

# Count Your Blessings

First Unitarian Church

*Count Your Blessings*



Annual Report 2026

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis

**First Unitarian Church of St. Louis**  
**2026 Annual Report**  
**Table of Contents**

<b>Agenda</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>May 18, 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2025/2026 Policy Board Roster</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2025/2026 Church Council Roster</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Minister’s Report</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Minister of Congregational Life Report</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Church Policy Board President’s Report</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Church Council Chair Report</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Nominating and Leadership Development Report</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Church Treasurer’s Report</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Special Gifts and Bequests</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Secretary’s Report</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Music Report</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Administrator’s Report</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Policy Board Committees</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Finance and Stewardship Cluster Reports</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Facilities Cluster Reports</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Growth and Engagement Cluster Reports</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Programming Cluster Reports</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Outreach and Social Action Cluster Reports</b>	<b>39</b>

**2025-2026 Annual Meeting Agenda Sunday, May 17, 2026 held in person and online via  
Zoom (originated within the city limits of St. Louis, MO) of the  
First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, Mo  
First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, a corporation**

Call to Order and Welcome	Kathy Wilke, President
Opening Words	Rev. Kim Mason
Reading of the Congregational Covenant	Chris Kocher
Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting	Sidney Watson, Church Secretary
President's Report & Remarks	Kathy Wilke
Minister's Report	Rev. Kim Mason
Church Treasurer's & Finance Report and Budget Presentation	Margaret Weck, Treasurer Kathy Wire, Finance Cluster Coordinator

**To consider whether to adopt Acknowledgement of the Native People Who Were Here Before Us as a statement of conscience.**

*We acknowledge the fact that our Church occupies what was once the home of the [Osage Nation](#), [Otoe-Missouria](#), [Kickapoo](#), [Quapaw](#), [Ho-Chunk](#), [Miami](#), [Illini Confederacy](#) and other tribes who were unjustly removed and who still continue to face injustice today. We stand in solidarity with them, and we celebrate their continued resilience. To make this a meaningful expression of our concern for Native People, we will make an annual donation to a Native cause and continue to educate ourselves about our Native neighbors and the struggles they continue to face.*

Kathy Wilke

Presentation of the Melanie & Anthony Fathman and William W. Ross Awards	
	Kathy Wilke

Recognition of Officers, Trustees and other Leadership from past Church year

To consider and vote upon the proposed slate for the Policy Board and Church Council	Steve Wilke, Nominating and Leadership Development Committee
--	--

Remarks from New Board President	Sidney Watson
----------------------------------	---------------

Closing Words	Rev. Kim Mason
---------------	----------------

Adjournment	Kathy Wilke
-------------	-------------

\*\*\*\*\*

**First Unitarian Church of St. Louis**  
**2024-2025 Annual Meeting**  
**May 18, 2025**  
**held online via Zoom (originated within the city limits of St. Louis, MO)**  
**Minutes**

**The meeting was called to order by President Chuck Eby at 11:15 am.**

Chuck welcomed the congregation. Lynn Hunt counted the attendees and confirmed that a quorum of at least 51 members was present.

**Opening words** were offered by **Rev. Kim Mason**.

**Vice President Larry Dusenbery** read the **Congregational Covenant**.

**Secretary Sidney Watson** directed members to the **Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting, which are** included in the Annual Report. She requested a motion to dispense with reading the minutes and approve them. **Tom Finan moved, and Margaret Weck seconded. The motion passed.**

**President's Report and Remarks**

President Chuck Eby's full report is included in the Annual Report. In his remarks, Chuck reviewed the Policy Board's major activities during the 2024-2025 church year, including the August Board-Council Retreat, the November start of vision imagery sessions, Rev. Kim's sabbatical from January to April, and Rev. Kim's return in May, and a tornado hitting the CWE.

President Chuck also highlighted both the challenges and opportunities facing the church. Over the last year, our challenges included increased operating costs for the building and staff, a leadership staff opening in RE, an old building with maintenance and repair needs, and hitting plateaus in membership numbers and pledges. The opportunities ahead for the new church year include new rental income, the current search for a new Director of Congregational Life, expanding social action and community outreach, adoption of a Vision statement, and a strong slate of church officers.

**Minister's Report and Remarks**

**Rev. Kim Mason** referred members to her full report included in the Annual Report. Her remarks highlighted and thanked a few of those who sustained the church this year. Thanks to the Worship Committee who did so much during the Sabbatical to keep the worship community strong and vibrant. Thanks to the Sabbatical Committee who recruited Rev. Sabrina and communicated with everyone during the process leading up to and during the Sabbatical. Thanks to the Policy Board for keeping the policy working while she was away on sabbatical. Thanks to the Care and Concerns Team for taking care of us all. Thanks to Lynn Hunt who took on extra work, including staff supervision

Rev. Kim noted that taking a sabbatical after five years feels like the end of one era and the beginning of a new one. The first five years were a time for getting to know each other so we are ready for the work we will now be doing. The work we did creating Vision and Mission statements is part of the foundation that positions us to do strategic planning for the future, to understand what our priorities are for ourselves, and our place in the community.

Rev. Kim concluded, “Coming back from sabbatical is a commitment to each other and moving forward. I look forward to our next five years together. Having been through COVID together, we know how to hold each other, and how to draw on our resources that keep us strong and open up possibilities. “Thank you for the past 6 years and the future 5, 6, however long.”

### **Church Treasurer’s and Finance Report and Budget Presentation**

**Treasurer Kathy Wilke** thanked Finance Committee chair Kathy Wire for putting together the 2025-2026 budget. Kathy Wire reported that financially we are doing “pretty well.” We had challenges planning for finances last year because we had unexpected expenses, including building costs and staff transitions. But “we did well.”

**Kathy Wire** provided a high-level overview of the 2025-2026 budget approved by the Policy Board.

Revenue totals \$615,253, with \$412,110 in pledges, \$30,000 in building use income, \$29,500 from contributions and fundraisers, \$2,000 from the Women’s Alliance, \$58,933 from the already approved 5% draw from the endowment, and a proposed additional draw of up to \$35,360, a 3% withdrawal that the Congregation will be asked to approve during the Annual Meeting.

Expenses total \$614,671, with \$286,493 for salaries and wages; \$70,423 for benefits and taxes; \$182,650 for routine building maintenance, inspections, and insurance; \$34,150 for administrative and staff miscellaneous expenses; \$22,950 for UUA and regional dues and fees.

Revenue highlights include increased income from a new building tenant who will be renting office space and using the kitchen during the week, and increased donations, although pledge income is flat. The Finance Committee is hoping to hold a fundraiser for the building fund. The Finance Committee and Board are asking the Congregation to approve an additional 3% withdrawal from the endowment to meet operating expenses during 2025-2026.

For expenses, the budget highlights include the salary and benefits for the new position of Director of Congregational Life, a 2% raise for existing staff, increased insurance premiums, and increased building costs for deferred maintenance and weather-related expenses, like unusual and high snow removal costs.

Finance Committee, Treasurer, and Building Committee project for 2025-2026 is to develop a better way to document and communicate the financial costs of our building work. The goals of the project are to clarify the flow and quantity of funding for non-operational building projects, including deferred maintenance costs and other costs that are bigger than one year’s operating budget can support. Currently we have about \$60,000 in the Building Reserve Fund to support capital building costs. The Finance Committee hopes to hold a fundraiser for building capital costs during 2025-2026.

They aren’t part of an annual budget that depends primarily on routine annual pledges. This will show a balance in the building fund, now about \$60,000. Plans are also to have a fundraiser to try to raise another \$25,000 for these capital expenses.

Chuck opened the floor for discussion:

Teresa Jay – Does the proposed budget include any building related expenses

Tom Finan – comment that looking for a consultant to give assessment of work that needs to be done on the building

Is withdrawal from the endowment for a new position and if so, will it be required for future years?

Answer: Actual increase in cost for new position is much less than the 3%; 3% is because we had a lot of expenses increase and we wanted flexibility to handle it. The 3% draw is not because of the new position. We do hope that the new position will result in an increase in membership and pledges that will help us avoid needing another extra draw from the endowment.

