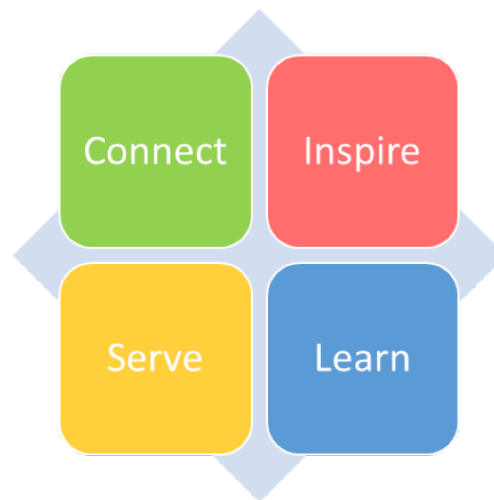




First Unitarian Church
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Annual Report

2022-2023



Board of Trustees

Rob Schwartz, President (2021–2024)
Raeann Olander Murray, Vice President (2022- 2025)
Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2020–2023)
Kate Snow, Secretary (2020–2023)
Heather Masterson (2020-2023)
Amy DeChicchis (2021-2024)
Bob Mitchell (2021-2024)
Nick Izzo (2022-2025)
Chris Milcarek (2022-2025)
Rev. Dr. Kate R. Walker, Minister (ex-officio)
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary (ex-officio)



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From the President of the 2022–2023 Board of Trustees

I can't begin to express how exciting it is to be at church these days. With Sunday worship attendance approaching pre-pandemic levels, more and more families bringing their children to R.E., and the social hour regularly filled with members and visitors alike, there's an energy and enthusiasm that is unquestionable. It feels like after living in the Covid "bubble" for so long, we're eager to re-establish connections with one another and create new ones.



This is our first full year with Rev. Kate as our new minister, and, with her guidance, support, wisdom, we have come a long way. I've so much enjoyed getting to know Rev. Kate better both as a congregant and in my role on the Board. And I have to say that I can't say enough positive things about my fellow Board members. This is a group of dedicated people who truly honor the Board covenant to "speak with honesty, listen with respect, reason with compassion, and serve with integrity."

The Board kicked off the 2022-23 year with a retreat in June that was attended by both newly elected and current Board members. We reflected on and discussed challenges the church is facing, and the many opportunities we have, and identified and developed a set of priorities that would guide our efforts for the year. These included clarifying Board roles and responsibilities as well as our Board and non-Board committee structure, developing a plan to grow & maintain membership, establishing a clearer leadership pipeline, promoting and encouraging participation in General Assembly, and ensuring Board members are visible and increasing actions of the Board. I will touch on some of these areas below, as well as some other highlights.

Sound Financial Stewardship

A key duty of the Board is to ensure our resources are used in a responsible manner and in a way that supports the mission of the Church. While the Board bears accountability, we depend on the thoughtful and expert financial management and oversight of our Treasurer, Kyle Gracey, Controller, Claus Makowka, Assistant Controller Margaret Noether, and the other members of the Finance Committee, Pat Schuetz, Ward Kelsey, and Randy Weinberg. Because of their work, combined with tight management of expenses, and, of course, the generosity of members and friends, we were able to adopt a balanced budget for the 2023 fiscal year. Because of better-than-expected pledge payments, this was later revised to include a 4.5% cost of living adjustment for our dedicated staff, who, like so many of us, have experienced higher personal expenses due to high inflation. This was quite an accomplishment given the many financial challenges we have faced over the past several years.

A Safe Return to In-Person Services and Activities

This was an area on which the Board spent a great deal of time. We voted on several iterations of our COVID-19 policy, gradually increasing the number of people who could attend service, reducing the requirements for proof of vaccinations, and ultimately eliminating the mask requirement altogether. There was also much thoughtful discussion and analysis related to our goal to reduce the exposure to the COVID-19 virus as much as possible, informed by the incredible work of the Ad Hoc Air Quality Team, Bob Mitchell, Sue Oerkvitz, and Peggy Parsons. This ultimately led to our approval of the purchase and installation of new air filters in the Sanctuary and Undercroft Gallery.

Creating a More Welcoming and Diverse Community (to Grow Membership)

I think there were two major components to this. One was the approval of the 8th principle. With the congregational vote in October, we joined nearly 225 fellow Unitarian Universalist churches in doing so. This commitment demonstrated that we not only value diversity, but agree to work to “build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community” by taking actions to “dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.” The 8th Principle working group, whose members included Sonia Wellington, Kate Snow, Jean Schmidt, Denice Galpern, Linda Fleming, Margaret Fuhrman, Sue Oerkvitz, and Ebe Emmons worked tirelessly to meet with many members of the congregation so that the vote went as smoothly as possible.

The second was our efforts to bring new visitors to the church. As I mentioned earlier, this was a key focus of the Board with Rev. Kate, Kyle Gracey and Amy DeChicchis leading the effort. This led to March Membership Month, where members were encouraged to bring friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, etc. to services and/or to one of the activities that occurred during the month, such as the family games night, the hike in the woods, or the night of improv. While it’s unclear how many people visited our church for the first time because of this monthlong effort, it demonstrated we can create energy and excitement around membership recruitment and that we all play an important part in membership growth.

Organizational & Governance Improvements

This is an area that may not be the most fascinating but is extremely important in ensuring the health of our congregation. From an organizational perspective, we identified an opportunity to define the reporting structure of non-board committees more clearly. A small working group comprised of Rev. Kate, Nick Izzo, and me met with a broad cross section of committee leaders to gain feedback and develop an updated structure which we hope to implement in the fall of 2023.

In terms of governance, we made an important change to our bylaws that will allow board members to serve two consecutive terms as long as they are nominated by the Nominating Committee and reelected by the congregation. This is aligned with how many other boards operate (we were an outlier), and will help ensure we have strong, experienced, and consistent leadership. Raeann Olander-Murray, Heather Masterson, and Kate Snow were instrumental in moving this initiative forward.

While I'm sure I could go on for pages, I will spare you that, and will only touch briefly on some of the other accomplishments over the past year. These include:

- Voting to approve the installation of LED lighting, furthering our commitment to environmental sustainability.
- Hosting the Greater Pittsburgh Cluster Meeting in November, where area churches came together to learn from each other, worship together, sing, and of course take care of necessary business.
- Approving a new Share the Plate procedure proposed by Rev. Kate, with input from Mary Denison, Karen Burns, Ebe Emmons and Kyle Gracey, with all money now collected weekly, and split 50/50 between the church operating budget and the organization the congregation has chosen to support that particular month, unless designated otherwise.
- Promoting attendance at General Assembly, spearheaded by Chris Milcarek, and voting to approve our delegates Kyle Gracey, Jean Schmidt, Ebe Emmons, Eleanor Mayfield, Alice Carnes.

I've no doubt missed many other things, and failed to recognize people who made meaningful contributions, but this report isn't intended to include an exhaustive list of all actions and activities of the board. For that you are more than welcome to read through the monthly minutes our Board Secretary, Kate Snow, adds to the church website every month (and which Kurt Summersgill, our Recording Secretary, writes). You can also find these in the handy "Report of Motions Passed" document that is included as part of the Annual Meeting documents.

In conclusion, I want to recognize our outgoing Board Members, Heather Masterson, who served as vice-president her first year on the board, and then president the following year, and Kate Snow, who served as secretary for three years, a truly critical, but sometimes thankless role. And of course, many thanks go to Kyler Gracey for his many, many contributions and for agreeing to be re-elected for a second three-year term as our treasurer. Lastly, I'd be remiss if I

didn't acknowledge the tremendous work of our dedicated staff Erika Shadowsong, Rita Gates, Cicely Moultrie, Dan Laity, Kris Rust, and Ellen Gozion. We are so grateful for all that you do.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Schwartz



First Unitarian Church
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Minister's Report to the Congregation

The mission of the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh is to:

Connect deeply in community

Inspire reverence and spiritual growth

Serve one another and the world

Learn together

"It's hard to imagine a more depressing place than a room with a few hundred people expecting community to happen to them."

Brian D. McLaren in Leadership Journal

This quote got my attention. People go to church looking for a faith they can embrace and a community to which they can connect. Yet, we have to recognize that community is something that depends upon each of us for its creation. At times, a community may seem overwhelming, that is because it always calls on its members to participate. I've seen churches where people are waiting for something to happen to them. It is depressing. First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh is not one of them!

In my second year of ministry in this wonderful and active community, I've continued to be impressed with the level of love and engagement that happens on a daily basis. I've learned to be thoughtful with what I vocalize as a desire, because it may very happen. As in all religious communities, there are those members and friends who for personal reasons or lack of interest are not easily engaged in service or stewardship in the community. The goal of every community is to have every member doing what they can, when they can. This may be volunteering once a year for an event and occasionally attending worship, or at the other end attending worship two- or three-times a month, and serving on multiple committees.

In addition to volunteering for committees or service, I encourage everyone to attend to their spiritual and faith development. This may be taking an RE class or singing, it may entail going for a walk in a park or sitting in meditation or prayer. As I and the board development a strategic plan, I want to ensure we remember to focus on

offering opportunities for members to engage in spiritual formation and deepening of faith.

I've really enjoyed working with the program team in creating engaging and thought-provoking worship services. Several times I've felt my own heart lifted and my brain pushed. We've intentionally invited engaging and inspiring guest speakers who bring experiences from different marginalized communities such as Rev. Sunshine Wolf, Farooq Al-Said, Rev. Tyler Coles, Rev. Dr. Asa Lee and Dr. Elias Ortega.

This past year, in partnership with the Board, I've focused on three governance initiatives: membership and growth; ensuring there are forms of assessment in place for leadership groups each supporting a strategic plan (to be finalized in June); and creating a "program council" governance structure that facilitates communication and decision making both laterally (between members) and vertically (with the board and myself).

I continue to meet monthly with the Board of Trustees, Pastoral Care, Worship, Membership, Personnel, and of course staff. I meet occasionally with Environmental Justice, Stewardship Committee and Finance as needed.

I continue to be deeply grateful to work with the wonderful staff: Erica Shadowsong, Kris Rust, Ellen Gozion, focusing on Programming. Cicely Moultrie, Rita Gates, Dan Laity and I focus on administration, buildings and grounds. This spring we shifted our security team members, creating a better balance of accessibility, security and hospitality.

In order to stay healthy, I have good collegial support: I'm active in the regional minister's group (Ohio-Meadville Chapter), as assistant treasurer and helping with programming at our twice annual retreats. I'll be attending the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association's annual meeting in person here in Pittsburgh, June 19-21, followed by the UUA's General Assembly June 21-25.

I'm honored to welcome attendees to Pittsburgh as I lead the Opening Celebration of General Assembly on June 21. At my side will be Erica Shadowsong, Ellen Gozion and Rev. Jim Magaw of the South Hills UU Church.

I'm also in two support groups and a study group, each meet monthly. It is crucial for religious professionals to be connected with colleagues for emotional and spiritual support, as well as staying engaged in our professional association with important contemporary topics.

For professional development, I'm currently serving as: Scribe for the Ministerial Conference at Berry Street (<https://www.uuma.org/page/berrystreet>); an Advocate on behalf of complainants to the UUA's Safe Congregations Office; with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, I continue to offer workshops for religious professionals on healthy boundaries; as a mentor for a new minister in Ohio.

Next year, I'll be working closely with the board on following the Strategic Plan (finalized in June), and supporting Membership and Pastoral Care ensuring we have a healthy and growing community.

I'll be on study leave and vacation July 1-August 19, 2023

I am deeply grateful to serve as your minister, and celebrate our ministry.



First Unitarian Church
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Treasurer's Report – Fiscal Year 2022

We ended the year in a strong financial position, particularly thanks to robust pledging from members. Most financial trends have largely recovered from the pandemic, although our rentals are still lagging. Despite making some large capital purchases, including our solar array and a new commercial dishwasher, and the market ending the year a bit down compared to the previous year, our investments are still providing a valuable contribution to our operating income, and have benefited from members' planned giving.

Financial Position, Budget Variance, Investments

Asset balances added up to \$347,731, an increase of \$114,350 over the course of the year. This did not include the money in our endowments and trusts. Total liabilities were \$308,310, an increase of \$93,090 from the beginning of 2022. A significant portion of the increase in our available cash and long-term liabilities was due to preparing to purchase the solar array. Overall, we had \$39,420 in net assets. Our income came in at 104% of the budget, for a total income of \$557,526. This was mainly because our members made more pledge contributions than expected. Expenses were almost exactly what we budgeted, for total costs of \$532,197. Overall, this left us with net income of \$25,329, more than the \$2,028 income budgeted. This gives us more of a cushion to cover any unexpected expenses we might experience in 2023.

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 catastrophic expenses. 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 \$2,802,956, a decrease of \$603,500 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. We're especially grateful to Mary Kostalos and her estate.

Finance Committee

In addition to monitoring our finances over the past year, the Finance Committee has nearly completed an overhaul of our financial policies and procedures. We've also begun to create a more comprehensive, consolidated emergency reserve.

Investment Committee

The Investment Committee kept a close eye on the health of our investments during a tough year for the market. The Committee also completed 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 May 2023 Submitted by: Kyle Gracey, Treasurer

these efforts, including: Claus Makowka, Margaret Noether, Ward Kelsey, Pat Schuetz, Stuart Hastings, Randy Weinberg, Rita Gates, Rev. Kate, Bob Mitchell, Gail Pesyna and Brian Rohleder.

