnerabilities identified by the Pittsburgh Department of Homeland Security audit in 2018. We will continue to coordinate with the Stewardship and Building Committees to work on the full grant application as well as work towards preparing ourselves for the larger 2023 grant season for additional safety and security items such as upgraded security and alert systems, and enhanced safety infrastructure.

We spent time and effort to reconnect with the public safety community as well as area churches to increase our knowledge of establishing a successful safety and security program through education, seminars, and liaison activity with more advanced faith-based organizations.

We have identified additional training for the coming year as well as took our new Minister through a walk-through of the church facility to discuss her role and ideas on safety.

In 2022, we also were accepted into the Faith-based Information Sharing and Analysis Organization (FB-ISA), a trusted partner at the center of a national network of faith-based organizations that receive and participate in intelligence and cooperation to prevent, protect against, mitigate, and respond to and recover from incidents arising from all-hazards, ensuring the resilience and continuity of important community assets.

- **Kirk Striebich**

Stewardship

Last spring, the board and some members from the Annual Budget Drive Committee formed the Reimaging Fundraising Task Force with the plan to revise the scope and purpose of the Annual Budget Drive Committee. As part of this, the committee was renamed the Stewardship Committee, a standing committee of the board. This newly formed committee will comprise core members who will break into sub-groups that will be assisted by volunteers from the congregation. The seven main areas of responsibility for this committee are:

- Annual budget drive

- New Member Stewardship
- Special Fundraising/Friendraising events
- Assistance with capital projects and campaigns
- Planned Giving
- Grant writing assistance
- Identifying New Fundraising Sources

Each member of the committee has indicated interest in one or more of the above areas, with the expectation that the entire committee will serve during the annual budget drive process. Dependent on church needs the focus on any one of these areas, with the exception of the annual budget drive, may or may not be active at any given time.

Prior to the completion and acceptance of the new charter, the Annual Budget Drive was run. Through concerted efforts, the annual budget drive total for the 2022 church year came to \$415,017 from 174 pledging units. A portion of this total is from “roll-over” pledges from members who did not respond directly. Those whose pledges were rolled-over were given an option to opt-out or change the pledge value.

In January were welcomed a number of new members to the committee to form our first Stewardship Committee. The committee will now run on a January – December time frame with officers being elected in February. Committee members are asked to serve a three-year term with an option to stay on longer if they so choose.

The capital projects portion of this committee is currently running the Capital Campaign to support the Ray Schinhofen Solar Panel Array. The goal is to raise \$35,000 to help off-set the overall costs that will be incurred by the church.

The committee has contracted with Barry Finkelstein a UU Fundraising Consultant through Stewardship For Us. The goal is to learn how to complete year-round stewardship and involve the entire congregation.

Current Committee members are: Maria Lauro co-chair, Al Schwartz co-chair, Ebe Emmons, Ward Kelsey, Jenn Layman, Eleanor Mayfield, Lynne Porterfield, Jean Schmidt, Scott Smith, Heather Masterson, Board Liaison, Kyle Gracey, Board Treasurer Liaison, Rev. Kate Walker Ex-Officio.

- *Maria Lauro, Al Schwartz*

Vision, Identity, and Mission (VIM) Committee

Purpose of VIM

The Vision, Identity and Mission (VIM) Committee is a standing committee of the Board of Trustees. It supports two key Board roles — discernment and strategic planning.

Discernment involves determining the interests and goals of the congregation — typically by convening small group “cottage” conversations. The conversations are structured around 3 or 4 “open questions” designed to elicit information about who we are now (identity), what we would like to become (vision), and what steps we can take toward achieving our goals (mission). Each conversation has a facilitator and a note-taker who records the responses of each participant. Members of VIM then review and summarize all responses, identify priorities, and produce a document that informs the planning process.

Strategic planning is the second Board role supported by VIM. Starting in 2017, our church has produced a rolling 3-year strategic plan based in part on the priorities identified by the cottage meeting discernment process.

VIM Activity in Recent Years

Our current strategic plan covers the years 2019-2022 and is based on cottage meetings conducted in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019. (Cottage meetings did not occur during the 2019-2021 interim ministry.)

The 2018 and 2019 meetings affirmed our aspirations to be more welcoming. They also revealed strong passions for racial justice and for actions to address climate change and environmental degradation, as well as a number of other social justice causes.

The 2019-2022 strategic plan highlights the following two church priorities:

- **Create a strong sense of BELONGING for ALL who enter our doors**
 - This priority includes promoting awareness of the impact of white privilege on inclusivity at First Unitarian Church
- **Explore paths to the formation of a long-lasting and meaningful FIRST Unitarian / COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

VIM Activity During 2021-2022

The 2019 VIM meetings also highlighted a shared desire to work in a more unified way as a church on a focused justice mission. Accordingly, Rev. Dr. Kate Walker and the Board agreed in October 2021 to explore Environmental Justice -- the intersection of racial justice and environmental action -- as a potential unifying theme. As part of the

exploration process, VIM convened cottage meetings involving 59 participants that occurred in March.

Participants were asked about best ways to achieve their visions for a more socially equitable and environmentally sustainable region. In response, 26 people (44%) prioritized the need for better air and water quality, and 21 (36%) identified more equitable housing and better integrated neighborhoods.

Participants were also asked what actions our church could take to reach their visions for both racial and environmental justice. By far, the major response was to partner with existing organizations who are already leaders and doing the work. This response reinforces our ongoing priority to develop a meaningful community partnership.

The most frequently mentioned specific partnership organizations were the Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN), Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers of Pittsburgh (BUGS), Mayor Gainey's administration, GASP, Clean Air Pittsburgh, UUJusticePA, and other churches.

The most frequently mentioned types of actions were:

- Internal education and awareness raising (14 people)
- Pass 8th Principle (12 people)
- "Use our collective voice through social media, Rev Kate interviews" (8 people)
- Demonstrating, bearing witness (5 people)
- Educating others about the issues and about UU values (5 people)
- Get out the vote efforts (5 people)

In general, the Cottage meetings reaffirmed a strong interest in Environmental Justice among the members of the church. They also contributed to the content of the Environmental Justice proposal that will be put before the congregation at the Annual Meeting on May 22.

-Bob Mitchell