Less the \$10,000 increase in budget for the new position.

Board approved the budget

Kathy Wire, Finance Cluster Coordinator

**Motion** to consider and vote upon proposal for an additional withdrawal of up to 3% from the Church Endowment. **Motion by Kathy Wire. Second by Betty Neill. Motion passed**

### **Vision Statement**

**Chuck Eby** presented the proposed vision statement for First U that the Board developed through a series of small group interactive sessions and an online poll of the Congregation. It says: First Unitarian Church of St. Louis envisions a vital, spiritual congregation fostering an active and relevant presence in the community.

The Board would like Congregation to approve this as our first vision statement and incorporate it into the bylaws as Article III, Section 3.

President Chuck opened the floor for discussion. Several positive comments were posted to the Zoom chat.

**Motion** to accept the vision statement and add it to the bylaws. **Motion from Chuck Eby. Second from Mindy Allen. Motion passed.**

### **Presentation of the Melanie & Anthony Fathman and William W. Ross Awards**

**Policy Board President Chuck Eby** presented the **William W. Ross Award** to **Sue Herzberg** for her leadership over the years with events like the Unfish Fry, teaching in Religious Education and serving on the Board (one term as president).

Chuck Eby awarded **Steve Wilke** the **Melanie & Anthony Fathman Award** for his institutional leadership over many years, including Policy Board President, Nominating Committee and Religious Education participation.

**Steve Wilke**, chair of the **Nominating and Leadership Development Committee**, presented the following slate to the Congregation:

**Policy Board (year in parentheses indicates end of term)**

**Board President** – Kathy Wilke (2026)

**Vice President** – Chris Kocher (2026)

**Secretary** – Sidney Watson (2026)

**Treasurer** – Margaret Weck (2026)

**Trustee-** Carl Bassi (2028)

**Trustee-** Lisa Ross (2028)

**Trustee-** Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant (2028)

**Trustee-** Chris Peterson (2028)

**Trustee-** Mike Bray (2028)

**Church Council (year in parentheses indicates end of term)**

**Council Chair** – Cathy Rauch (2026)

**Cluster Coordinator, Stewardship Cluster** – Kathy Wire (2028)

**Cluster Coordinator, Outreach and Social Action** - Fran Hoffman (2028)

Motion to accept the slate proposed by NLDC. **Motion by Steve Wilke. Seconded by Becca McBride. Motion passed.**

Chuck Eby and Rev. Kim Mason recognized **Officers, Trustees, and other Church Leaders from the past year.** Those present were asked to rise and be recognized.

The Rev. Kim Mason offered **Closing Words.**

**The meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.**

**Motion by Jaime Laing. Emily Jaycox seconded. Passed.**

---

# Roster

## 2025/2026

---

### Church Officers

<b>Kathy Wilke</b>	<b>President</b>
<b>Chris Kocher</b>	<b>Vice President</b>
<b>Sidney Watson</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
<b>Margaret Weck</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>

### Policy Board Members

<b>Betty Neill</b>	<b>2026</b>
<b>Carl Bassi</b>	<b>2028</b>
<b>Chris Peterson</b>	<b>2028</b>
<b>Lisa Ross</b>	<b>2028</b>
<b>Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant</b>	<b>2028</b>
<b>Mike Bray</b>	<b>2028</b>

---

## Church Council Roster

### 2025/2026

---

### Church Council Members

<b>Cathy Rauch</b>	<b>Council Chair (2026)</b>
<b>Grace Munie</b>	<b>Programming Cluster (2026)</b>
<b>Kathy Wire</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Stewardship Cluster (2028)</b>
<b>Erin Milligan</b>	<b>Growth &amp; Engagement Cluster (2027)</b>
<b>Tom Finan</b>	<b>Facilities Cluster (2026)</b>
<b>Fran Hoffman</b>	<b>Outreach &amp; Social Action Cluster (2028)</b>

---

# Minister's Report

## Submitted by Rev. Kim Mason

---

Looking back, it was literally one year ago that an EF-3 tornado struck St. Louis. It's hard to believe how much recovery has happened in the year since, and how much remains to be done. Here at First Unitarian we spent many weeks and many hours of volunteer labor cleaning up the debris. It then took more weeks and more months to have the damage to the building repaired. Looking around the property now it looks mostly normal - only the torn up sidewalk remains.

The story of recovery is more complex than what we can see on the surface. Having addressed the immediate needs of power and access, it took weeks to discover less obvious instances of damage. Then as we made repairs, our bright and shiny (literally) repairs became a target for thieves. We were able to be generous with the funds we received from the UUA, and the portion we used on the building didn't cover all the damage we later identified. As humans living through a tornado, our bodies also remember. I see how our physical response to threatening weather has changed - we are much more likely to take it seriously, to stay home and seek shelter.

I see a similar story playing out across the city as well, of destruction and recovery, of not realizing the true impact until much later, of the memory living in our brains and our bodies. The tornado feels so long ago - and it was just yesterday. What have we learned in the intervening year that will help us survive in the future?

### *Nurturing Spirituality* **Worship**

We began the year with water communion on September 7th! We had several multigenerational services this year, including Water Communion, Bread

Communion, the All-Ages Christmas Pageant, Easter, Earth Day and RE Sunday. We also experimented some this year. We moved around the sanctuary and the Dodson Room with activities at stations. We brought a labyrinth in for a summer service in the chapel. Rev. Sabrina Trupia and I split a sermon between the two of us on the topic of Our Whole Lives and sexuality education. We created a rotation for the chalice lighting songs. We had pair and share activities and participated with interactive questions. We added stones and bubbles to joys and concerns. Our goal throughout has been to offer more ways for people to engage with the topic.

Average attendance this year was 97 people with 17 people online. That total is up over last year, and more people are attending in person.

Our Worship themes again came from the Soul Matters subscription service. This year the Connection Moments were planned a year out and coordinated with the monthly theme.

After a year and half with us our Organist and Music Director Allen Hoffman decided to retire. The Music Search Committee worked diligently and found someone to work with us over the summer and hopes to have something more permanent lined up for the fall.

The Choir performed two fantastic Music Sundays in addition to singing twice a month throughout the year. The Fall Music Sunday was a special treat when it coincided with Winter Solstice. And the Spring Music Sunday featured a really lovely new piece from member Chris Kocher. Several members also participate in solos throughout the year and the MUUses have really increased their presence in worship this year. We were also gifted with a gorgeous new

Steinway Grand piano. Everyone who plays it says what a truly magnificent instrument it is.

Coming off of sabbatical last spring, I was able to take less leave in the summer, which lined me up to spread out both my vacation and study leave throughout the year. This means that I will be preaching more in the summer than in previous years. I am preaching twice a month in June, July and August. Having Rev. Sabrina on staff also helps with the worship load as they preached this year and will do so in the future.

The Worship Committee has done a tremendous job this year of bringing quality services. They also helped pivot online the two Sundays that we canceled in person worship due to snow. Please take a moment to thank these thoughtful and creative folks who make worship possible each week.

Groups in the congregation also lead special holiday observances for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Winter Solstice, and ERDE has kept a regular practice of observing the cross-quarter holidays.

### **Religious Education**

*Children & Youth RE:* Rev. Sabrina Trupia came on staff in July 2025 as our Minister of Congregational Life, a role that is part-time lifespan RE and part-time membership. This was a blessing for us as the UUA made the decision to “sundown” all their RE curricula but have not yet replaced them with any new materials. Rev. Sabrina wrote an original Lego-based curriculum for First Unitarian based on our UU values and featuring famous UUs.

We were also able to run middle school OWL and the youth group has been active in the revived Sandwich Making Program.

As we continue to experience the post-pandemic shift in church engagement, Rev. Sabrina and I have met with both the Committee on Ministry and with RE families to explore what it is that families are looking for right now. Stay tuned for

information about next year’s programming, and efforts to get out the word through publicity and public events.

*Adult RE:* I lead a six part class called Transgender Inclusion in Congregations in the fall with members of the congregation. The First U staff, as well as the Board and Council also participate in this program. I also ran an 8 session discussion program based on Parker Palmer’s *Healing the Heart of Democracy*. Together with Rev. Sabrina, we are looking at how we offer adult RE. Look out in the fall for more one-session programming as well as short-term covenant group model programs.