Appendix: Investment Account Balances and Key Restrictions

Appendix: Investment Account Balances and Key Restrictions

Investment Balance 12/31/2022

Income Restricted Funds

Core Endowment	\$1,008,320
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3.5% of balance can be spent each year for unrestricted expenses.

Harkcom Fund	\$60,585
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Dividends can be spent on unrestricted expenses. Supports operating budget.

Memorial Trust	\$54,816
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Dividends can be spent on unrestricted expenses. Supports operating budget.

Mullins Memorial Endowment	\$395,456
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Dividends can be spent on unrestricted expenses. Supports operating budget.

Simon Income Fund \$162,674

Dividends can be spent on unrestricted expenses. Supports operating budget.

Goldsmith Concert Fund \$67,585

Dividends typically spent on music expenses. Supports operating budget.

Program Grant Funds

Campus Ministry Endowment \$174,899

3.5% of balance per year can be spent as grants for campus ministry activities.

Music Endowment \$155,165

3.5% of balance per year can be spent as grants for music-related expenses.

Social Justice Endowment \$272,895

3.5% of balance per year can be spent as grants for justice-related activities.

Endowment for Ministry with Children and Youth \$37,046

3.5% of balance per year can be spent as grants for children and youth activities.

Capital-Restricted Funds

Goldsmith Targeted Fund \$119,370

Dividends support maintenance reserves. Principal can be spent on capital projects.

Goldsmith Growth Fund \$163,953

Balance can be spent on capital projects.

Simon Future Fund \$48,727

Balance can be spent on capital projects.

Unrestricted Funds

Donaldson-Genzler Fund \$81,465

Dividends support operating budget. Principal can be spent unrestricted.

Submitted by: Kyle Gracey, Treasurer

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: MR Kelsey maryruthkelsey@gmail.com

Pastoral Care Ministry

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

Small-Group Ministry

Covenant Groups Team: Lynne Porterfield ljporterfield@yahoo.com
Addictions Ministry: Jim Pashek jimpashek@gmail.com
Gathering of Men: Jim Reitz j5650r@comcast.net
Humanist Group: Stuart Hastings sph@pitt.edu
WomanSpirit
(evening group): Pat Schuetz patschuetz@verizon.net
Women's Alliance
(daytime group): Linda Fleming flemingmitchell@hotmail.com
Denice Galpern dgalpern47@gmail.com

Nominating Committee: Martin Schmidt mschmidt127@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
Khasi Hills Partnership
Team: Karen Litzinger litzingerkaren@aol.com

Social Justice Ministry

Environmental Justice: Bob Mitchell rrmitchell350@gmail.com
Action Team: Becky Studer rkstuder@gmail.com
PIIN Core Team: Sandy Woolley sandy.woolley@gmail.com
Karen Burns Rutigliano burnskaren00@gmail.com
Racial Justice Task Force: Sonia Wellington sonia.wellington@gmail.com
Share the Plate: Karen Burns Rutigliano burnskaren00@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:	Martin Schmidt mschmidt127@gmail.com
Endowments:	
– Campus Ministry:	Heather Cunningham heatherbcunningham@gmail.com
– Ministry with Children and Youth:	Jamie Kunning Jamie.kunning@utexas.edu
– Music:	Martin Schmidt mschmidt127@gmail.com
– Social Justice:	Jean Schmidt jaschmidt127@gmail.com
Finance:	Kyle Gracey kgracey@first-unitarian-pgh.org
Investment:	Kyle Gracey kgracey@first-unitarian-pgh.org
Marketing and Communications:	Mark Whitaker mwhit14@gmail.com
Ombuds Officer:	Nancy Latimer nlatimer@gmail.com
Personnel:	Ebe Emmons ebeemmons@gmail.com
Safety:	Mary Denison marydenison@gmail.com
Stewardship:	Kirk Striebich kstriebich@gmail.com
	Al Schwartz alisons@andrew.cmu.edu
	Maria Lauro mariainpgh@gmail.com
Vision, Identity, and Mission Committee (VIM):	Bob Mitchell rrmitchell350@gmail.com

Church Administrative Staff

Business Manager:	Rita Gates
Communications Coordinator:	Cicely Moultrie
Sexton:	Dan Laity

Connect

Hospitality Ministry

Membership Team

Team Members: Amy De Chicchis, (co-chair), Joan Harvey (co-chair), Mark Whittaker (former), Marjolijn Rietsema (temporarily inactive), Michael Saffron, with support from Rev. Kate Walker

Mission: As part of the Connections Council, the Membership Team helps members and potential members connect with our church community and discover and pursue their own path to spiritual growth. The Membership Team has met by zoom monthly throughout the 2023 year.

We support the Welcome Table each Sunday, plan and attend the Introduction to UU and RUaUU? sessions throughout the year, and participate in Membership Signing and Church Services where new members are welcomed.

We have also followed up with the 100+ individuals who have visited and expressed interest in our church. Our goal is to connect each visitor with a resource person or personal referral to a group of their interest, whether it be choir, adult or child RE, Young Adults, Womens Alliance and Womenspirit, Men's Gathering, Humanist Group, Social/ Environmental Justice, etc.

Path to Membership series:

- 'Introduction to UU' sessions are currently scheduled the fourth Sunday of each month following the church service. Any visitors can sign up ahead of time and attend our in-person sessions with our minister and 1–2 members of the Membership Team.
- 'RU a UU?' orientation sessions have been held 3–4 times, initially via Zoom but recently in-person, which we feel are so much more effective for personal connections. Members of the various ministries of the church also attend these as well as a representative of the Stewardship Committee.

New Members: We welcomed the following 17 people as new church members during the past church year 2022 (*more than double the number who joined in 2021!*):

Liz Foley
Bill Collinge
Mary Beth Marinnereo
Robert Piemme
Lucy Perkins
Jill Siegfried

Mark Wilson
Margaret Hemstead
Jane Ann Williams
Monica Taylor
Casey Taylor
Mary Redford
Whitney Granger
Danny Rectenwald
Laura Gallagher
Linda Archinaco
Jim Merino

We were happy to hold an in-person welcoming of new members at a church service, so our congregation had a chance to add their welcome and celebrate at coffee hour. We have continued to revise relevant sections of the First UU web page and the Visitors' Form. We have also updated the trifold of our various church ministries, formatted according to the four missions of Inspire, Connect, Serve and Learn, including contact information.

Welcome Tables: As our church reopened its doors, we have resumed our presence at the newly designed Welcome Table. We plan to re-institute 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 visitors who wish to meet with her and welcome them to our church community.

New initiatives: At the suggestion of Rev Kate and Michael Saffron, who emphasized the effectiveness of inviting friends to our church to give them a chance to get to know us, we designated the month of March to focus on showcasing our community. This included a Saturday game night, a gathering to enjoy improv, tai chi practice, walk in the park, encouragement to attend Song Space. Attendance was good and we will continue with this effort.

A second suggestion was to designate a special space during coffee hour where visitors could come to meet each other, be greeted by congregation members, and ask questions. We will be trying this out in 2023.

We are excited to work closely with referrals to the Young Adult Group and the RE Parent Group.

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 being at the Welcome Table on a Sunday morning; being at the visitor's corner at coffee hour; offering to take an interested visitor or new member to a ministry group you belong to or being a resource for a visitor interested in social justice, for example. If you feel that working with membership could be a good match for your interests and time, the Membership Team would gratefully welcome 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

Our Greeters and Ushers are very important because they are the first faces our members, friends and visitors see when attending our Sunday services. We have a dedicated crew of 21 friendly members who devote themselves to making everyone in our church feel as welcome and comfortable as possible. We cover all the entrances to greet people as they come in, and have people stationed in the Sanctuary distributing Orders of Service to all who enter. We take up the collection and count and deposit the money in the office. We also count and record the number of people in the Sanctuary for the service. This is a rewarding way of giving our time and energy to the church, and, as a bonus, making new friends. Anyone interested in joining us can talk to or email MR Kelsey (maryruthkelsey@gmail.com).

— MR Kelsey

Pastoral Care Ministry

Pastoral Care Team

Annual Report 2023

Pastoral Care Team Members: Chris Beregi, Jan Carlino, Jim Cunningham (co-chair), 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 until our November 2022 meeting which was at church. We have continued to meet at church. We continue to share concerns of church members who contacted any team member or concerns related to us by others. We send cards, make calls, send emails, make occasional visits if possible. We also check in with each other.

We were blessed to have Marty Lieb on our team until he and Alice moved. Rev. Kate continues her pastoral ministry with the weekly Pastoral Care and Connections letter.

We prepare a list of congregants who have passed away and also family and friends of

congregants to share those names on All Souls Sunday. To date we lost the following members:

Naomi Crain: February 1, 2023

Gordon Lewis: March 14, 2023

Future projects:

We will seek to welcome anyone who would like to join our team.

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

If possible, reopen our Caring Table in the Undercroft Gallery.

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.

-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.

There were few requests during this past church year. My guess is that many in the church do not know such a loan program exists and is available to them. I think we need to make it more visible via the website and/or the weekly email.

- Jim Reitz

Minister's Discretionary Fund/Marion's Purse

The Minister's Discretionary Fund (formerly "Benevolence"), is also known as Marion's Purse, is used to help congregants in temporary financial need, such 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.

The fund was formed with a significant gift 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 Discretionary 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 Discretionary Fund" from the dropdown list; or
- By texting "give" to 412-435-1050 with the designation "carefund."

As of March 2023 the fund has a balance of \$6585.70.

- Rev. Dr. Kate Walker

Small-Group Ministry

Covenant Groups Team

Covenant Groups remained a source of support and connection for 97 people involved in the 12 Covenant Groups that reported data for this Annual Report.

Unitarian Universalism offers a large tent that encompasses a variety of beliefs and backgrounds. We do not all need to think alike to love alike. Those who participate in covenant groups reflect that variety.

One covenant group has been meeting since 2000, pre-dating the time when the concept of covenant groups had been introduced to the congregation. Originally the group came together in order to pursue topics about spirituality. As members have

come and gone in this group, the members remain intentional in their pursuit of spiritual growth and are comfortable using language that refers to “God” or a higher power. Meetings may include ritual and prayer.

Another group comes from a Christian foundation and still values some aspects and practices of that faith tradition. Members seek to explore what remains meaningful to them about the roots of Christianity and Unitarian Universalism’s Christian roots.

Other groups are connected because of common life experiences or friendships. Until the pandemic, there had been two parent groups that gathered with their children on a Saturday night once a month. One of the groups did not survive but one continues with 21 members, including the children. (Children are not included in the count of 97 members noted above.)

Most covenant groups have been together for well over five years. The newest group of eight is a mix of long time and new church members that began meeting as a covenant group two years ago on Zoom..

Throughout the pandemic Zoom made it possible for covenant group members to connect and inspire one another. Now, more groups have begun to meet in person and more plan to begin in-person meetings in the near future.

There is almost an even split between how frequently the groups have chosen to meet: five groups meet two times per month, six groups meet one time per month.

In becoming a member of a group each individual has committed to following the guidelines for a successful covenant group: a desire to engage in thoughtful conversation (listening with respect, offering personal insights, speaking without judgement about others’ points of view); a willingness to commit to attending meetings at agreed upon times; making attendance a priority; sharing responsibilities of membership; agreeing to a covenant of behavior toward one another and to keeping personal information confidential.

In most groups the role of leading the discussion rotates among members. In some groups the host chooses the topic, in other groups members agree in advance on suggested topics. Sources of discussion this year have come from *books*, such as Active Hope (Macy & Johnstone) and Between Dark and Daylight (Chittister). Other sources are *Soul Matters* (a collection of topics and resources from the UUAA); themes from sermons, movies and current events. Topics from these sources have included: coping in these times; change is a constant and how to live through it; honoring and

remembering the life of a group member; specific turning points in our lives; and finding joy in each day.

One common expectation is that a covenant group engages in a *service project each year*, although the number of groups participating in a service project this year has declined, most likely due to pandemic restrictions.

Responses to the question of: "What keeps your covenant group together?" cited the following reasons: opportunities for learning from each other; support for each other; friendship; liking each other and wanting to be together." "We enjoy sharing our lives, mutual support, and exploring issues near and dear to our hearts."

According to the data submitted by the groups, the 97 people who are currently in a covenant group continue to value the experience.

- *Lynne Porterfield*

Addiction and Recovery Ministry

The committee suspended meeting during COVID and has not yet begun new meetings. 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 31st 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. After a couple of years of meeting by zoom, we have resumed meeting in-person in the Priestly room. We were able to schedule and

conduct a limited number of field excursions 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 second season, with nine monthly programs. Our steering committee, consisting of Lucinda Beattie, Amy De Chicchis, Kim Francis, Stuart Hastings, John Hooper, and Claus Makowka, had an easier time this year, needing many fewer meetings than last year. Attendance ranged from 14 to 32 with an average above 20. We offered 6 programs which were hybrid, combining in-person and Zoom audiences, two which were Zoom only, and one which was in-person only. We expect to continue in this vein in the coming year.

Here is a list of our programs:

September: Humanism as an Interfaith Initiative. John Hooper spoke on the Introduction to Humanism lectures that he gave at the Chautauqua Institute in New York State last summer. This was perhaps the first such venture into Humanism at Chautauqua.