### **Building Community**

#### **Pastoral Care**

I officiated the memorial service for Karen Siegrist in August 2025, followed by the memorial service for Warren Lammert in September and the memorial service for Martha Grimm Liesman in October. In March the choir and I hosted a Service of Remembrance for Stan Vehyl.

The Pastoral Care team, with Judy Crouch on site for much of it, provided support for each of these events, setting up and cleaning up Fellowship Hall and helping the families feel their loved ones were well remembered.

We added a wonderful new event in April, Our Swell Nineties, where we recognized and celebrated the three members of the congregation in their nineties. Care and Concern really make this event happen and several volunteers did extra work to get information about our honorees so that we tell a little of their stories. We’re hoping to do more of this kind of celebrating in the future.

Care and Concern continues to do a wonderful job keeping in touch with folks and providing support when needed. Please thank Judi Crouch, Gene Ruben, and Larry Dusenberry as well as the numerous volunteers who deliver food and visit

members. The tradition of pumpkin bread at Christmas time and flowers for Flower Communion continues. We have several members whose in-person participation in church is dependent on a ride. Please thank the drivers when you get a chance!

### **Membership / Fellowship**

We have combined the New Member Luncheon and the Fellowship Dinner again this year as a single event to celebrate participation in the church. I am pleased to report that we had twice as many people join this year as last year. Read more about this from Rev. Sabrina!

We also added several new Fellowship opportunities this year. The Social Justice Committee added a once a month lunch on the first Sunday of each month. This has been a tremendous success as folks stay and connect with each other after worship. The Feast and Festivals Committee was revived and the Hanging of the Greens returned this past December with a catered dinner, a Christmas sing-a-long and decorating the tree.

Rev. Sabrina and I hosted a successful game night for all ages in March, where the youngest participants were under 10 and the oldest were in their 70s. We've started a monthly Young Adult Mocktail Hour, to offer an easy way to gather for the folks in their 20s and 30s.

I also organized and launched the Mural Project. Using the prompts: What does community look like? Who are we? Who do we want to be? What are our values? How do we show that? Adults and children submitted ideas and drawings and a local Art Education student from UMSL combined the pictures into a cohesive image. As I write this the installation is ongoing, but folks of all ages have helped to paint. If you haven't yet participated, it's still possible to put your mark on the project.

### **Administration & Governance**

We are in the middle of a two year transition cycle with multiple people on staff retiring. Organist and Music Director Allen Hoffman retired in May. Lynn Hunt is retiring in August. Joel Knapp has announced he's retiring at the end of next year. So we'll be going through several staff transitions. As we looked at staffing going forward the Personnel Committee took the opportunity to examine our staffing levels, our budget, our work load, and standards for other congregations our size. They made the difficult decision to eliminate the Office Assistant and to recommend combining the accompanist and choir director into one position. The board approved their plan at the April meeting. This process will roll out over the next two years.

Rev. Sabrina Trupia came on board in July and we held a Start-Up weekend on October 3-4 and forth with the Rev. Mr. Barb Greve as facilitator.

The board spent a big chunk of time this year working through the Transgender Inclusion in Congregations curriculum as well as working on goals for the congregation. They hope to have goals ready to unveil at the annual meeting! In addition to looking at staffing for our size, we are also looking at our governance style and structure. Conversations started this spring about best to meet the needs for leadership while also being realistic about volunteer capacity and freeing people from meetings. More on this will happen next year.

The board also updated the ICE policy in light of immigration enforcement activities elsewhere in the country. ICE must have a Judicial Warrant to enter the building at any time.

### **Stewardship**

The Canvass chair Emily Jaycox ran an excellent campaign this year and we met our goal. After last year's flat canvass this was heartening! We still have a ways to go

before our canvass approaches meeting our budget. As Emily ran the campaign solo this year, we are now in the position of needing someone to run next year's campaign!

Kathy Wire and a massive team of volunteers ran a hugely successful Field of Dreams fundraiser to rebuild our Building Reserve and pay for some of the necessary maintenance on our lovely and aging building. Work is happening all over the campus from the beautifully renovated library, the repaired back hallway off Fellowship Hall and the redone concrete at the front door. Also, take a look at the landscaping - Stan Birge has been tremendously dedicated, from redesigning the Memorial Garden, to restoring some many of our flower beds. Tell him just how much you appreciate his green thumb!

### ***Advancing Justice***

#### **Growth & Engagement**

We've had some opportunities to work with Tabernacle CDC this year, particularly during tornado recovery period where many of our members helped with disaster aid boxes for residents of the north city. Additionally members helped with phone calls to impacted residents letting them know about deadlines and getting property deeds. Members of First U also volunteer regularly at the food pantry at The Hub and on the scholarship review committee. We hope that folks will join in a neighborhood clean up on Saturday, May 16th in the JeffVanderLou neighborhood.

The Social Justice committee was a hive of activity this year! They launched a year-long process to learn about the Indigenous history of the area, participated in the Trail of Tears Memorial Walk in Steeleville, MO and submitted language for an Indigenous People's acknowledgement to be voted on at the annual meeting.

Additionally, we hosted MICA (Migrant and Immigrant Community Action) to lead a

training on Community Defense in response to ICE enforcement. We participated in multiple No Kings rallies across the city in the summer, fall and spring, as well as smaller events in response to the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis.

The weekly Human Rights Vigil continued until constructions began on Kingshighway. With the literal destruction of the street corner and the subsequent new traffic pattern and presence of machinery and workers, a decision was made to postpone the vigils until construction is complete for the safety of all.

An Environmental Justice Task Force was born in the late summer and was active all year long with Coffee Hour displays about at home greening efforts, a Bike/Walk/Carpool to Church Sunday event, a book study in collaboration with the Love at the Center Book Group and an excellent film series about environmental pollution here in the St. Louis region. The ultimate goal of this group is to submit an application to re-certify as a Green Sanctuary.

While the Welcoming Congregation committee is on pause, we have begun participating in the local LGBTQ+ Faith Alliance. I was part of the Sunday worship at Pride last summer and we participated in the PrideFest parade with other UUs and other congregations in the Faith Alliance. This year we will be part of the Faith Alliance booth at PrideFest in June. We hosted a UU booth at Tower Grove Pride last September and have reserved space again this year. Our focus this year will be on sharing the good news of our welcoming religious education program for children and youth!

#### ***Professional Development***

I attended the annual meeting of the Prairie Group at Pere Marquette in November. The theme was Authoritarianism. My take away? We are justified in our concerns. Over the

summer I was asked and agreed to become the Scribe for Prairie Group, meaning I am now the registrar and onsite coordinator for the gathering.

Additionally, I took a 60 hour Integrative Somatics and Trauma Certificate this fall and attended the UU Ministers Association Learning Institute in January.

One of my pieces was published in the UUA's Braver/Wiser column in December and another will be published in June. You can find them online.

I was able to participate in two interfaith panels at Principia College in Elsa, IL, one in the fall and one in the spring. And starting

in May, I am serving a one year term on the Interfaith Partnership's Clergy Board.

It's been a full year with many changes and exciting opportunities. As we continue to move into the future as a congregation, I am looking forward to the possibilities we are creating together.

In Love and Faith,  
*Kim*

## **Sunday Services 2025/2026**

**September 7th** - *Love Like Water. - Water Communion - All ages* Revs. Mason & Trupia

**September 14th** - *Creating Belonging* - Rev. Kim Mason

**September 21st** - *Reflections on Belonging* – Annette Peterson & Steve Wilke, members

**September 28th** - *We Belong to Each Other or Individuality vs Individualism* - Rev. Mason

**October 5th** - *Animal Blessing* - Rev. Kim Mason

**October 12th** - *Indigenous Wisdom and the Call to Compassion* - Rev. Kim Mason

**October 19th** - *The Boxed Question* - Sue Fazio, member

**October 26th** - *The Sin of Empathy, or How Compassion Became a Weapon* - Rev. Kim Mason

**November 2nd** - *Gratitude Anyway* - Rev. Kim Mason

**November 9th** - *Grateful for it All* - Rev. Kim Mason

**November 16th** - *Partner Church Sunday* - Rev. Lehel Molnar, Guest Speaker

**November 23rd** - *The Welcome Table* - Revs. Mason and Trupia

**November 30th** - *Count Your Blessings* - Rev. Nita Penfold, member

**December 7th** - *A Rose In the Wintertime* - Rev. Kim Mason

**December 14th** - *Come as you Are Christmas Nativity Pageant* - Rev. Sabrian Trupia

**December 21st** - *Music Sunday: Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening* - Rev. Kim Mason

**December 24th** - *Christmas Eve*: Rev. Kim Mason

**December 28th** - *Twixtmas: the Limbo between Holidays. Try out Café Church this Sunday in Fellowship Hall. We're off the Grid* - Worship Committee

**January 4th** - *The Alchemy of Transformation* - Rev. Kim Mason

**January 11th** - *Jazz as Resistance* Rev. Kim Mason

**January 18th** - *Rev. Martin Luther King Sunday* - Rev. Sabrina Trupia

**January 25th** - *Come Healing* - Rev. Kim Mason

**February 1st** - *Finding Home* - Rev. Kim Mason

**February 8th** - *Perspectives on Resilience* - Sue Fazio, Sue ASHwell & Kevin Kellogg, members

**February 15th** - *Let's Talk About Sex* - Revs. Mason & Trupia

**February 22nd** - *Nevertheless She Persisted* - Rev. Kim Mason

**March 1st** - *Count Your Blessings* - Rev. Kim Mason

**March 8th** - *What We (Choose To) Remember* - Rev. Sabrian Trupia

**March 15th** - *Intent v Impact* - Rev. Kim Mason

**March 22nd** - *Freedom School: Celebrating Youth and Literacy* - Carrie Henderson, Director of Youth and Family Programming for Beyond Housing

**March 29th** - *Why Fish Don't Exist* - Rev. Kim Mason

**April 5th** - *Rise and Rise Again* - Rev. Kim Mason

**April 12th** - *Unwritten: Embrace the Possibility* - Annette Peterson, member

**April 19th** - *Earth Day: My neighbor Totoro* - Revs. Mason and Trupia

**April 26th** - *A Brief History of the Future* - Rev. Kim Mason

**May 3rd** - *Music Sunday* - Rev. Kim Mason

**May 10th** - *Mother's Day and Flower Communion* - Rev. Kim Mason

**May 17th** - *Religious Education Sunday* - Rev. Sabrina Trupia

**May 24th** - *The Women* - Rev. Kim Mason

**May 31st** - *Three Words of Wisdom* - Sarah Dashner, member

---

## Minister of Congregational Life Report

Submitted by Rev. Sabrina Trupia

---

I started my first year as Minister of Congregational Life in July of 2025, a few months after I finished being sabbatical minister: this has been a pretty full and eventful year!

### Religious Education

I knew coming in that religious education for children and youth was in a transitional period. After a few generative conversations with the RE committee as well as RE consultant Michele Grove, it was decided to pursue a one-classroom (K-8) approach for RE, with the caveat that the Youth Group could decide to attend the one-classroom (and help the younger kids) or to hang out in the Youth Room discussing the same topic as the littler kids. Also it was time to offer Our Whole Lives for middle school (OWL), which was decided we'd start in January.

The 23-lesson Lego-assisted UU Values curriculum for the elementary-middle school was a curriculum I designed specifically for this year and was very successfully implemented. Some weeks we did Lego builds (look for some those on RE Sunday, on May 17th), or discussed UU ancestors or role models, and sometimes we had extracurricular stuff: we invited a support dog and their handler, we had a circus

themed Sunday where we talked about Universalist PT Barnum and learned to juggle, we learned to write a poem, cooked Stone Soup for the congregation, and even went to the zoo!

In terms of attendance, the reality of it is that it has been very sparse despite the fun things we have been doing, which is why we held a parents' town hall on April 28 to know how we can best serve them. We are also brainstorming ways to advertise our RE offering to the greater community, including a presence at farmers markets throughout the City and advertising to children-specific events webpages.

The one well attended RE offering we did have is the OWL class. Many participants were not members of the congregation, and yet the group is very cohesive and they seem to enjoy this offering, including (or maybe especially) the overnight on March 7.

Of course, none of this year's success would be possible without volunteers. The teachers for the one-classroom K-8 were Deborah Cavanaugh Grant, Sarah Vaughn, Tara Perry, Ian Simmons, and (starting in January) Sue Herzberg. On hand as substitutes and/or Sunday Superintendents we had Michael Hamtil, Caitlin Hill and Jan Herzog. In the

Youth Room Sam Hunt reprised the role he held for the past few years with Jasmine Ratliff. In January Marti Munie took over as assistant and apprentice, leaving Jasmine free to teach OWL with Steve Wilke. That is a lot of volunteer power and I am very grateful for everyone who has helped, whether as a regular, as part of the RE committee and everything in between. You have made my job so much easier (and fun!) this year, thank you so very much!

### **Membership**

When I first came on board the Membership Committee was very interested in offering new member classes, based on UU history and theology, as well as the meaning of membership. We decided to base the three classes on Soul Matter's packet for new members, but to throw in some personalization. The three classes were held the first Sunday in October, November and December and were attended by a small number of newcomers, although they were open to the entire congregation. At the last class, we had three people sign the book and become members, so all in all the first batch of classes was successful. In the winter the plan was to offer UU 101, 201 and 301, a slightly redesigned program, in hybrid format so more people could attend, but attendance was poor for UU 101 so we decided to change course and just establish a table in the ramp room on Sundays which is typically staffed by a Membership Committee member and me, where people can ask questions about membership and/or sign the book. We had good success with that, including that three people signed the book the first time we tabled.

The newcomer chats have been held monthly and, while attendance varied, when it was attended the discussions were very generative and I noticed that they encouraged people to come back on other Sundays.

Following suggestions offered during the weekly meetings of the UU Association of Membership professionals (UUAMP) that I attend as time permits, I decided to create a

“Community Card”, that people can use to request subscriptions to the eNews, a new name tag, or say a little about themselves and ask for one of the ministers to contact them. While the card is useful for newcomers, it is also something that regular members or friends can fill out if they need to. Whenever a newcomer fills one of them and their name gets entered in the MailChimp database, it triggers an automatic welcome email from the ministers. The response has been good and has produced many new contacts which the Membership Committee has been able to follow up on.

Much like we are doing for RE, we are in the process of thinking about how to market ourselves to the greater community.

### **Congregational Life**

A part of Congregational Life that does not deal directly with newcomers and new members, but it's essential: new initiatives that involve various or all segments of the congregation. This year Rev. Kim and I tried out two types of initiatives: one was to have more events on the First U Campus. For example, the Young Adult group was rebooted; we hold monthly “Mocktail Cocktail Hour” gatherings monthly on a Friday early evening; they have been well attended. We also held an all ages Game Night at the end of March that exceeded expectations filling the Fellowship room with people playing games and enjoying themselves! Similarly we are planning a Puzzle Competition Night for Friday May 1st that will be open to the general public. The second initiative aimed at new ways of doing outreach was recording a series of small video blogs on YouTube called “Heartbreak and Hope”; in these dialogues, we notice what is happening and how we continue the spiritual practice of hope. As of this writing, we have recorded episode 10.

### **Worship**

In worship this year I had the idea to transform the Time for All Ages into a moment of connection and participation for

all the congregation in the Sanctuary and online, as well as showing the topic of the worship service through a different angle. This is how the Connection Moment came about. Sometimes it's a story, sometimes an activity, sometimes a song and sometimes it is the whole service. The idea is to get EVERYONE engaged early on in the service, to counter the idea that it's only the sermon that is important.

This year Rev. Kim and I led the multigenerational services: Ingathering, Thanksgiving, Christmas Pageant, the Christmas Eve candlelit vigil, Easter, Earth Day. I led the MLK multigen with the Youth Group, performing an adapted version of a service called "The Man, the Dream, the Movement" by Revs. Clyde Grubbs and Erika Hewitt. Rev. Kim and I also did a service on Feb 15 about human sexuality (including consent), "Let's Talk about Sex" and I preached on March 8th about some of the history of First U.