October: "Is American Democracy Really in Danger". This program was a discussion built around two videos on this topic. It was quite timely, with the 2022 election only a few weeks away, and the noisy presence of groups claiming that the 2020 presidential election was "stolen"

November: Building a Secular Society. Bruce Ledewitz, a prominent local attorney and Professor of Law at Duquesne University discussed ideas from his 2021 Oxford University Press book entitled "The Universe is on Our Side".

December: Higher Education Humanist Chaplaincy: Otros Saberes, Relational World-Making, and Spiritual Life. Anthony Cruz Pantojas, Humanist Chaplain at Tufts University. Otros Saberes: means "centering of other types of knowing". This program focused on understanding and celebrating the synergy that can result when

different groups of congregants interested in humanism, racial justice, and religious education work together.

January: Claus Makowka led a Zoom discussion of the proposed revision of UUA Bylaws, Article 2. He used a structured format which minimized rancor and maximized the opportunity to learn other points of view and present your own without making comparisons between them.

February: Taming the Crazy: Misinformation and the Science of mental immunity. Andy Norman discussed ideas from his recent book "Mental Immunity", which explores ways we can avoid being influenced by unreliable information.

March: Smart Recovery: An alternative to twelve step methods for those seeking a non-theistic solution. John Hooper discussed the ideas behind a program which preserves the compassionate group dynamics so important to recovery, while also providing each member with the necessary behavioral tools to overcome and be released from the urges that lead to relapse.

April: Let's Celebrate: Assigning Significance within a Secular Life. Anita Peters came to us by Zoom to answer the question: "What do you (as a humanist) celebrate, and why? She emphasized the necessity of rituals and traditions, even for the non-religious.

May: Exploring Restorative Justice. Claus Makowka introduced us to a system of managing conflict in a way that does not assign blame and has intense community involvement.

- **Stuart Hastings**

WomanSpirit

WomanSpirit is the evening women's group at First Unitarian Church. Currently we have over 150 church members and friends on our email distribution list. We always welcome new members and friends of First Unitarian.

Our goal is to meet for a potluck dinner on the second Wednesday of every month, in a member's home. Dinner is often followed by a group discussion on a topic proposed by the host. In addition, we periodically engage as a group in a social service project and occasionally devote an evening to political action.

During the warmer months of 2022 we took advantage of a member's spacious front porch and other outdoor venues, when available, to meet in person in small groups. We have recently resumed meeting indoors in small groups when a member is kind enough to invite us into her home. As the warmer weather returns, we will resume meeting on porches and other outdoor venues when the weather cooperates.

A WomanSpirit dinner is an easy and entertaining way to meet other women of a broad range of ages and interests. If you have a porch, deck, back yard, or indoor space and would be willing to host a potluck for a group of friendly women, please reach out to Pat Schuetz (patshuetz@verizon.net). We are judgment free and very appreciative of those who are willing to host us for an evening!

- **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 64 members and 18 friends.

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:

Linda Fleming and Denice Galpern – Co-Chairs
Madeline Darnell and Margaret Fuhrman – Co-Secretaries
Margaret Stevens—Treasurer
Louise Jencik and Jane MacLeod – Programs
Mary Schinhofen and Nancy Simmons – Membership
Becky Studer and Sue Oerkvitz – Social Responsibility
Peggy Bonnell and Sandy Woolley– Hospitality
Pat Schuetz – Bequests
Christine Michaels – Poet in Residence

Women's Alliance Meetings: Our calendar runs from July 1 to June 30. Our meetings are on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays from 10:30 am until 12:30, with the first 30 minutes being a business meeting. Each meeting includes a Member Check-In that provides an opportunity for reflection, mutual support, and spiritual benefit.

This year's meetings include the following GUEST SPEAKERS, most of whom highlighted the 8th Principle **(8P)** and/or Environmental Justice **(EJ)** as noted:

- October 2022, Cristina Lagnese, Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinator for Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS), talked to us about the "Welcome Home Set Up Team." This team prepares the permanent home of a refugee individual or family by collecting essential items for the home and setting up the home to create a welcoming environment when the clients move in. (8P)
- November, Chris Kubiak, Director of Education at Audubon Society of Western PA, presented a program, "November Skies and the Process of Migration," encouraging us to see and enjoy the bird migrations around us. (EJ)
- January 2023, Germaine Patterson, an activist leader of Valley Clean Air Now (VCAN) is also a Community Health Worker in Women for a Healthy Environment (WHE). Her talk focused on topics including lead exposure in the home, understanding asthma and air quality, creating a healthy home environment, consumer product safety, green cleaning, and personal care products. (8P, EJ)
- At second meeting in January, we had a book discussion on "All That She Carried, the Story of Ashley's Sack," led by Mary Schinhofen. (8P)
- February, Maddie Barnes, Director of Technology and Evidence-Based Programming at the Jewish Community Center (JCC) discussed the many AgeWell programs offered through the JCC. Programs include lunch for seniors, exercises, CCAC classes, transportation, and counseling.
- March, Emily Miller, who works in Adult Services at Carnegie Library, presented "An Introduction to your Library," We learned of the amazing variety of services offered by the Carnegie Libraries, both on-line and in person. These include personalized book recommendations, computer literacy, genealogy inquiries, career assistance, even discounted or free tickets to cultural events through RAD pass. Pick up a 3-month guide to all the programs and events at any library.
- April, Kate Lovelace, attorney and advocate, and Neishia Duganne, spoke to us about Locally Served, a program providing free legal services, social work support, and parent advocacy services to educate, support and preserve families in Allegheny County. (8P)
- At second meeting in April, our own Madeline Darnell, presented an interactive program called "Living Gently on the Earth," highlighting information in the United Nations emissions gap report of 2022. Members shared one eco-friendly practice that gives them the most joy. (EJ)

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. All Social Responsibility donations come from our yearly dues of \$50 (sliding scale available).

- In December, \$100 was sent to charities selected by our Holiday Party Scattergories winners: \$50 to Reading Ready Pittsburgh, \$25 to POWER, \$25 to Garfield Community Farm.
- After soliciting suggestions from the Membership for potential recipients, the Social Responsibility Co-Chairs researched which organizations were the best match and had the greatest financial need, creating a short list. Following discussion, the Membership voted in May to donate: Allegheny Reproductive Health Center- \$260; Garfield Community Farm - \$260; HEARTH - \$260 (for a safe home and for help in achieving economic mobility through on-site supportive services, resources, case management and community support); Locally Served - \$260; Women for a Healthy Environment - \$260; Women's Law Project- Donate \$300. (8P, EJ)
- Total Social Responsibility Expenditures from dues: \$1,700. **100% of these funds supported a Racial Justice cause, our 8th Principle and/or an Environmental Justice cause. (8P, EJ)**

The Bequests Committee recommends contributions for congregational needs, from bequest funds held in investment accounts, in accordance with the terms specified in the individual bequests.

Summary of Bequests Spending:

Flowers	\$1,000.00	For Sunday Services.
Technology	\$2,000.00	Replacement projector for Schweitzer Room, and a portable projector. To support multiplatform meetings and audio-visual support for general meetings.
Music -- Kris Rust	\$500.00	Support beyond general church budget.
Music -- Ellen Gozion	\$500.00	Support beyond general church budget.
Campus Ministry	\$1,000.00	Support of Young Adult Ministry (Erica Shadowsong).
Stained glass protection	\$500.00	Modification to prevent sitting on ledge at base of the Garden Stained Glass (Building and Grounds).
Total	\$5,500.00	

Special Events: Women's Alliance hosted two conversations to discuss our Church's adoption of the 8th Principle, opening the conversations to all members of the congregation (8P). In July Pat Ulbrich hosted a Porch Party. We celebrated in person at a Fall Garden Party Potluck, 09/15/22; Winter Holiday Party 12/01/22; End of Year Potluck (5/04/23).

Special Projects: 1) 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. 2) JFCS Welcome Home program (8P). A team of church members, mostly members of the Women's Alliance, prepares the permanent home of a refugee individual or family by collecting essential items for the home and setting up the home to create a welcoming environment when the clients move in. In Dec 2022, we were the pilot group for JFCS Welcome Home program. In Feb 2023 we supported another Welcome Home Family. 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.

Looking Forward: The Women's Alliance made conscious decisions to explore and support the 8th Principle. We also support the Church decision to explore Environmental Justice for 1 (and possibly 2) years. We intend to continue growing in this direction through our programming, financial contributions, and our actions. With our contribution for technology, we look forward to multi-platform meetings where our members who are unable to be physically present for meetings will still be able to be a vibrant part of our group and activities. We anticipate an increase in the number of JFCS Welcome Home projects in the coming year (8P).

NOTE: 8P = Eighth Principle; EJ = Environmental Justice.

Respectfully submitted,

-Linda Fleming and Denise Galpern, Co-Chairs

Nominating Committee

Nominating Committee Members

Martin Schmidt, Chair (2020-2023)

Linda Fleming (2020-2023)

Nancy Latimer (2020-2023)

Sue Oerkvitz (2021-2024)

Stuart Hastings (2021-2024)

Melody Platz (2021-2024)

Cathy Rohrer (2022-2025)

Mary Pat Mengato (2022-2025)

Margaret Fuhrman (2022-2025)

Nominees to the Board:

Kyle Gracey

Brian Junker

Jean Schmidt

Nominees to the Nominating Committee:

Karen Burns

Nancy Latimer*

Lee Carnes

Nominees to Endowment Committees for 2023-2026

Chris Michaels (Music)

Jennifer Adibi (Campus Ministry)

Julie Downs (Ministry with Children and Youth)

Sonia Wellington (Social Justice)

* Nancy has served the final year of the term of a member who resigned from the Nominating Committee. Having served less than 24 months, she is eligible to fill a new 3-year term on this committee.

-Martin Schmidt

Inspire

Worship Ministry

Worship Team

Stephanie Pawlowski, Commissioned Lay Minister (chair), Bryan Bandli, Alice Carnes, and Ward Kelsey.

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.

This year we changed how we identify liturgists for Sunday services. In the past, all liturgists came from the Worship Team. This year, the Worship Team compiled a list of liturgists to assist on Sundays who are not members of the Worship Team. This allows a greater number of voices in the pulpit without burdening volunteers with the commitment to monthly meetings and planning duties. We plan to continue to utilize volunteer liturgists and grow the number of volunteers. To date, volunteer liturgists have been used only on Sundays that Rev. Kate has been leading the service. In the future, we hope to expand volunteer liturgists to other days. If a guest is in the pulpit, a Worship Team member will be present to assist in guiding and coordinating the service.

This year, the Worship Team assisted on bringing back a new and improved Joys and Concerns table which includes candles to light or stones to place in the water.

- **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 is on worship.

This past year I presented two sermons. On July 3rd, I presented a sermon entitled the Gifts of Neurodiversity and on December 25th, I assisted in presenting an informal Christmas Day service. The sermon on Neurodiversity was very special to me. I hope to further commit to making our congregation a welcoming and supporting place for all individuals. To that end, I provided Rev. Kate and Erica Shadowsong a memo including a number of suggestions regarding Neurodiversity. The Christmas day Service, while sparsely attended, was very well received. It was important for us as a community to be open on the Holiday. Participants were welcomed to come in PJs and bring cookies to share. We sang, told personal holiday memories and shared cookies.

In the fall, I led the class Building Your Own Theology. Because it was virtual, it was quite outside my comfort zone. I received positive feedback and was able to dig deeper into my own theology.

I continued as chair of the worship committee and worked intensely with Ellen Gozion to organize summer services when Rev. Kate was off. I continued to meet monthly with

Rev. Kate and regularly with a group of other CLMs. In November 2022, I attended a presentation entitled “Promoting Neurodiversity in our Congregations” which was presented by the UUA and the UUMA. I participated in the annual cluster meeting both in the worship service and as a delegate. I officiated two weddings for non-members, one at the church and one in a backyard. I completed overhauled my wedding packet that I provide to couples and created a contract for use with engaged couples. I completed my work as a member of Stephanie Gannon’s Ministerial Formation Network. Finally, I am volunteering with GA this summer and plan to lead service this July.

For next year, I would like to continue to explore and assist however I can in making our church more welcoming to Divergent Thinkers and a place that embraces Neurodiversity. I plan to explore the format of a Taizé Service and would like to lead one at First Church this year.

- **Stephanie Pawlowski**

Committee on Shared Ministry

Members: Sue Oerkvitz, Jim Reitz, David Doorley, Gretchen Aiyangar, Michael Safran, Kate Walker

Chair: Mary Denison

The Committee on Shared Ministry was first established in February 2022. The committee is charged with providing advice and counsel to the Minister, the Board of Trustees (“BOT”), and the congregation so as to strengthen the quality of shared ministry within the congregation. Recognizing the congregation as a whole system, rather than fragmented parts, we strive to support the overall health and well-being of the community and its members. In support of this charge, the committee meets monthly to discuss the strengths and needs of the congregation and the ministry. One assigned task for the Committee on Shared Ministry is the recommendation of a mutually agreed-upon, effective annual process to evaluate on alternate years the Minister(s) and the ministry of the whole congregation, in consultation with and respectful collaboration with the BOT. In meeting this responsibility, the Committee on Shared Ministry has completed an assessment of Dr. Reverend Kate Walker’s work at First Unitarian. A report has been submitted to the BOT for their review.

- **Mary Denison**

Music & the Arts Ministry

Director Of Instrumental Music Annual Report

It delights me to have planned and participated this past year in Sunday morning services that are no longer virtual-only. It is fulfilling to make music with and for the congregation in person. I am grateful for our tech crew volunteers, who stream services for those who can't attend in person.

I continue to accompany services primarily at the piano. Sometimes I include traditional vocal music, accompanying myself on banjo, harmonium, or singing a cappella.

Occasionally I play the organ; the instrument is exhibiting signs of its age. The technicians have no suggestions for smaller repairs at this time, only a more extensive overhaul, should the congregation wish to raise funds for such an undertaking.

The hymn band played several times this year, accompanying hymns and performing pop and rock songs from across several decades. Member Mike Shanley recommended "Get Together" which was super fun for us and the congregation, who sang along. The band (without me) arranged and played "It's the End of the World as we Know It," among many other things!

An old-time string band gathered for one service in October, led by fiddler Sarah Benson, with banjos (Brian Junker, me), mandolin (Danny Rectenwald), guitar (Heather Cunningham) and upright bass (Dave Glasser).

Twice we have enjoyed folk tunes by the acoustic quartet *Les Aubergine*: Mary Denison, Martin Schmidt, Dave McGlaughlin, Deb Byrum—with guest pianist Dave Stone.

I assisted Erica Shadowsong with her beautifully planned Kwanzaa service which included traditional west African songs, led by singer Morgan Hawkins and me.

The First UU music program has supported the creation of the Pittsburgh Community Gamelan, offering them rehearsal space in the Harper Room where they can also keep their instruments. Their inaugural performance was in March at a First UU service, followed by a hands-on workshop. About ten of us, including three youth, learned to play a tune together. PCG will perform at State College in June. I hope to see First UU enriched by this growing and diverse community, even as worship is enriched by their entrancing music.

I had the pleasure of accompanying Chantal Braziel, soprano and baritone Solomon Onyukwu, as well as a David Fitzpatrick, oboe, and Ryan Leonard, clarinet, of the ICPlayers, director of PCG Jay Arms, classical guitar. Many musicians from the congregation played for services: Maddy Izzo, and Ebe Emmons, flute; Mary Denison, recorders; Nancy Latimer, mandolin; Brian Junker, guitar and banjo; Heather Cunningham, blues harmonica; Corey Layman, guitars and drums; Paul Cunningham, bass and drums; Danny Rectenwald, guitar and mandolin; Mike Shanley, bass. Will Snavelly played a gorgeous piano Offering for one service and new member Bill Collinge, piano, accompanied a hymn led by the Community Singers. I have also collaborated with the Dance Choir for several services.

Oscar Atkinson played bassoon during worship in February, which inspiration led to a meeting of young musicians in the congregation, initiated by Janine Jones. We have scheduled one rehearsal and a Sunday to perform in June. I have been making hymn arrangements for this quartet of players.

Guest accompanists have included Nathália Kato Giordano, Amaury Morales, and member Kiki (Katherine) Barley. Hugo Cruz has served several times as our guest percussionist. Dr. James Johnson's Trio also played a service this past year.

I attend about staff and programming meetings each month, and collaborate on service planning with Kate, Erica and Kris and others. I am grateful for the support of the congregation, and for the ways our collective music-making enriches both worship and community.

– *Ellen Gozión*

Director Of Vocal Music Annual Report

During the 2022-23 church year, our vocal music program has emerged from the pandemic.

We have seen a return to more robust congregational and choral singing as COVID infection rates have gone down and concerns about transmission have lessened. And with the recent lift of the mask mandate, singers have been able to sing with less difficult respiration and enunciation of words, and with more social/emotional connection because of visible facial expressions and enhanced non-verbal communication. I have worked closely with the rest of the program staff to plan worship that includes robust congregational singing led by music staff, professional artists, UU Community Singers, and lay song leaders.

The UU Pittsburgh Community Singers have sung about once per month in Sunday Services at First UU and have sung for the First UU Christmas Eve service. We went Christmas caroling at the Promedica Skilled Nursing Facility on Negley Ave in Shadyside. In addition, Kris organized the first UU Pittsburgh Cluster Choir in many years at the Cluster's annual meeting and at the South Hills UU Church. The Community Singers participated in the annual Let Freedom Sing Concert in January with numerous Pittsburgh choirs. In May, Community Singers are presenting "De Colores" A Spring Concert with Coro Latinamericano and other Latin American artists. In June, we will perform with the Lemington Chorale and Rev. Deryck Tines at Pittsburgh's LGBTQ+ Pride Festival, at Allegheny Unitarian's Juneteenth Service, and at the Pittsburgh Juneteenth Festival at Point State Park.

Our community partner arts organizations and individual professional artists have included Coro Latinamericano, the Lemington Chorale, Reverend Deryck Tines, Let Freedom Sing & the Afro American Music Institute, Dr. Herbert Jones, Nikki Porter, Eastminster Presbyterian Church Choir, Alton Mitchell, the Rodman Street Baptist Church Choir, the Renaissance City Choir, Temple Sinai Choir, Michele Bankole, Emmanuel Berrido, Chantal Braziel, Adrianna Cleveland, Robert Frankenberry, Morgan Hawkins, Zuly Inirio, Desmon Jackson, Kiara Lee, Geña Nieves, Solomon Onyukwu, Miguel Sague Jr., Miguel Sague III, and Lourdes Santiesteban. Our community partners and professional artists have added music excellence and diversity to our music program and have brought the voices and faces of young adults, people of color and gender non-conforming individuals into community with First Unitarian.

– **Kris Rust**

Art Team

Team members include: Art Team members include: Ali Masalehdan (Chair), Linda Kaufmann, Mary Weidner, Kirsti Adkins, Alice Lieb, Mary Schinhofen, Charlotte Toal, Joe Jencik, and Annie Stunden.

Month	Artist	Artist Contact Information	Medium	Show Up (7-9p.m.)	Show Down (7-9 p.m.)	Reception	Coordinator	Coordinator Contact Information
Sept 2022	Quilt Show		Fabric	9/2	9/30	?	Annie Stunden	Annie.stunden@gmail.com
Oct	Member Art Show	?	Paintings, watercolor, etc	9/30	10/28	?	Linda Kaufman	LK01@andrew.cmu.edu
Nov.	Miguel Hoyos	alwaysshoyos@yahoo.com	Acrylic Painting	10/29	12/2	?	Ali Masalehdan	Al_asgar@yahoo.com
Dec	Quilt Sales		Fabric	12/3	12/30/22	?	Annie Stunden	Annie.stunden@gmail.com
Jan 2021	2 nd annual phone photo		photographs	12/30/22	2/3/2023		Kirsti Adkins Joe Jencik	kladkins1@verizon.net joejencik@gmail.com
February	2 nd annual phone photo		Photographs		3/2/2023		Kirsti Adkins Joe Jencik	kladkins1@verizon.net joejencik@gmail.com
March	Group art		Collages		3/31/23		Mary Schinhofen & Alice Carnes	Mary Schinhofen <mary@schinhofen.net>
April	Creative Citizens Studio CCS	Cert Art Teacher Katy DeMent w/ sup PAC on Arts	Mixed media		5/4/23		Annie Stunden	Annie.stunden@gmail.com

– Ali Masalehdan

Dance Choir

May 2022-

- Created, rehearsed, and performed original choreography to song "Vine and Fig Tree" And danced children out of service for Memorial Day Service on May 29th, 2022

October -

- Prepared service themes and elements for Winter Solstice Service as a team

November -

- Choreographed and rehearsed for Winter Solstice Service;
- Collaborated with musician, Jett Downey, who created original arrangements and compositions;
- Submitted and received a Music Endowment grant for Jett's compensation

December -

- Final rehearsals with Jett for Winter Solstice Service;
- Coordinated with First U ministerial staff (Erica Shadowsong, Stephanie Pawlowski, and Alice Carnes), tech team, and office for service element readings, the creation of lighting/staging for live streaming, and printed Order of Service;
- Led and performed in the Winter Solstice Service on December 20, 2022

January 2023 -

- Performed in a New Moon event on January 21, 2023 led by Jett Downey with local dance group, Interplay, at First United Methodist Church, including a restaging of one of the Winter Solstice dances;

- Submitted application to offer movement workshop at GA in June, which was unfortunately not chosen for one of the limited time slots

April -

- Created, rehearsed, and performed original choreography for Earth Day Service, April 23, 2023

Looking ahead -

June - Hope to gather for Sacred Circle Dancing for Summer Solstice

October - December - Winter Solstice 2023

Dance Choir is open to sharing movement for services upon request when possible and to collaborating with other groups in the church.

Current members -

Tory Butterworth, Alice Carnes, Linda Fleming, Jennifer Halperin, Karen Litzinger, Mary Pat Mengato, Cathy Rohrer, Sarah Sheard, Sonia Wellington

– **Mary Pat Mengato**

SongSpace

SongSpace at First Unitarian is a celebration of folk, Americana, singer-songwriter, old-time, acoustic blues, and world music, featuring local, regional and (inter-)national artists. We are dedicated to establishing a welcoming and meaningful space both for making and listening to quality music. Our shows are open to the public. A public-facing website for the series is here: <http://uusongspace.com/>.

The current SongSpace steering committee consists of Brian Junker (chair), Gary Crouth, Irma Tani, and rotating technical volunteers Paul Cunningham, Will Snively, and Andrew Papale.

Other volunteers for the series include Rob & Al Schwartz, Kate Snow, Ebe Emmons, Mary Schinhofen, other church members, and friends of Irma Tani such as Jean Siegel. During the period June 2022 – May 2023 the following concerts took place or were scheduled:

- *Saturday September 24: John Flynn* (Philadelphia-based folk singer and activist)
- *Saturday November 12: Rupert Wates* (London-born singer-songwriter and fingerstyle guitarist), with special guest **Dan Petrich** (Pittsburgh-based singer-songwriter and fingerstyle guitarist)
- *Saturday January 28: The Squirrel Hillbillies* (Pittsburgh-based upbeat folk duo) with special guests **Louie Castle** (younger Pittsburgh-based R&B influenced singer-songwriter) and **Madeline Jo & Friends** (younger Pittsburgh-based folk-pop trio)

- *Saturday April 1: House of Hamill* (neo-trad Celtic trio from eastern PA) with special guests **Pairedown** (Pittsburgh-based experimental acoustic guitar duo)
- *Saturday May 6 (scheduled): Jess Klein* (North Carolina based, internationally known alt-country singer-songwriter with social justice themes) with special guest **Brad Yoder** (Pittsburgh-based beloved singer-songwriter and gatherer of community)

Generally speaking, SongSpace books strong, but not well-known performers, who can afford to come to Pittsburgh for relatively small guarantees (typically \$600-\$900). One show per year is drawn entirely from Pittsburgh artists; this year the Squirrel Hillbillies, who are well-known in the church community, was featured in the January show. They invited two younger, very talented local opening acts, Louie Castle and Madeline Jo & Friends, to join them. While we do not tend to book Unitarian-centric or, more broadly, religious-centric performers, we do look for artists for whom aspects of social justice and/or the seven principles (<https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/principles>, accessed May 2, 2023) are explicitly or implicitly evident in their identity.

SongSpace has developed a strong reputation among a core following of attendees (a mixture of church members and members of the general public). Particular performers also draw members of their own following to the church, increasing the church's exposure among the general public. We do not have the capital or the expertise for extensive advertising of shows, and so our attendance remains moderate (40-90 at most shows).

We are currently booking for the 2023-2024 church year. Because of certain audience dynamics, as well as difficulties with our current advance-ticketing agency, we will probably book more local headlining artists in 2023-2024, to try to build a stronger financial cushion for the future. We may also seek Goldstein funds for some specific purposes in the future, as opportunity permits.

– **Brian Junker**

Serve

Humanitarian Service Ministry

Alternative Gift Market Team

For the third year, out of cautious respect for the lingering COVID-19 pandemic's impact, First UU held a limited online Alternative Gift Market (AGM) in 2022.

Conducted on our First UU website, during the month of December 2022, we featured three charities to whom congregants could make "alternative gift" holiday donations. Featured were: Reading Ready Pittsburgh (\$358 in donations), Khasi Hills (\$436 in

donations) and the UUA's UU Service Committee's Emergency Response Fund (\$146 in donations). Thank you to all of you who participated in our Virtual AGM.

We are optimistic that we can return to our traditional Undercroft-located, in-person, Alternative Gift Market for the upcoming 2023 holiday season. We hope to welcome back displays for about a dozen charities endorsed by the Alternative Gifts International organization with whom we have partnered over many years. And we hope to welcome some table displays from local charities that First UU heartily supports.

We thank Mark Whitaker, Cicely Moultrie, Claus Makowka, and Kyle Gracie for their invaluable help. We would warmly welcome additional members to our committee!
- *Karen Burns Rutigliano and Bari Roman*

East End Cooperative Ministry Homeless Shelter Meal Preparation Coordinating Team

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.