### **Professional development**

Being a minister also means never stopping learning. Of course, we learn every day while serving, however it is good when we also receive formal instruction. This year I have taken and have been certified in adult,

young adult and older adult classes in OWL, as well as OWL for middle and high school. I was invited and attended Prairie Group which had the theme "Resisting Authority". I really enjoyed it and also was accepted in the group! In January I participated in the UU Ministers' Association Institute for Teaching and Learning in the "RE Sea Change" track. Between January and February I also attended the "New DRE" class offered by the UUA and LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Association). In addition to that, I participated in the Trans Inclusion in Congregations course and discussion, I facilitate monthly one of two UUMA affinity cluster meetings (trans and nonbinary), I set up a Ministerial Fellowship Team in October and we have been meeting monthly; I meet with my mentor and with my spiritual director also monthly.

Looking back, I did and continue to do a lot of interesting work with you all, and I am excited to continue for year two!

In faith and solidarity

*Rev. Sabrina*

---

## **Church President's Report**

### **Submitted by Kathy Wilke**

---

As I got ready for my (hopefully one) year as Board President, I knew we had some challenges, both pressing and long term. Due to the heroic efforts of the Nominating Committee (and particularly its dashing, handsome, and all together fantastic chair!), the Board was going to have full membership for the first time in several years. Many of the new members had never served on the Board and it was important to give them the training and skills they would need for the years ahead. With the help of Rev Kim, our early months were going to be spent training the new Board so we could

deal with the challenges ahead. The Policy Board focused on learning about Board Basics (from an on-line series from the UUA).

The Friday before the Annual Meeting St. Louis was hit with a tornado that caused great damage to St. Louis City, including portions of the Central West End. While our Church was mostly spared (only a bit of the roof and the poor trees in front were severely damaged), I realized we would need to spend some of our time focusing on the building. For us to be more welcoming we would need to put on the front burner

several building related projects. Our focus for the year became how to make the Church more welcoming, both from a facilities and Board perspective.

The Board and Council participated in a workshop from Transforming Hearts Collective titled: “Trans Inclusion in Congregations” over a 6 month period at the beginning of our regular meeting time. Even though it was specifically designed to explore the needs and a culture shift as to Trans people, the experience taught us how to be truly welcoming to everyone.

Even though most of the Board and Council members believed at first we all knew these strategies, we learned perhaps we needed to continue to work on being truly welcoming. We say we support and want diversity, but do we really consider different wants and needs?

Take, for example, the Golden Rule- Treat others as you want to be treated. Does this mean your wants and needs are the same as everyone else’s? Does it assume that you are always right when others are wrong?

How about the Platinum Rule instead-Treat others as *they* want to be treated. The Platinum Rule focuses on the needs of others and their perspectives.

We needed to be interested in other people as opposed to being interesting. Or, as we say in my profession – read the room.

We were able to follow the Platinum Rule in a few important ways. We created a space for children to hang out and play close to Fellowship Hall so parents can socialize with other adults while their kids are engaged in supervised activities. We created a comfortable library space for people who enjoy books and a quiet place to sit and contemplate.

Both of these things were accomplished this year with work from the RE and Facilities committees. Both were invaluable in achieving our goals of welcoming and following the Platinum Rule.

The Board also worked on updating an ICE policy for use by the Greeters. Thankfully we did not have any ICE sightings this year, but we will be ready if something occurs in the near future.

The Board worked on a 3 year rolling strategic planning project. This project sets 3 year goals for each area of consideration:

Membership

Building and Facilities

Religious Education

Worship

Stewardship

Social Justice

I wanted to specifically mention some Committees who were invaluable to our accomplishments this year.

Facilities for all their work in handling the damage after the tornado and every other building issue that has arisen this past year.

Stewardship cluster for their successful fundraiser for the building fund. The event was well attended, lots of fun and very successful.

The Canvass chair. We made our goal!

And to all of the cluster chairs and the committees that work on the church, thank you for making this a successful and fun year.

It has been an interesting year and I thank the entire Policy Board for all of their expertise, hard work and thoughtful learning.

---

# Church Council Report

## Submitted by Cathy Rauch

---

The Church Council has a chair and 5 Cluster Coordinators who support the goals and activities of the various committees and groups that carry out the work of the church. The Council works with the Policy Board.

The Cluster Chairs this year are:

- Kathy Wire-Stewardship
- Grace Munie-Programming
- Fran Hoffman-Outreach and Social Action
- Erin Milligan-Growth and Engagement
- Tom Finan-Facilities

Rev. Sabrina Trupia is our staff liaison and Kathy Wilke represented the Policy Board.

Council members along with the Board attended 6 sessions of the Transgender Inclusion Workshop offered by the UUA and met with the Board to discuss.

This year the Council focused on the need to upgrade our facility and worked with Facilities, Stewardship and the Board to have a Fundraiser specifically to grow our building reserves. The fundraiser was a success.

The new website was completed and is now live.

The Council supported several ongoing projects. We have volunteers helping regularly with projects at Tabernacle Community Development Corp (TCDC). We supported an all-church lunch after services once a month. We're beginning a partnership with Beyond Housing's Freedom School which will be located in our building this summer. Facilities continues to work on updates to the building. Religious Education is offering the OWL (our whole lives) program this year.

The Church Council has reviewed the updated ICE policy and is in support of posting a sign on our door outlining that position. We reaffirmed that all are welcome to our church.

The Council also looked briefly at a proposal to align our Clusters with our Mission Statement: Creating an Advancing Justice cluster, a Building Community Cluster and Nurturing Spirituality Cluster. This proposal will be taken up again for further discussion during 2026/2027.

---

## Nominations & Leadership Report

### Submitted by Steve Wilke

---

The Nominations Committee (NC) is charged with identifying candidates to fill elected leadership positions of both the Policy Board and the Church Council. Last year, the NC was able to nominate a full slate for the first time in several years. Through lots of hard work, we were able to put members in positions to not only serve on the Board and Council, but also be trained for higher leadership positions in the years to come.

One year later the NC found itself in a bit of conundrum. The church had a very strong Board and Council, but the church was about to enter a significant transition with Lynn Hunt (she who knows all!) retiring in August. We had good up and coming leaders, but did not feel it was the right time to ask any of them to become President, Vice-President, or Council Chair.

We had some additional challenges. We determined some of our normal go-to people were off limits, at least for the time being (you know who you are, and expect to hear from us next year!!). We were also mindful to try to keep some promises to people who wanted to transition from their current roles to something else. For example, Chris Kocher and Betty Neil wanted to take a break after serving multiple years on the Board. Kathy Wilke was also ready for a break (at least for now) after serving on the Board for 8.5 years.

A further challenge was my role this winter and spring as an OWL teacher. While I was happy to do it, and found this year incredibly rewarding, the classes ended at noon every Sunday leaving me very little time to do the usual conversations with members about leadership positions. Thankfully Sue Ashwell and Chris Peterson picked up the slack and were very helpful in identifying and ultimately convincing candidates to say yes.

I am happy to report we have an almost full slate of candidates. Our slate has a long term member, a newish member, and a wealth of experienced leaders who will get us through the next Church year.

The elephant in the room is the Council Chair position. For the last 7 years we have had only two people serve in that role (Cathy Rauch and Sherry Bassi). Cathy (who has served as Council Chair 4 separate times!) wanted to focus on the Clark Lecture. Sherry (who has served 3 separate times) just stepped down a year ago, and her husband Carl was nominated for Vice-President. Realizing I had no idea who would be a good candidate for the position, the best way to learn would be to hold the job for a year. My goal is to only hold it for one year (I want to teach OWL again, and know I cannot do both) and have a good idea what it takes to serve in that role going forward.