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*

Khasi Hills Partnership Team

Members: Karen Litzinger (chairperson), LeeAnne Haworth, Lois Hurt, Mary Pat Mengato, Maureen Porter, Shelley Ross, Carol Washburn

Highlights:

- Twenty Years of School Sponsorship - This year marked 20 years of sponsorship which began in 2003 with sponsoring individual student in grades 5-10 until government funding came through. The focus since we funded the Higher Secondary School in 2015-2016 has been funding two teachers for the 11th and 12th grade. We raised \$8900 of the \$9,600 goal of the two teachers' salaries which we had done the last five years. We expect to raise \$700 in the remaining church fiscal year. Additionally, we are trying to cover the 10% fee due to the Unitarian Union of North East India so the full \$9600 goes to the school.
- School Expansion – School enrollment is high at 371 for 2022 school year, but about the same as last year. They are expanding with the second floor of the second building (where our 11th and 12 grade classrooms are) due for completion May 2023. Our school contact keeps us updated about the expanding enrollment with a record 85 students in grade 6, 61 in grade 7, 76 in grade 9, and 57 in grade 10, resulting in the need for two sections and additional classrooms. The accreditation of the school and government funding of the teachers that we expected has slowed down due to changed government regulations and the pandemic. Grade 12 continues to have a 100% pass rate for the graduation exam.
- September Anniversary Day Double Events– This was the third year of acknowledging Khasi Hills Anniversary Day (previously referred to as Founders Day), their most important holiday. The September 18 church service included a greeting and guided meditation of blessing each other. In addition, we initiated a collaboration with our partner and the UUA, resulting in a live video celebration of both country's partners, including a video greeting from our Rev. Kate Walker.
- Holiday Card Donor Outreach –Based on last year's success, we did a direct appeal to past donors with a sponsorship form in a holiday card which raised a successful \$2833.
- Alternative Gift Market – We were pleased to be one of the causes this year and which brought in \$476.
- February Share the Plate Month – This raised \$1142.90 compared to \$825 last year.
- Khasi Hills Partnership Sunday – The February 23 service featured the story of Reverend Annie Margaret Barr, the founder of our school, whose 50th anniversary of her death is being commemorated in Khasi Hills. Unique highlights were prayers and songs from our Khasi Hills partners and an "appearance" of Rev. Barr during Time for All Ages, then interviewed by RE students.
- April Khasi Indigenous Festival Recognition – This is the second year we hosted a recognition of this agrarian festival, one of the most important holidays of our Khasi Hills Unitarian siblings. This year we reached out to the Environmental Justice Action Team to collaborate for Earth Sunday. We hosted a festive Social Hour on April 23 with a new initiative of showcasing North East Indian cuisine in addition to traditional Main Land Indian cuisine as we strive to honor our siblings' authentic culture.

- Funding and Organizing June India Visitor Trip – With General Assembly in Pittsburgh and the new UUA international partnership process in transition with no visitor budget, our team received a generous grant from our Social Justice Endowment Fund to facilitate travel to our church in conjunction with General Assembly. We are providing home hospitality and transportation for our visitor for both events, with the highlight being the church service and reception/luncheon on June 18.

Coming year: In addition to the June India visitor trip highlight, we hope that multiple church members can travel to India in October or November (date TBA) for the final commemoration of the Rev. Annie Margaret Barr celebration. We will also be playing a role to support our partners in a UUA Faithify global campaign focused on expanding the school we sponsor. We expect to continue with two Higher Secondary School teacher sponsorships, fall Anniversary Day recognition, Share the Plate Month, Khasi Hills Sunday, and Shad Suk Mynsiem festival celebration.

– *Karen Litzinger*

Social Justice Ministry

Environmental Justice

At the 2022 Annual Meeting the congregation unanimously approved a churchwide Environmental Justice Initiative. The directive, based on the information gathered at VIM meetings held in early 2022, was “to commit to a year-long, church-wide focus on Environmental Justice, in order to take appropriate actions to address the issue.”

The proposal envisioned “achieving Environmental Justice in three ways: direct action working with oppressed communities; public advocacy at the local, state and national levels; and changing our own social and environmental behavior. The Environmental Justice Action Team (EJAT) will provide educational programming to help members choose activities best suited to their interests.”

This report documents the accomplishments to date as well as ongoing plans. Not surprisingly, it has proven difficult to make the desired progress within a one-year timeframe. The EJAT therefore proposes that the Congregation renew its Environmental Justice commitment for another year. The EJ initiative will be incorporated into the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, specifically with respect to the ongoing church priority to “Explore paths to the formation of a long-lasting and meaningful First Unitarian/Community Partnership.”

The EJAT identified these areas of potential focus: Air, Land, Water, Greenspace and a Partnership with at least one organization that is already doing this vital work as well as minding our own sustainability and witness.

Current members of the EJAT include Madeline Darnell, Rev. Stephanie Gannon, Bob Mitchell, Karen Burns Rulegliano, Becky Studer, Sonia Wellington, and Sandy Woolley (as liaison with PIIN) with Rev. Kate Walker when available. Initially they asked 'How do we go about accomplishing these goals? Where do we find community partners and collaborators? How do we become a partner? What educational programs could we plan for the congregation?

Casting a Wide Net

To get started the committee cast a wide net to search for collaborators, partners, and programs.

- Saturday June 18, **Allegheny Solarfest**, attended by 9 First UU members. It was held at Hazelwood Green Plaza, the site of Mill 19 of the former J & L Steel mill. The site now features a 2-megawatt solar installation - the largest solar installation in the country on a sloped roof. The mission of Allegheny Solarfest is to "accelerate the adoption and enhance the public understanding of Solar Energy and Electric Vehicle technologies in Western Pennsylvania". Each year it brings together industry and the general public for a festival of learning, music, and celebration. You can learn more about Allegheny Solarfest at <https://www.alleghenysolarfest.com/>
- September 22, **Clean Energy Justice Roundtable at Phipps Conservatory**, attended by Bob. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HA55iUdXvl4>. The Roundtable was one of a number of events held during the week of the Global Clean Energy Action Forum <https://www.energy.gov/eere/wind/events/global-clean-energy-action-forum>. Like many satellite events, it was a justice-oriented counterpoint to the more political/mainstream work of the Clean Energy Forum. The Roundtable featured a panel discussion with six members. One of the panelists was Germaine Patterson, an activist leader of Valley Clean Air Now (VCAN). After the panel session ended, Bob talked with Germaine, explained our EJ initiative including our strong interest in air quality, and asked if we might be able to help with VCAN. She was very receptive to the idea and provided a link to their next meeting. She also offered to do a workshop for us, which she did in January for Women's Alliance. We are continuing to work with VCAN.
- Sunday October 2, **Interfaith Power and Light panel discussion**. Bob Mitchell joined Kathy Hrabovsky for the discussion which was one in a series of Sunday services at the East Suburban UU Church spotlighting Environmental Justice. The panelists were asked to articulate and identify actionable opportunities for us locally and around Pittsburgh to engage with our neighbors and live our values. They were asked the following questions:

how do you define environmental justice?

locally, what have you found to be the biggest challenges with respect to environmental justice?

what groups do you know of that are addressing these challenges?

in your experience, what in your opinion is the most important activity to be involved in right now?

- October, **VCAN monthly meetings visitation begins.** Bob and other members began attending the meetings as listeners, the first step toward a partnership.
- November, **Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN) joined our initiative.** First Church members Sandy Woolley and Karen Burns attended a multi-day training session the week after Thanksgiving during which they learned that the Gamaliel Foundation has decided to focus on Environmental Justice. PIIN is affiliated with Gamaliel and voted on April 30 to adopt Environmental Justice as one of its four top priorities. Sandy Woolley and Karen are attending both organizations' meetings to create communication among us.
- March 30 and 31, **Pennsylvania Campfire Gathering: Firing Up The Climate Campaign.** Karen Burns and Bob Mitchell attended the two-day gathering at Slippery Rock University. It was "hosted by a coalition of local groups who want to develop a regional campaign that will unify and strengthen the work we all are doing, and help us to collectively build power and form alliances". The event featured a presentation by long-time climate activist George Lakey, who presented information about experiences and successes of work in other parts of the country. He provided guidance about how to develop a long-term strategic campaign in our area so we can more effectively achieve our goals. George was joined by Veronica Coptis who is the outgoing Executive Director of the Center for Coalfield Justice and is currently Senior Advisor for Taproot Earth. Veronica brings expertise in strategic long-term planning, community organizing, and an intimate knowledge of the struggles of communities in western Pennsylvania.
- April 15, **March on Harrisburg "Majority Against Corruption Barnstorming Tour"** held at First UU and open to the community. A 90 min. presentation by Rabbi Michael Pollack with time for Q&A; the event was both in person in the Undercroft and streamed for a larger audience. Along with a gift ban, ranked choice voting and a poor people's campaign, MoH prioritizes "PA Action on Climate", stating that "Pennsylvanians have both a constitutional and inalienable human right to a clean environment". It conducts nonviolent direct action trainings and it carried out nonviolent direct actions to advocate for change. Notably, in a sidebar conversation with Bob Mitchell, Rabbi

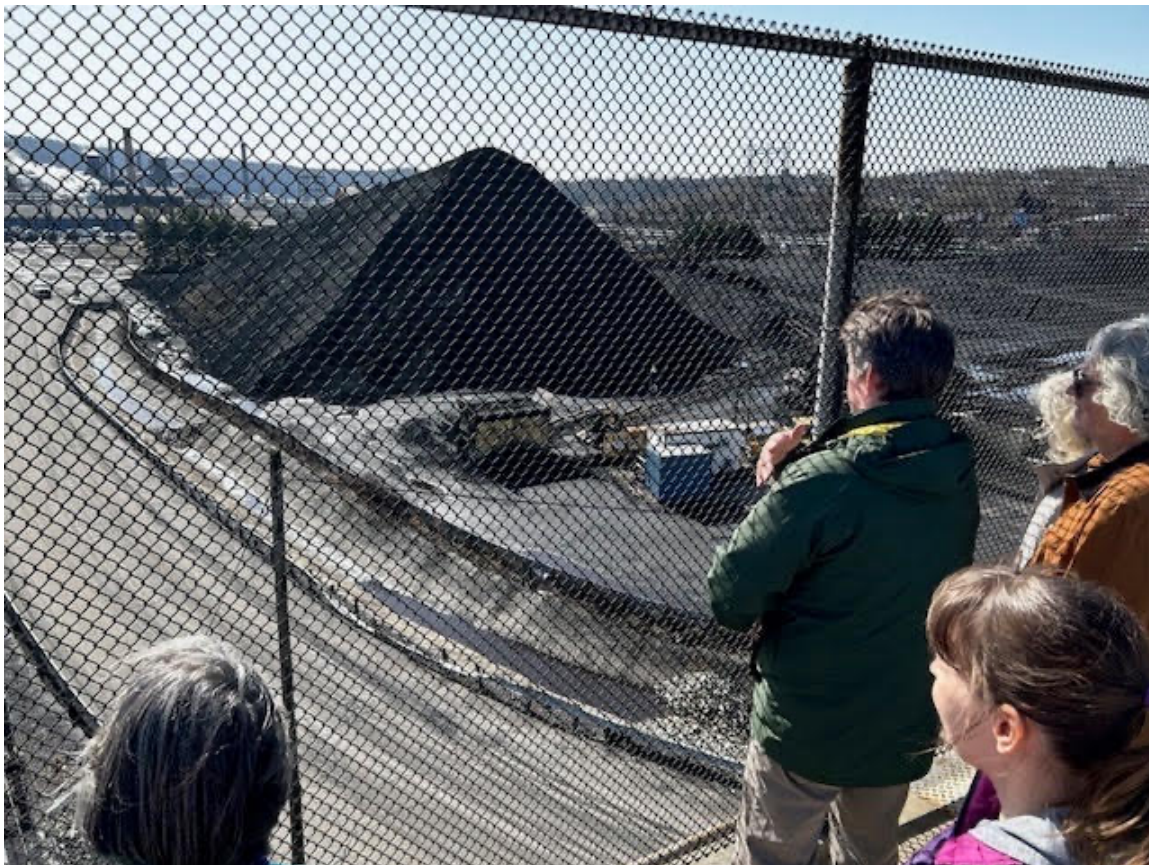
Pollack enthusiastically supported the idea of advocating Community Solar legislation as an attainable goal.

- **Habitat for Humanity** is on hold for now due to new financial requirements of Habitat. First UU has long been a partner with this organization.

Direct Action

VCAN Partnership – Our listening sessions with VCAN developed into a Partnership with our hopes for a long relationship. We hope to offer support and advocacy for their work to obtain clean air for the people of their community. Bob and other members still attend the virtual third Thursday community meetings, still as listeners.

April 1, 2023, **Walking Tour to see Clairton Coke Works (CCW)**. Tom Bailey, VCAN's steering committee secretary, led First UU members and friends on a Walking Tour of the area around the Clairton Coke Works (CCW).



Here is his summary from their website:

*Around 10 folks joined Germaine Gooden-Patterson, Qiyam Ansari and myself to get a better idea of what goes on in the Clairton Coke Works (CCW). **The largest group was from the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh in Shadyside.** The weather was perfect. Our idea was to help people from outside the Five Boroughs to see and learn about the CCW by walking on the Glassport-Clairton Bridge while talking with VCAN members.*

I told everyone what my friend, who worked at CCW for 5 years told me. "Remember inside every steam molecule is one piece of coal dust." Thanks to everyone who participated. Here are some of their comments:

"The trip was very informative to me. There is nothing like seeing it for yourself. The magnitude of the Clairton Coke works was stunning. I was amazed by all that coal on the site, soon to be burned, and how much is burned each day."

"When I learned that there was newer, coal free technology, and that US Steel was building or has built the better facility in another state, I felt angry that they were polluting in PA at the expense of the health of the residents especially when improvement in their old plant could make the air cleaner."

"I appreciated learning of the steps planned by VCAN to address the problems. They give one hope that there can be improvement."

"My husband...doesn't usually like tours/lectures — but he enjoyed this and learned a lot."



April 11, **Glassport City Council Meeting**. First members and friends joined six VCAN members attended this meeting to show our support for the air quality issue. Lisa Marcucci of the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) and Ana Hoffman of Carnegie Mellon University's Create Lab, led a presentation for the Glassport City Council. Lisa gave an overview of EIP's air monitoring efforts that began in December, 2021. Ana presented the results in detail and both answered questions from council members. Excessive benzene levels at several local locations have been detected repeatedly. Council agreed to write the EPA directly to take action on US Steel's Clairton Coke Works.

Other Direct Action

Becky Studer recruited a few new Urban **EcoStewards** to help tend our area in Frick Park. A group of 6 met there on Monday evening May 7 to orient and remove invasive plants. We work under the direction of Upstream Pittsburgh.

Women's Alliance donated \$260 to Women for a Healthy Environment. Germaine Gooden-Patterson (also on the board of VCAN) was a guest speaker in January and explained how her work with WHE addressed the poor air quality causing so much asthma in children and others living in the Mon Valley. Women for a Healthy Environment (WHE) educates communities about environmental risks to human health,

provides action steps to mitigate those risks, and advocates for solutions to better protect the region.

Advocacy

Farm Bill. Many First UU members wrote to our U.S. Congressional legislators to advocate for a Farm Bill of 2023 that would create a climate-smart agricultural sector that advances justice. The five-year proposal now being drafted offers the chance to reduce hunger, promote environmental stewardship and promote fairness to all farmers and farmworkers. Our UU values call on us to advocate for a Farm Bill that brings about fairness, especially to farmers and farm workers of color who have been left out of earlier bills, and that encourages production of sustainably grown, healthful food rather than commodity crops grown in ways that deplete soil and pollute our waterways. Why now? The current Farm Bill expires on September 30, 2023, so both the House and Senate are actively working on drafting a new five-year Farm Bill.

Glassport City Council Meeting. While this April 11 meeting is described in the VCAN partnership section, it was also advocacy. By attending this meeting we added numbers and support for the issue of Clean Air for the Mon Valley Community. We would like to attend future meetings as well.

Educational Programming

January 5, 2023, **Women For a Healthy Environment**, Women's Alliance hosted guest speaker, Germaine Gooden-Patterson (also on the board of VCAN). She presented how her work with WHE addressed the poor air quality causing so much asthma in children and others living in the Mon Valley.

February 11 & 12 and all of March. **Envisioning The Future: A Collage Workshop and Art Show.** Mary Schinhofen and Alice Carnes organized a two afternoon collage workshop addressing the changes of climate change and our anxieties about it by helping participants create "images that encompass our dreams, express our hopes, and project our energies into the universe, illustrating our deepest longings and our lingering anxieties. The collages were displayed at the March art show in the Undercroft Gallery, photographed and placed into a power point for future sharing.



On the Edge

By Mary Schinhofen
Collage made in
Envisioning The
Future workshop

April 20, **Living Gently on the Earth.** Women's Alliance participated in an interactive program given by Madeline Darnell highlighting information in the United Nations emissions gap report of 2022. Members shared one eco-friendly practice that gives them the most joy and took a poll to measure their impact in reducing Green House Gas emissions.

April 23, **Joy in Action Workshop,** following the Earth Day service. The EJAT conducted the workshop. The goal was to help congregants discover what needs to be done and what best uses our skills and experiences — what actually brings us joy! Church strengths include musical and artistic talent; readiness to engage in focused projects, the skills to organize and run enjoyable events, and the overall power of passionate, caring and creative people. The EJAT is currently analyzing all the workshop responses to identify the specific Environmental Justice actions most likely to bring us joy as a church.

April 23, **Earth Day Worship Service,** with the Khashi Hills group and Dance Choir. Rev. Stephanie Gannon and Becky Studer served as liaisons for the planning of this beautiful and inspiring annual event. EJAT had an information table in the Undercroft Gallery highlighting our programs.

May 5, **Introductory Climate Healing Workshop.** The workshop was based on Joanna Macy's resources, *The Work That Reconnects* and *Active Hope*. Rev. Stephanie Gannon and Kirsi Jansa conducted the workshop.

Minding Our Own Store

October and November, 2022 **Middle School RE Class Builds Box Filters.**



You may have noticed boxes like these with colorful tape in the Schweitzer Room, Garden Lobby and RE spaces. They were built by our own middle schoolers in two of Cathy Rohrer's classes late last year. They are called Cori-Rosenhal boxes — or just C-R boxes for short. Their cost is a fraction of commercial air purifiers and they take only about 20 minutes to construct using a fan and four MERV 13 filters.

The C-R boxes are one part of our church's Environmental Justice Initiative — the part where we "mind our own store". They effectively reduce air particles that carry viruses such as Covid and aggravate asthma and other respiratory diseases. Reducing harmful particles helps create safer places for ourselves and for visitors who enter our doors. The C-R boxes also support our efforts to partner with Valley Clean Air Now (VCAN).

November, 2022 – **LED Lighting Installation.** Nearly all bulbs/lamps in current church lighting fixtures were replaced, except for the Undercroft. In the Undercroft the old, unsightly fixtures were replaced. The new Undercroft lighting also provides dimming and color temperature settings. This allows users of the space to achieve lighting most appropriate for their events. The total cost was \$14,776.44. We estimate that we currently use about 44,000 kWh per year to light our church at a cost of about \$4000. With LED lights, we would reduce the electricity

needed for lighting by 75% and save about \$3000 per year. We are also lowering our carbon footprint in support of the Seventh Principle and the Environmental Justice initiative.

May, 2023 (expected) – **Installation of Ray Schinhofen Solar Array.** At the 2022 Earth Day service we kicked off a fund drive to install solar panels on the roof of the Mason Wing. Congregants generously contributed over \$30,000 of the projected ???? cost. The array is expected to provide about a third of the church's annual electrical energy, again reducing our carbon footprint.

July, 2023 (expected) – **Installation of MERV 13 Equivalent Air Filters for the Sanctuary and Undercroft.** While our HEPA and C-R box units purify the air in their vicinity, the new SecureAire filters will reduce harmful air particles throughout the Sanctuary and Undercroft.

Future Programming

August 24-25, 2023, ***Nature of Place Symposium: Faith and the Environment***
Our own Rev. Kate R. Walker will give a talk and participate in a panel discussion at Phipps Conservatory as part of this symposium. Phipps wrote to her "We are encouraged and inspired by the Unitarian recognition of environmental impact, climate justice, and harmonious coexistence with the wild world; and the church's observance is acutely relevant to the theme of our symposium this year. The symposium is focused on the complexity of how human worldviews impact our relationship with nature.

September 14, **Community Program - Mark Dixon, Environmental Activist and Award-winning Filmmaker,** Mark Dixon, local environmental activist and filmmaker, will give a presentation on Zoom, open to the Pittsburgh Community, about Environmental Justice. He will highlight air quality but include other justice issues. Mark received recognition for his clean air advocacy when named GASP's (Group Against Smog and Pollution) Champion for Healthy Air in 2017 (along with Dr. Deborah Gentile). The program will be open to the community. Mark is currently working on a new film entitled, "Inversion: The Unfinished Business of Pittsburgh's Air."
(<https://inversiondoc.com/>)

TBA. **Climate Healing Workshop, TBA - The Work That Reconnects'** (from Joanna Macy resources) with Rev. Stephanie Gannon and Kirsi Jansa.
Our Leaders: Rev. Stephanie Gannon is the Affiliated Community Minister at First Church. She trained as a Work That Reconnects facilitator in 2020. Kirsi Jansa is a climate guide and communicator and Tara Rokpa Training healing relaxation course

leader. She has studied with The Work That Reconnects and Active Hope network for many years.

Communications

The EJAT and other groups in the congregation made a good start on learning not only about the very harmful effects of industrial air pollution on people's lives especially in the Mon Valley but also in learning how to help. You can see from this report how the early part of the year was spent educating ourselves and searching for where and how First UU members could plug in. With the partnership of VCAN and participation in other area groups, EJAT is in a better position to offer programs, experiences and opportunities for advocacy. We are also proud of our congregation's commitments to making our church a much more sustainable and healthier place to gather.

Participation by the congregation was often low. Part of the problem was that programs began to emerge late in our calendar year, giving us a short leash on publicity. We learned that it is sometimes difficult to schedule around other church events, as well. We realize that more advance notice will be very helpful with communication. However, some of the activities like the CCW Tours and the City Council meetings are opportunities presented by others without much advanced warning so an effective way to communicate these kinds of opportunities would be beneficial.

It is hoped that the congregation as a whole will renew its commitment to a Churchwide Environmental Justice initiative and prioritize attending programs or being involved in some other way. New EJAT members will be welcomed.

- Bob Mitchell, Becky Studer, Sonia Wellington

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. First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh was one of the founding members of PIIN over 22 years ago. **The PIIN Board meets monthly on zoom the 2nd Thursday, 7-8:30 p.m. Any interested First Church member or friend is encouraged to attend PIIN Board meetings.** For information about PIIN or a link to the Board meeting, contact Karen Burns Rutigliano or Sandy Woolley.

Are you concerned about Justice in Pittsburgh area, but perhaps unable to march in rallies or travel to Harrisburg? PIIN has a unique role. Working with other organizations, PIIN can add a moral voice to support justice issues. PIIN needs your support. **Consider**

becoming a regular donor to PIIN. To donate, go to PIIN's website: PIINPA.org. PIIN is thrilled to have hired Leah Kazak as a community organizer, to coordinate the efforts of volunteers. Additional financial support will allow PIIN to hire additional staff.

Would you like to discuss books with a multi-racial, multi-faith group? Join PIIN's ongoing Book Study Group that is currently discussing, White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity by Robert P. Jones. Books discussed in the past include: 1) Caste by Isabel Wilkerson, 2) The Sum of Us by Heather McGhee, and 3) Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class.

An important focus of PIIN in the spring 2023 has been to identify the justice issues that PIIN congregations/organizations want to work on together. A team of First UU members conducted 1-1 meetings with other members to discern First UU priorities. These 1-1s were conducted by Joan Adibi, Linda Fleming, Laura Gallagher, Joan Harvey, Bob Mitchell, Susan Oerkvitz, Karen Rutigliano, and Sandy Woolley. On April 30, PIIN held an Issues Assembly to choose PIIN's top priorities for the coming year based the listening campaigns of all the congregations. **The top issues selected are: 1) Criminal Justice Reform, including a focus on the Allegheny County Jail, 2) Gun violence, and tied for 3) Environmental Justice and Educational Justice.** For each issue PIIN will partner with other organizations to increase our power, for example, Alliance for Police Accountability (APA), CeaseFirePA, and Great Public Schools (GPS). **Hopefully, 1st UU can help lead in the area of Environmental Justice.**

One PIIN focus in the last two years has been Criminal Justice Reform. Partnering with West End Power, PIIN has developed the Colorful Backgrounds EXPO program to help citizens returning from incarceration, including a twelve-week course and monthly support group meetings. To date, there have been 36 EXPO graduates and 9 more currently enrolled. PIIN is also part of the APA group attending monthly ACJ Review Board meetings, demanding changes including the firing of the Warden.

Second, PIIN has continued a focus on voter engagement. This campaign, called the Integrated Voter Engagement, has included registering voters and canvassing. Becky Studer has helped coordinate PIIN and 1st UU efforts.

Third, PIIN is working to support our public schools, which are under attack by conservatives. Public schools are essential for our democracy. They educate all children whatever issues students bring with them to school. Sandy Woolley is co-chairing the PIIN's Education Task Force, which is working with Great Public School Pittsburgh (GPS) to create Community Schools, which are full-service schools to support families

and their neighborhoods. Nine community schools have been created to date in the Pittsburgh Public School District.

First Church's continued support of PIIN is critical, both our organizational support and that of individuals members sharing of our treasure and talents.

Submitted by:

- *Sandy Woolley and Karen Burns Rutigliano*

Share the Plate

We are so joyful to be able to report that – with the congregation's help and generosity – the newly developed First UU "Share the Plate" STP program is going wonderfully! We have a robust program of bounteousness that reflects our shared values as a congregation! The SHP team (Karen Burns Rutigliano, Mary Denison, Ebe Emmons and Rev. Kate) have adapted an approach that brings a deeper knowledge about the charities we support together, 50/50, from our Sunday collections with 50% going to the month's designated charity and 50% going to First UU, unless otherwise designated. (This does not affect payments made in fulfillment of annual pledges).

Respecting our longer-term partnerships with several charities that we consider First UU "core" – the first six STPs we featured were: Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN), Habitat for Humanity Pittsburgh, East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM), Khasi Hills, UU Justice PA and the UUA denomination's UU Service Committee (UUSC) – we featured them from September-December '22 and January/February of 2023. We now have added the opportunity to learn about new charities and vote and select among them, together, for the other annual Share the Plate causes.