The slate of nominees recommended for election in 2026-2027 are:

#### **Policy Board**

- **Board President-** Sidney Watson (2027)
- **Vice-President-** Carl Bassi (2027)
- **Secretary-** Chris Tigue (2027)
- **Treasurer-** Margaret Weck (2027)
- **Trustee-** Stan Birge (2029)

#### **Church Council**

- **Council Chair-** Steve Wilke (2027)
- **Cluster Coordinator, Facilities-** Tom Finan (2029)
- **Cluster Coordinator, Programming-** Grace Munie (2029)

Nominations Committee

Steve Wilke

Sue Ashcroft

Chris Peterson (liaison from the Board)

---

## **Treasurer's Report**

### **Submitted by Margaret Weck**

---

I have included the 2 reports that demonstrate the state of the financials for First Unitarian Church as of March 31, 2026.

The first is a copy of the Budget v. Actuals for fiscal year 2025-26. All numbers are current as of March 31, 2026. It also shows the total Budget amounts for the Fiscal Year that ends June 30, 2026.

The second report is the March 31, 2026 Statement of Financial Position in Comparison to March 31, 2025. This report includes the balances for the Reserve Funds as of March 31 for both 2025 and 2026 for comparison.

Beginning with this budget year (July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027) it is my intention to change the formatting of these reports in consultation with the Finance Committee, the Church Council, and the Policy Board to make it easier to identify and track budgeted line items and extra-budgetary custodial funds.

If you have any questions about church finances, or would like to be involved in the process of making our financial reporting more user-friendly, please feel free to contact me.

<b>First Unitarian Church</b>			
<b>Budget vs. Actuals: FY 2025-26 Operating Budget - FY26 P&amp;L</b>			
<b>July 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026</b>			
Income	Actual YTD	25-26 Budget	over Budget
<b>40000 Operating Pledges</b>			
40010 Current Year Pledges	367,824.15	314,250.03	53,574.12
40090 Prior Year Pledges	4,753.33	2,000.00	2,753.33
<b>Total 40000 Operating Pledges</b>	<b>\$ 372,577.48</b>	<b>\$ 316,250.03</b>	<b>\$ 56,327.45</b>
<b>40200 Contributions &amp; Collections</b>			
40210 Regular Plate Collection	7,761.40	6,750.00	1,011.40
40230 Other Contributions	5,812.04	8,030.00	-2,217.96
40250 Designated Collections	17,740.02	0.00	17,740.02
<b>Total 40200 Contributions &amp; Collections</b>	<b>\$ 31,313.46</b>	<b>\$ 14,780.00</b>	<b>\$ 16,533.46</b>
<b>40400 Building Use Income</b>			
40400 Building Use	17,283.73	8,250.03	9,033.70
40405 Building Use - CRC	5,925.00	5,625.00	300.00
<b>Total 40400 Building Use Income</b>	<b>\$ 23,208.73</b>	<b>\$ 13,875.03</b>	<b>\$ 9,333.70</b>
<b>40500 Investment Income-Endowment</b>	39,289.00	44,199.72	-4,910.72
<b>40520 Investment Income-General</b>	4,336.08	3,750.03	586.05
<b>40700 Miscellaneous Income</b>	2,864.57	2,250.00	614.57
<b>40750 Unrestricted Gifts</b>	16,620.00	5,625.00	10,995.00
<b>40800 Fundraisers</b>			
40810 Auction	-134.44		-134.44
40819 Miscellaneous Fundraisers	259.55	1,874.97	-1,615.42
<b>Total 40800 Fundraisers</b>	<b>\$ 125.11</b>	<b>\$ 1,874.97</b>	<b>-\$ 1,749.86</b>
<b>40910 Interest Income</b>			
41500 Transfer from General Fund		22,500.00	-22,500.00
41600 Transfer from Memorial Fund	490.00	0.00	490.00
41605 Transfer from Music Reserve	3,200.00		3,200.00
41610 Transfer from Cap. Maint. Res.	93,262.56	0.00	93,262.56
41615 Transfer from Partner Church	3,070.00		3,070.00
41620 Transfer from RE Res.		0.00	0.00
41625 Transfer from Sabbatical		0.00	0.00
41627 Transfer from Sandwich Making	1,084.33		1,084.33
41630 Transfer from Soc. Resp. Res.		0.00	0.00
41650 Transfer from Trinity Hot Lunch	554.74	0.00	554.74
41710 Transfer from Bookstore	1,575.16		1,575.16
42000 Transfer from Endowment Fund	45,470.00	44,199.72	1,270.28
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 639,041.22</b>	<b>\$ 469,304.50</b>	<b>\$ 169,736.72</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$ 639,041.22</b>	<b>\$ 469,304.50</b>	<b>\$ 169,736.72</b>

Expenses	Actual YTD	25-26 Budget	over Budget
<b>50000 Staffing</b>			
<b>50100 Salaries and Wages</b>			
50120 Gross Wages--Salaries	168,994.41	145,964.97	23,029.44
50125 Gross Wages--Bonus	625.02	0.00	625.02
50130 Gross Wages--Hourly wages	32,542.30	37,523.25	-4,980.95
50135 Gross Wages--Contract Labor	18,468.62	14,941.53	3,527.09
50190 Housing Allowance	15,749.35	19,933.47	-4,184.12
<b>Total 50100 Salaries and Wages</b>	<b>\$ 236,379.70</b>	<b>\$ 218,363.22</b>	<b>\$ 18,016.48</b>
<b>50200 Benefits</b>			
50210 Health Insurance	13,484.22	20,250.00	-6,765.78
50220 Dental Insurance	432.00	600.03	-168.03
50230 Retirement--401(a) Expense	21,234.43	14,596.47	6,637.96
50260 Life Insurance		510.75	-510.75
50270 Payroll Taxes	10,146.07	14,037.03	-3,890.96
<b>Total 50200 Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 45,296.72</b>	<b>\$ 49,994.28</b>	<b>-\$ 4,697.56</b>
50300 Sabbatical Accrual		2,000.00	-2,000.00
<b>50500 Staff Expenses</b>			
50510 Administrator Staff Expense	505.87	700.00	-194.13
50520 ReligiousEd Staff Expense	1,717.13	3,000.00	-1,282.87
50530 Music Director Staff Expense	250.00	250.00	0.00
<b>Total 50500 Staff Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,473.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,950.00</b>	<b>-\$ 1,477.00</b>
50600 Minister's Expenses	7,632.96	7,049.97	582.99
<b>Total 50000 Staffing</b>	<b>\$ 291,782.38</b>	<b>\$ 281,357.47</b>	<b>\$ 10,424.91</b>
<b>51000 Administrative</b>			
51050 Canvass	808.87	1,500.00	-691.13
51100 Internal Communications	1,474.20	1,391.22	82.98
51200 Board Expenses	565.26	500.00	65.26
51400 Office Supplies	840.79	2,705.00	-1,864.21
51500 Office Equipment & Repairs	3,787.11	1,874.97	1,912.14
51650 Payment Processing Fees	1,580.78	1,575.00	5.78
51700 Computer Expense	2,089.34	2,175.03	-85.69
51800 Legal & Accounting	750.00	2,625.03	-1,875.03
51900 Postage	640.57	850.00	-209.43
91997 Leadership Dev & Nom Comm		200.00	-200.00
<b>Total 51000 Administrative</b>	<b>\$ 12,536.92</b>	<b>\$ 15,396.25</b>	<b>-\$ 2,859.33</b>
<b>52000 Building</b>			
52100 Building Maintenance	20,139.07	13,500.00	6,639.07
52125 Capital Improvements	108,770.81	0.00	108,770.81
52150 Housekeeping & Supplies	7,300.52	6,750.00	550.52
52200 Insurance	31,001.43	29,999.97	1,001.46
52250 Telephone	4,796.28	4,612.50	183.78
52300 Utilities	17,525.42	24,750.00	-7,224.58
52350 Equipment & Repairs	16,614.13	22,500.00	-5,885.87
52400 Contract Labor	20,835.24	22,500.00	-1,664.76
52500 Landscaping	2,233.00	3,750.03	-1,517.03
52550 Security	6,921.40	8,624.97	-1,703.57
52600 Capital Maintenance Reserve		0.00	0.00
<b>Total 52000 Building</b>	<b>\$ 236,137.30</b>	<b>\$ 136,987.47</b>	<b>\$ 99,149.83</b>