In January/February 2023, the congregation first nominated 15 charities. Then, with an explanatory note about their missions, we were all given the opportunity to vote on them with the six receiving the most votes becoming our March-August 2023 STP charities. The winners for this round were: Reading Ready Pittsburgh, CeaseFire PA, Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers of Pittsburgh Co-op, TransYOUning, Tree Pittsburgh, and Planned Parenthood of Western PA. And, in July/August, you will again be given the opportunity to nominate your special charities and we will vote for six again, interspersing them throughout the next year, with the core charities.

We are proud to report that you all have responded warmly in support of Share the Plate! The share that has gone to the eight charities between September and March has been an inspiring nearly \$7,000!

We thank you so very much! And we would welcome additional members to our committee!

Respectfully,

Ebe Emmons, Mary Denison, Karen Burns Rutigliano

Racial Justice Task Force

2022 was a very busy and productive year for the Racial Justice Task Force. Our charter continues to be to work 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. The Racial Justice Task Force continued to meet monthly throughout 2022, with separate meetings for a smaller sub-groups working on specific issues/items. Our monthly meetings were a combination of education, partnership building, personal reflections and ways to build awareness and action around social justice work at First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh.

After several successful book clubs in 2021 the Racial Justice Task Force continued to lead three more groups on the book "Waking Up White" as well as one on the book, "My Grandmother's Hands". We petitioned for, and were granted, funds for members of the congregation to attend Jubilee 3 anti-racism trainings, including being able to cover care giving expenses.

Many of our members once again attended the Pittsburgh Racial Justice and Town Hall, an annual event featuring workshops and speakers covering so much of the interdisciplinary facets of social justice work here in Pittsburgh and beyond. As appropriate, we spread our attendance to many different workshops so the entire group could benefit from the take-aways and learnings.

We continued to build support and partnership both inside and outside our First U community. These partnerships included (but were not limited to) the First Unitarian Environmental Justice Initiative, the Bethel AME Reparations group, Alliance for Police Accountability (APA), Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN) and UUA Justice.

In 2022, a lot of our work was focused around discussion, education and reflection on whether or not First U was ready to pass the 8th Principle. This was the culmination of the previous years' work by the RJTF and many others at our congregation. This work included presenting to as many affinity and focus groups as we could, capturing video testimonials from members of our congregation, creating an 8th Principle webpage with educational resources, having multiple articles and reflections in the weekly newsletter and by separate email (by us and by Rev. Kate) and having countless one on one conversations with our community both in person and virtually. We are beyond proud to report the 8th Principle passed with an overwhelming majority at a special congregational vote in October 2022.

As we said throughout our work to pass the 8th Principle, passing this is really just where the work begins for First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh. We look forward to building a stronger and more resilient Racial Justice Task Force in 2023 and truly embodying the 8th Principle as we grow together into beloved community.

The Racial Justice Task Force is currently revamping their meeting schedule for 2023. For more information, to view past meeting minutes, or if you have any questions, please contact them at racialjustice@first-unitarian-pgh.com

- *Sonia Wellington*

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.uujusticepa.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

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: 2022-2023

Members

Jim Pashek, Brian Rohleder, Bob Mitchell, Bill Collinge, Martin Schmidt (chair)

Nick Izzo (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 2022 – 2023

1. LED Lighting. We have replaced our energy inefficient fluorescent and incandescent lights with energy efficient LED lights.
2. Dishwasher. The commercial dishwasher in the kitchen was replaced. The new dishwasher was installed in June 2022 and is working well.
3. Downspouts. Two downspouts that were not functioning properly and causing water damage to the exterior and interior walls have been replaced.
4. Roof repair. The flat roof above the Mason Wing and Schweitzer room was leaking. We hired a well-respected commercial roofer, Burns and Scalo, to patch 3 problem areas in the roof. That work has been completed.
5. Memorial Garden Improvements. A diseased tree was removed from the Memorial Garden. A replacement tree is being selected. Sidewalk pavement sections that had lifted creating a trip hazard were removed and replaced.
6. Undercroft Pipe Cover. Degraded pipe cover in the Undercroft Gallery was replaced with a new stained wood cover.

On-Going and Future 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. Installation was delayed while the Mason Wing roof was repaired. Installation is now scheduled for May 2023.

2. Keys and Locks. We are working with the Safety committee to change and re-key our locks to enhance building security. We will also install a "KnoxBox" to allow emergency access to the church by first responders.
3. Window trim paint. The minister's office windows will be repainted.



Diseased tree



Tree removed



Trip hazard



New concrete



Torn water pipe access cover



New water pipe access cover



Water ponding and leaking from flat roof over Schweitzer room



Roof repaired



Downspout not connected to gutter causing water damage to exterior and interior walls



New downspouts installed



New dishwasher installed

Respectfully submitted,
-Martin Schmidt
Building Committee Chair

Program Endowments

Campus Ministry

The Campus Ministry Endowment extends the ministry of the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh to local universities and colleges.

Here is a description of our committee's activity in 2022:

Beginning balance: \$6,382.04

Grant #1 was a \$6000 request by Erica Shadowsong to fund the campus ministry outreach worker for the 22-23 academic year. This was our only grant approval of the year.

Ending balance: \$382.04

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).

We initially allocated \$800 to Erica Shadowsong to employ an RE assistant. We then allocated another \$150 for a continuation of the same project, and then another \$400.

There was \$1,378.32 to award this year, and we allocated a total of \$1,350, so there was \$28.32 remaining.

-Jamie Kuning

Music

Here are the projects funded by the Music Endowment in 2022:

Khasi Hills \$500.00 UU Community Singers

\$600.00 UU Community Singers

\$535.00 UU Community Singers

\$820.00 Pittsburgh Cluster Choir

\$875.00 Christmas Eve Choir

\$1,400.00 First U Dance Choir \$150.00

The total spent comes to \$4,880.00. The amount we had to spend was \$5,267.23. The projects were all within the guidelines for use of the funds.

- Katherine M. Barley

Social Justice

Committee members in 2022: Irma Tani (term expires 12/2022) Chair, Jean Schmidt (term expires 12/2023), Jenn Layman (term expires 12/2024); ex official members Kyle Gracey (Treasurer), 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 consider the suitability of each application to the guidelines of the Endowment. We weigh 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 2022:

- 05/10/2022: \$472.17 to Kyle Gracey to support payment of our congregation's dues to PIIN.
- 08/06/2022: \$550 to Jean Schmidt for registration fees at \$170 per person for up to three people to support The Racial Justice Task Force's participation in The Jubilee-3 Antiracism Training, a full weekend of online training on August 19-21, 2022 led by gifted UUs of color. Ten individuals from our congregation have already completed this training. Only \$170 was spent.
- 09/15/2022: \$1200 to Rebecca Studer to support Environmental Justice's efforts to educate the congregation in the church's year-long effort in environmental justice. The money will be used to support workshop costs of meals for workshop attendees and speaker fees. Funds have not been used.
- 09/18/2022: \$750 to Madeline Darnell for UU The Vote's letter-writing effort in coordination with Vote Forward to send hand-written letters about the importance of voting in this election to underrepresented voters. The goal is to send 750 letters on October 29. Only \$680 was spent.
- 10/09/2022: \$1000 to Shelley Ross for the Holiday Toy and Mitten Drive for the Matilda Theiss Health Center in Pittsburgh's Hill District to buy Giant Eagle gift cards. The congregation's donation of toys and mittens/hats will continue and part of the Giant Eagle gift cards will be distributed to homebound seniors.
- 10/11/2022: \$1500 to Kris Rust to help defray the cost of producing and performing the 2023 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. The \$1500 will be paid out when the event is completed.
- Summary of funds used in 2022
- *Annual Draw* available to this committee on 1/1/2022: \$10,035.25
- *Total funds awarded:*
5,472.17
Awards Paid Out: $\$472.17 + 170 + 680 + 1000 =$
2,322.17
Current Balance: $\$10,035.25 - 2322.17 =$
7,713.08

- Irma Taní

Marketing and Communications

Committee members: Rob Schwartz, Nancy Latimer, Michael Safran, Maria Lauro, Mark Whittaker

Here are the projects undertaken by the marketing committee between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023:

- Prepared and distributed a press release about Rev. Kate's installation.
- Updated the church Facebook page with information about special holiday events including the solstice service and the Christmas Eve service.
- Updated the church website with information about the Alternative Gift Market.
- Updated the church website with information about the Eighth Principle.
- Updated the church website with information about making annual pledges.
- Updated the church promotional video to replace comments by Rev. Connie with comments by Rev. Kate.
- Prepared website promotions for Membership Month, including Facebook page updates, a Facebook advertising campaign that reached 4,041 local Facebook users. The Facebook ads generated 72 clicks to the church website.

Website statistics (April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023): Traffic to first-unitarian-pgh.org increased year over year. There were 12,940 users on the website, up 22 percent from the same period the previous year.

There were 20,216 sessions (visits) to the website, up 25.8 percent, and there were 50,142 page views, up 28.4 percent.

- *Mark Whittaker*

Ombuds Officer

I have served as Ombuds Officer since June of 2019, when I took over the role from Allison Schwartz. At the time I was a new Board Member, and in Feb. of 2021 I stepped off the Board, but continued in the Ombudsman role.

In the transitions between our Interim Ministry and the search and call of Rev. Kate, I received inquiries about all sorts of issues about who was in charge of such questions as who was the appropriate person to ask about:

- how to help with gardening at church
- who to speak to about planning a special service
- what is planned for what date
- how to get something listed in the newsletter
- how folks from other UU groups locally or nationally could get their message to our congregants
- what is xyz committee working on (e.g. Racial Justice TF, Environmental Justice TF).

Many of these questions went back to a Board member or to the minister, if I could not answer myself.

During this past year questions are much diminished as the church has reorganized in many ways under the leadership of Rev Kate, the current Board.

Looking ahead, it may not be necessary to have an ombudsman, as a new system of a Program Council seems likely to include lay leaders who would be in charge of overseeing

Connect, Inspire, Serve and Learn mission areas, and whose contact information would be readily available to congregants to answer questions.

I will say there have been hardly any inquiries in the past year along the lines of complaints or criticisms! Good!

- **Ebe Emmons**

Personnel

Members: Mary Denison, Bill Schuetz, Jane MacLeod, Sue Oerkvitz; Kate Walker
Chair: Mary Denison

Personnel Committee at First Unitarian supports and advises, our minister, Reverend Walker in regards to any personnel concerns. Meeting monthly, we discuss any personnel issues, concerns, or policy questions that may be presented.

A major portion of the Personnel Committee's energies since our last report has been efforts towards updating the First Unitarian Personnel Manual to include the UUA's recommendations / sample manual content. It is the goal of the committee to finish this project by June 2023. At that point a draft of the updated, proposed Personnel Manual will be submitted to the BOT for approval.

- **Mary Denison**

Safety

Mission

Our committee is charged with overseeing the safety and security domain at our church. 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, and providing.

Membership and Meetings

Kirk Striebich is the current Chairperson, and Susan Whittaker and Rob Masterson are Members. We continue to be open to new members. 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 our primary focus was researching and fulfilling safety items/services awarded to us by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for the Non-Profit Security Grant in 2022. We were delayed significantly from obtaining most of the items based on shortages of equipment from suppliers but look forward to 2023 to finally complete purchase of the safety items. This includes the first purchase for the church under the grant which is the Knox box used by Pittsburgh Fire Bureau.

Members have been working with staff in revamping the evacuation procedures to hopefully culminate in having our first fire drill in 2023.

Members have been working with Rev. Kate on some areas of concern and needing attention throughout the year, fulfilling our duties to service as a useful resource to mitigate safety or security concerns throughout the year.

In 2023, we were again approved into the Faith-based Information Sharing and Analysis Organization for another year (FB-ISA), a trusted partner at the center of a national network of faith-based.

Our April 2023 meeting will reset our agenda for the rest of the year to address continuing items but also incorporate Rev. Kate's areas of focus for the committee as well.

- **Kirk Striebich**

Stewardship

Although the stewardship committee is working to broaden its focus, the biggest area of concentration continues to be the budget drive for annual operating expenses. This process takes place in the fall to secure funding for the following calendar year. As of April, the stewardship committee raised \$418,147 from 186 pledges for the operating budget. This year we created the first rollover pledging process.

Using the rollover process, the committee determines a standard increase needed to meet the budget for the year. Past donors received a letter stating their suggested pledge amount. If the donor chooses to accept the suggested pledge amount, there is nothing to do. If the donor wants to change the suggested amount (either up or down), that could be done either using the online form or a paper pledge card. The advantage to this process is that donors have no additional work to do and the committee does not need to track down the people who have not yet responded. Congregational response to the rollover process has been positive.

The second change to this process was related to outreach. For a third of the congregation the committee performed personal outreach, either by phone or in person. The intent of this outreach was to make a connection, learn more about the member's relationship to the church, and answer any questions, especially related to the new pledging process. This outreach was specifically not a solicitation. Each year a different group of people will receive personal outreach so that the entire congregation will be able to be a part of this process.

As part of ongoing development, we have been reviewing the Cornerstones of Effective Stewardship training offered by the UUA. We have used questions raised during this training to stimulate discussion during our committee meetings.

Additionally, the committee is in the early stages of developing a planned giving program to encourage members and friends to consider the church as part of their legacy in their estate planning.