<b>53000 Worship</b>				
<b>53100 Music</b>				
53110 Guest Musicians		700.00		-700.00
53120 Music Supplies & Materials	413.44	0.00		413.44
53190 Miscellaneous	4,574.50	1,050.00		3,524.50
<b>Total 53100 Music</b>	<b>\$ 4,987.94</b>	<b>\$ 1,750.00</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,237.94</b>
53200 Worship Expenses	1,099.04	900.00		199.04
<b>Total 53000 Worship</b>	<b>\$ 6,086.98</b>	<b>\$ 2,650.00</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,436.98</b>
<b>53500 Education</b>				
53510 Children and Youth RE	1,184.63	4,500.00		-3,315.37
53520 Adult Religious Education	923.00	600.00		323.00
53530 ERDE	382.25	250.00		132.25
53600 John Learned Library	72.00	150.00		-78.00
<b>Total 53500 Education</b>	<b>\$ 2,561.88</b>	<b>\$ 5,500.00</b>	<b>-\$</b>	<b>2,938.12</b>
<b>54000 Membership</b>				
54100 Membership Expense	422.62	1,100.00		-677.38
54200 Hospitality	66.53	749.97		-683.44
54300 Feasts & Festivals	677.53	450.00		227.53
54303 Welcoming Congregation	392.71	350.00		42.71
54600 Website	780.00	500.00		280.00
<b>Total 54000 Membership</b>	<b>\$ 2,339.39</b>	<b>\$ 3,149.97</b>	<b>-\$</b>	<b>810.58</b>
<b>55000 Social Action &amp; Outreach</b>				
55100 Social Responsibility Committee	1,365.61	100.00		1,265.61
55130 Sandwich-Making	1,532.11			1,532.11
55150 SRC--Other		450.00		-450.00
<b>Total 55100 Social Responsibility Committee</b>	<b>\$ 2,897.72</b>	<b>\$ 550.00</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,347.72</b>
55300 Designated Collections	10,690.30	0.00		10,690.30
55600 Minister's Discretionary Fund		350.00		-350.00
55750 Care & Concern Ministry		50.00		-50.00
<b>Total 55000 Social Action &amp; Outreach</b>	<b>\$ 13,588.02</b>	<b>\$ 950.00</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>12,638.02</b>
<b>56000 Denominational Support</b>				
56020 UUA	16,650.00	16,650.00		0.00
56050 Partner Church	3,070.00	450.00		2,620.00
56055 Covenant Groups		300.00		-300.00
<b>Total 56000 Denominational Support</b>	<b>\$ 19,720.00</b>	<b>\$ 17,400.00</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,320.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 584,752.87</b>	<b>\$ 463,391.16</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>121,361.71</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>\$ 54,288.35</b>	<b>\$ 5,913.34</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>48,375.01</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 54,288.35</b>	<b>\$ 5,913.34</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>48,375.01</b>

# Statement of Financial Position

## First Unitarian Church

Comparison March 31, 2025 to March 31, 2026

Assets	Total PY- March 31, 2025	Total CY - March 31, 2026
Bank Accounts		
10000 Cash-Busey Bank	\$104,784.56	\$167,647.71
<b>Total for Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$104,784.56</b>	<b>\$167,647.71</b>
Other Current Assets		
13100 General Fund	\$241,935.03	\$193,492.25
13105 Transfers - Unrestricted	-\$22,133.83	-\$5,244.40
<b>Total for 13000 Investments - Unrestricted</b>	<b>\$219,801.20</b>	<b>\$188,247.85</b>
13109 Investments - Restricted		
13110 Endowment Fund	\$1,265,702.07	\$1,418,681.58
13200 Lewis-Wallis Intern Fund	\$541,454.31	\$658,652.04
13300 Clark Fund	\$212,421.02	\$258,399.52
13400 FCCF	\$192,614.67	\$237,756.97
13500 Dodson Fund - Prin	\$53,341.86	\$64,887.68
13520 Dodson Fund - Res	\$36,563.81	\$44,478.05
13600 Alliance Fund	\$54,000.00	\$62,843.40
13900 Transfers - Restricted	\$22,133.83	\$5,244.40
<b>Total for 13109 Investments - Restricted</b>	<b>\$2,378,231.57</b>	<b>\$2,750,943.64</b>
16800 Employee Cash Advance	\$5,850.00	\$5,850.00
<b>Total for Other Current Assets</b>	<b>\$2,603,882.77</b>	<b>\$2,945,041.49</b>
<b>Total for Current Assets</b>	<b>\$2,708,667.33</b>	<b>\$3,112,689.20</b>
Fixed Assets		
17200 Real Estate & Improvements	\$1,051,647.44	\$1,051,647.44
17300 New Chapel & Improvements	\$2,376,965.91	\$2,376,965.91
<b>Total for Fixed Assets</b>	<b>\$3,428,613.35</b>	<b>\$3,428,613.35</b>
<b>Total for Assets</b>	<b>\$6,137,280.68</b>	<b>\$6,541,302.55</b>

<b>Liabilites and Equity</b>	<b>Total PY- March 31, 2025</b>	<b>Total CY - March 31, 2026</b>
20100 Payroll Liabilities	\$0.00	\$0.00
20200 Federal Liabilities Payable	\$2,999.24	\$2,086.04
20300 State Withholding Payable	\$502.00	\$753.00
20400 City Withholding Payable	\$506.84	\$631.18
<b>Total for 20100 Payroll Liabilities</b>	<b>\$4,008.08</b>	<b>\$3,470.22</b>
20500 Benefits Liabilities		
20510 Insurance Payable		
20511 Health Insurance--Employer	\$0.00	\$0.00
20512 Health Insurance--Employee	\$0.00	\$876.36
20513 Life Insurance	\$0.00	\$0.00
20514 Disability Ins--Employee paid	\$0.00	\$0.00
20515 Dental Ins--Employee paid	\$0.00	\$60.00
<b>Total for 20510 Insurance Payable</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$936.36</b>
20530 Retirement--401(a) Payable	-\$2,585.88	\$1,493.86
20540 Retirement--401(a) WH Payable	\$0.00	\$0.00
20550 Retirement--SEP IRA Payable	\$0.00	\$0.00
20580 Garnishment Payable	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total for 20500 Benefits Liabilities</b>	<b>-\$2,585.88</b>	<b>\$2,430.22</b>
<b>Total for Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,422.20</b>	<b>\$5,900.44</b>
23000 Reserves		
23100 Holt	\$0.00	\$0.00
23200 Sabbatical	\$12,772.00	\$7,772.00
23300 Capital Maintenance	\$118,201.75	\$118,704.25
23310 Windows	\$30.00	\$30.00
23400 Partner Church	\$8,233.07	\$8,229.34
23500 Prepaid Pledges	\$41,249.21	\$30,100.00
23575 Prepaid Contributions	\$0.00	\$0.00
23600 Intern Fund	\$238.46	\$238.46
23610 Ministerial Search	\$616.22	\$616.22
23620 Prairie Group		\$7,910.09
23630 Membership Coordinator Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00
25011 Memorial Fund	\$13,246.42	\$18,302.21
25012 Special Gifts	\$1,712.92	\$1,712.92
25020 Social Responsibility	\$4,416.13	\$4,232.20
25050 Staff Recognition Fund	\$1,574.60	\$1,034.06
27000 Other Custodial Accounts		
27005 Auction Items	\$105.16	\$105.16
27010 Office Equipment Reserve	\$0.00	\$0.00
27020 Bookstore	\$2,104.85	\$351.69
27024 Boston Trip Reserve	-\$6,366.16	\$388.42
27030 Music Reserve	\$7,920.37	\$8,370.37
27040 Landscape Reserve	\$0.00	\$1,873.84
27050 Renovation Reserve	\$0.00	\$0.00