- *María Lauro, Al Schwartz*

Vision, Identity, and Mission (VIM) Committee

A. Charter

A revised VIM charter was approved at the December 2022 Board meeting. The VIM Committee was established by the First Unitarian Church Board of Trustees in 2017 to take the lead on two major Board functions:

- Discernment of First Unitarian Church Identity, Mission, and Vision
- Strategic Planning

Key changes in the VIM charter are as follows:

- The Open Question discernment process will occur once per year rather than twice.
- The discernment process can include a survey or other measures as appropriate, instead of or in addition to cottage meetings.
- The Committee on Shared Ministry (COSM) will assist in conducting cottage meetings or other discernment processes. This role was previously fulfilled by the now disbanded Healthy Congregations Collaborative (HCC).

B. Survey

The VIM Committee, in coordination with the Board, decided that the primary discernment process in 2023 would be a survey rather than cottage meetings. This decision was driven in part by the challenge of restarting VIM activities after their suspension during the period of interim ministry.

The questions in the VIM survey were developed in January and February. The survey was posted on February 27 and closed on March 21.

B.1 Overview of survey response demographics

There were 55 total participants of whom 54 responded to at least one of the demographic questions. Based on the demographic responses, three key findings emerge:

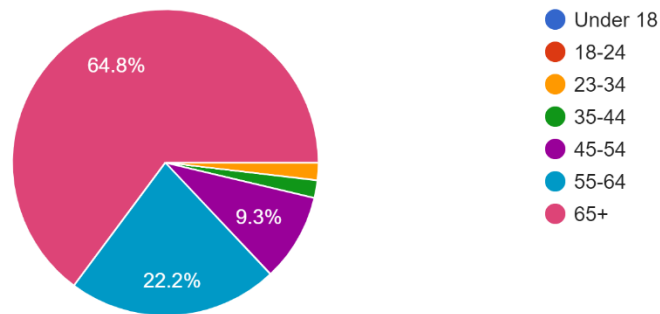
- a) Most respondents are relatively old – 65% above age 65.
- b) Respondents are predominantly female (71%).
- c) Relatively few newer members (five years or less) responded.

Below are more details about these demographic categories.

- a) The age distribution of respondents is heavily skewed toward older members. 35 of 54 (65%) are 65 or older. 47 of 54 (87%) are 55 or older.

What is your age?

54 responses



b) The respondents are predominantly female. Of the 52 who reported a binary gender identity, 37 (71%) are female.

What is your gender identity?

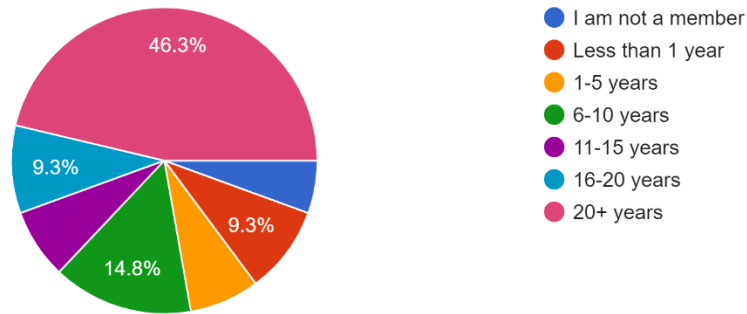
54 responses



c) Most respondents (78%) have been members for six years or more – 42 of 54. Nine have been members 5 years or less, including five less than one year. See figure below.

How long have you been a member of First Unitarian?

54 responses



B.2 Level of Interest in the Priorities of the most recent (2019-2022) Strategic Plan: Welcoming and Partnership

The survey asked specifically about the current level of interest/support for the two priorities from the most recent 3-year Strategic Plan that was completed in May 2019 for the years 2019-2022. The priorities were:

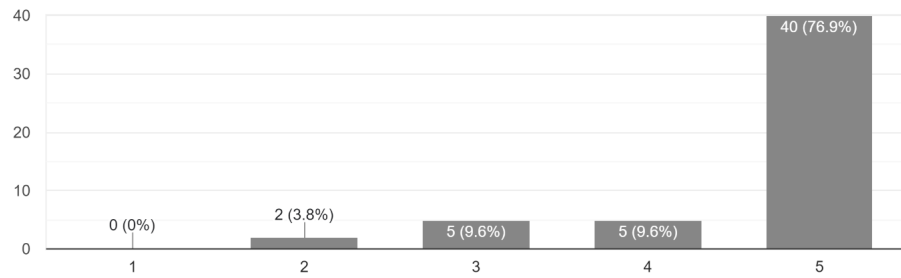
1. Create a strong sense of BELONGING for ALL who enter our doors.
2. Explore paths to the formation of a long-lasting and meaningful FIRST UNITARIAN / COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP.

The level of interest/support is reported below:

1. What is your level of interest in retaining the priority for creating a strong sense of belonging?

87% rated their interest at 4 or 5 out of 5, including 77% at 5. The complete results are shown below.

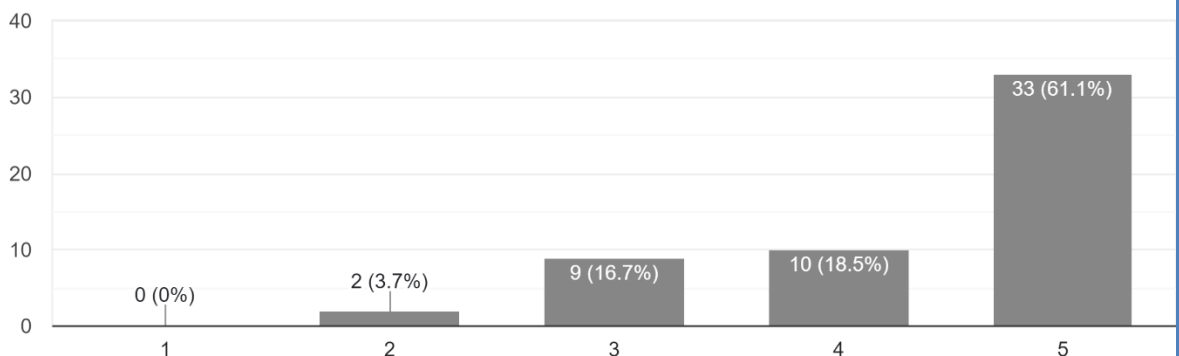
A priority from our most recent 2019-2022 strategic plan is to "Create a strong sense of BELONGING for ALL who enter our doors". It was difficult to pu...e priority for creating a strong sense of belonging?
52 responses



2. What is your level of interest in retaining the priority for a community partnership?

80% rated their interest at 4 or 5 out of 5, including 61% at 5. The complete results are shown below.

A priority from our most recent 2019-2022 strategic plan is to "Explore paths to the formation of a long-lasting and meaningful FIRST UNITARIAN / COM...aining the priority for a community partnership?
54 responses



B.3 Desired Changes and Accomplishments Over the Next Three Years

The survey posed two questions about congregant priorities going forward. The questions were open-ended; as the survey stated:

“Priorities could fall under the following categories. But feel free to include anything that's important to you, including things we don't have at our church today: music, arts, worship, staff, intergenerational activities, adult faith development, religious education for children and youth, family nights, building and grounds, community projects, social justice, climate justice, covenant groups, pastoral care, finances and fundraising.”

B.3.1 Picture our church in 3 years. What's the most significant change you want people to notice?

The responses are aggregated below into 5 categories as indicated. The categories are listed in order of the number of responses for each in parentheses. More specific response groupings are listed for each category, again with the number of responses.

More diverse and younger (24)

- Have more diversity including race, age, and gender identity (15)
- Have a younger congregation (9)

More growth and activity (17)

- Have a larger congregation (12)
- Be bustling with activity (5)

Have bigger impact in community through partnering, justice work and outreach (17)

- Partnering (6)
- Justice work and advocacy (6)
- Outreach (2)
- Have an impact (2)

Grow Lifespan Religious Education participation and programming (16)

- Larger Religious Education participation with more families (8)
- More campus, youth and young adult activities (6)
- More adult faith development offerings (2)

Provide a nourishing, welcoming, joyful experience for congregants and visitors (15)

- Experience joy and a sense of community building (6)
- Be welcoming and inclusive (3)
- Be a spiritual home with self-care (3)
- Have even better music and larger choir(s) (2)

B.3.2 Name up to 3 things you most want our church to accomplish over the next 3 years.

Again, the responses are aggregated into categories, which are listed in order of the number of responses. More specific response groupings are listed for each category.

Have bigger impact in community through partnering, justice work and outreach (52)

- Strengthen social justice work (23)
- Partner with churches and other justice organizations (16)
- Establish/expand community outreach including universities (6)
- Generally, have a bigger impact in the community (5)

Grow in size and dimensions of diversity (24)

- Generally, grow and have high service attendance (12)
- Increase diversity including race, age, LGBTQ+, and ideological viewpoints (12)

Provide a nourishing, welcoming, joyful experience for congregants and visitors (20)

- Provide self-care and a spiritual home (8)
- Be welcoming and inclusive (5)
- Build on the music program and expand the choir (4)
- Cultivate more joy with fun activities (3)

Grow Lifespan Religious Education participation and programming (18)

- Attract young families and grow Religious Education (9)
- Expand campus, youth and young adult programming (6)
- Expand adult faith development offerings (3)

Improve church processes (7)

- Better communication (5)
- Strengthen leadership development (2)

B.4 Ways the Church Could Help Congregants Find Truth and Meaning, Cultivate Deeper Relationships and Make a Difference in the Community

The survey included these three open-ended questions about what (more) the church could do to help in the following ways:

1. What could First Unitarian do (or do more of) to help you with your personal search for truth and meaning in your life?
2. What could First Unitarian do to help you deepen your relationships within the Church?

3. What could First Unitarian do to help you connect and act on making a difference in the community?

These questions are based on information learned during the Ministerial Search process. Specifically, they address the three primary church goals identified in the Final Survey Report.

General aggregated responses are listed below for the first two questions. They have not yet been analyzed in detail. Responses to the third question have been analyzed in detail as in section B.3.

B.4.1 What could First Unitarian do (or do more of) to help you with your personal search for truth and meaning in your life?

- Have more internal discussion/book groups
- Have outreach events – for example, bringing back the Forum

B.4.2 What could First Unitarian do to help you deepen your relationships within the Church?

- More internal “fun” activities
- More small group activities in addition to covenant groups

B.4.3 What could First Unitarian do to help you connect and act on making a difference in the community?

Improve communications, be more organized with unified actions (25)

- Make it more straightforward to volunteer for specific actions (11)
- Improve communications so people know what’s going on (8)
- Identify and organize group activities (4)
- Organize workshops (2)

Partner with and support social justice organizations (15)

Be more inclusive for those with challenges to physical participation (6)

Do outreach through church events open to the community (4)

C. Other Discernment Efforts

In addition to the survey described above, the VIM Committee is exploring two additional discernment efforts, both probably using a cottage meeting approach. The two efforts are focused on two groups of congregants:

- Religious Education families
- Young adults and visitors

There is limited overlap right now between the Religious Education family and new member (2022-current) categories. There is substantial overlap between the Religious Education family and visitor categories (significant number of visiting families with young children who have not yet converted to membership status).

VIM members Joan Harvey and Jean Schmidt have been in conversation with Erica Shadowsong about doing cottage meeting discernment with Religious Education families (both members and visitors) and they have developed a draft of proposed questions. However, these cottage meetings have not been scheduled yet. There was a recent Religious Education brunch intended to bring together Religious Education families and teachers, so everyone could begin to connect and get to know each other, as a prelude to VIM cottage meetings, but that ended up being attended almost entirely by teachers with very few RE families. We hope to find out from Erica if she would like us to proceed with VIM cottage meetings for this demographic (that is one way to get people connecting and meeting each other) before summer and the end of Religious Education classes.

There is also significant overlap between the visitor and young adult (age 18-35) categories, and between the new member and young adult categories. We believe the young adults should be a target for discernment. Joan, Jean and Erica had hoped that the new young adult coordinators would begin to pull that cohort together and get them connecting with each other, as a prelude to VIM cottage meetings. But now Kelly Regan is the only person in that position and she is understandably going to focus on college-age youth for the time being. One challenge to starting VIM cottage meeting discernments with this young adult demographic is we don't have a comprehensive list of people by age. Kelly has started to work on this with help from Membership.

D. Strategic Plan Development

The goal is to produce an updated Strategic Plan by the end of May. The centerpiece of the plan is the priorities that emerge from the discernment process – in this case, from analysis of the online survey.

Priorities of the Church

The survey results support one new goal; and the continuation of one of the two priorities from the 2019-2022 strategic plan, with some refinement:

1. DIVERSIFY and GROW our MEMBERSHIP. Of the two parts of this goal, diversity was slightly more popular than growth. Key areas of diversity that were mentioned include, in descending order: age, more children and families, race, and LGBTQ+ identities.

2. Explore paths to the formation of a long-lasting and meaningful FIRST UNITARIAN / COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE.

The priority to establish a community partnership also has strong support. In comparison to the previous strategic plan, there is a greater emphasis on community partnerships that advance social justice. The most common areas of justice mentioned were racial justice and environmental justice.

Two other strong themes emerge from survey responses:

- A. Improve communication, organization and coordination.
- B. Organize more church events, both internal and external. Internal events foster a sense of being in community. Outward-facing events, such as the Forum, attract like-minded people who might become partners or members.

Theme A supports the social justice partnership priority but may be a priority in its own right. Theme B can support membership diversity and growth, especially external events. But again, it could be a separate priority.