27060 RE Reserve	\$10,903.84	\$5,532.41
27065 Sandwich Making	\$4,590.68	\$3,506.35
27067 Trinity Hot Lunch	\$1,365.68	\$727.31
27070 Women's Alliance Op Shop	\$25.00	\$25.00
27080 Caring Ministry Reserve	\$523.82	\$3,955.99
27090 Keyboard Reserve	\$0.00	\$0.00
27100 Healthy Congregation Reserve	\$2,526.48	\$2,526.48
27110 PR / Marketing	\$996.49	\$996.49
27120 Library	\$100.00	\$100.00
27130 Men's Wellness Ministry	\$434.00	\$434.00
<b>Total for 27000 Other Custodial Accounts</b>	<b>\$25,230.21</b>	<b>\$28,893.51</b>
<b>Total for Long-term Liabilities</b>	<b>\$227,520.99</b>	<b>\$227,775.26</b>
<b>Total for Liabilities</b>	<b>\$228,943.19</b>	<b>\$233,675.70</b>
Equity		
30000 Opening Bal Equity	\$0.00	\$0.00
33000 Building Fund		
33100 Building	\$1,051,647.44	\$1,051,647.44
33500 Building Improvments	\$2,376,965.91	\$2,376,965.91
<b>Total for 33000 Building Fund</b>	<b>\$3,428,613.35</b>	<b>\$3,428,613.35</b>
35000 Fund Balances--Restricted		
35110 Endowment Fund	\$1,265,702.07	\$1,418,681.58
35200 Lewis-Wallis Intern Fund	\$541,454.31	\$658,652.04
35300 Clark Fund	\$212,421.02	\$258,399.52
35400 First Church Community Fund	\$192,614.67	\$237,756.97
35500 Dodson Fund - Prin	\$53,341.86	\$64,887.68
35520 Dodson Fund - Res	\$36,563.81	\$44,478.05
35600 Alliance Fund	\$54,000.00	\$62,843.40
<b>Total for 35000 Fund Balances--Restricted</b>	<b>\$2,356,097.74</b>	<b>\$2,745,699.24</b>
39000 General Fund--Unrestricted	\$94,671.49	\$79,025.91
Net Income	\$28,954.91	\$54,288.35
<b>Total for Equity</b>	<b>\$5,908,337.49</b>	<b>\$6,307,626.85</b>
<b>Total for Liabilities and Equity</b>	<b>\$6,137,280.68</b>	<b>\$6,541,302.55</b>

---

## Special Gifts and Bequests

---

Throughout the year the church receives contributions in memory of deceased members and friends or in honor of people and significant events. Unless otherwise noted, these funds are accumulated in the Memorial Fund. From time to time, by authorization from the Church Council & Board, special projects or acquisitions may be funded from this Fund. Bequests, when they are received, are added to the Endowment Fund of the church according to a policy adopted by the Board, unless they are specifically designated. Gifts received in this year include:

### **Memorial Fund**

In Memory of Sedg Mead  
In Memory of Rob Harding  
In Memory of Jim Stoein  
In Memory of Carol and Bud Drennan  
In Memory of Warren Lammert  
In Memory of Jane and William Ross  
In Memory of Dori Miller  
In Honor of Jeanette Myers  
In Honor of the Wedding of Colleen Hunt Bevilacqua

### **Music Fund**

In Memory of Stan Veyhl

### **Caring Fund**

Anonymous

### **First Church Community Fund**

Anonymous

### **Staff Fund**

Anonymous

### **Endowment**

Anonymous

### **Capital Maintenance**

Anonymous

---

---

## Secretary's Report

### Submitted by Sidney Watson

---

<b>Sustaining Members</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>Dropped From Active Membership</b>	<b>6</b>
(Includes 1 Out-of-Town Members)		John & Coleen Cuntz	
<b>Associate Members</b>	<b>17</b>	Ann & Daniel Truran	
		Katie DeSelm	
<b>New Members</b>	<b>9</b>	Suzy Honeycutt	
BJ McGough			
Ian Simmons		<b>Deaths</b>	<b>5</b>
Mary Anderson		Karen Siegrist*	
Fred Anderson		Stan Veyhl	
Nita Pendfold		Bud Drennan	
Roger Walker		Sedg Mead	
Liz Allinder		Warren Lammert	
Steve Gibbs			
Shahzeem Bhayani		<i>*Memorial Garden Internment</i>	
<b>Reinstated</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Weddings</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Resignations</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Child Dedications</b>	<b>0</b>
Scott Sinclair			
Cheryl Hansen			
Cathy Brown			
Terry Yokota			
John Glebs			
Danielle Kozemczak			
Hunter Hart			
Jack & Debbie Van Ryn			

---

# Faith Development Report

## See Minister of Congregational Life Report

---

---

### Music Report

---

#### Choir Director's Report

##### Submitted by Joel Knapp

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep, / But I have promises to keep, / And miles to go before I sleep." — Robert Frost

One of the first things visitors (potential members) experience is our music program. I am in awe of our choir and the time and talent that the members give to First Unitarian. They are gifted and versatile. Anytime you have the opportunity to thank them, please do.

The choir had a busy and eventful year. In the face of financial challenges and the May

tornado, we decided to find a major work for the fall that did not require hired musicians. That decision led us to *Frostiana* by Randall Thompson.

With the help of some new members and Allen Hoffman's work at the piano, the choir did a splendid job despite several challenges. As always, I am so proud to lead them as they create beautiful performances. During the winter months, we were bestowed with an incredible gift: a Steinway Model B grand piano. This model is just below a concert grand. It has been loved and cared for throughout its life, and it now sits in our sanctuary. This gift was completely free to us (even the relocation cost was covered). If we maintain and treat it well, it will provide beautiful music for decades.

On May 17 we will dedicate our new piano with Gail Hintz playing. Gail Hintz, St. Louis Symphony Chorus accompanist since

1997, is a graduate of Webster College (piano performance) and has a master's degree from the University of Illinois (vocal accompanying and coaching). She is a freelance vocal coach/accompanist in St. Louis and also works for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and the Muny.

This spring we are preparing Mozart's *Missa Brevis in D major*. We will present it with a string trio, Allen Hoffman and our own soloists: Judy Meyer, Alice Montgomery, Esley Hamilton, and Chris Kocher.

This summer we will enjoy the talents of pianist Linda Batterson. Linda recently moved back to St Louis and is a lifelong friend of choir member Anna Roach.

Our search has begun for a new keyboardist and Music Director. As we disseminate the job posting, please share with anyone in your sphere of influence. We congratulate Allen and wish him well on his retirement and thank him for his contributions this past church year.

We thank Reverend Kim and Reverend Sabrina for their ever-present support and positive collaboration. We are grateful for members and friends of First Unitarian for their many compliments and praise. Finally, we are thankful for the staff who are always quick to help us in any and all ways that they can.

**Submitted by Joel Knapp**

---

---

## Administration

### Submitted by Lynn Yarrington Hunt

---

This time last year, then President Chuck Eby and I were scrambling to move the Annual Meeting to zoom due to not being able to use the church building due to the tornado that came through St. Louis. The Facilities Cluster was busy assessing damage, triaging needs and clearing the parking lot. As time would go by we would discover additional damages (like A/C units on the RE roof and fence damage on the Kingshighway side) and continue to get repairs scheduled. We still have one relatively minor repair to the sheet metal that lines the roof of the RE wing. (The sidewalk damage is still considerable and it will be addressed by the City).

Running the office in the aftermath of the storm was difficult. Power was out for a while, which, of course, made working from the physical office impossible. Once it was restored, it still took a while to get the internet operational and once it was up it was very unreliable! It would be on one day and then off the next. You never knew what physical obstacle would get in the way of simple tasks like going to the bank. It probably took a good two months to get everything in the office functional again.

All things considered, we weathered the storm well, but such a whirlwind does make its mark and serves as a physical reminder of how perilous things can be. Concurrently, it also serves as a metaphor for a year in which I was always playing catch-up (due to being inhibited by the storm) to a congregation that was busy and full of energy!

I continued this year, like last year, overseeing communications, finances and daily administration. Rental groups kept me very busy with scheduling activities. Welcome Neighbor will no longer be using

our building as their headquarters, but will continue to use our space for their cooking projects – it was a joy to support them as they went through a period of transition. Another major group that has found a home with us is the St. Louis Homeschooling Group who use most of the facility every other Friday. Again, they are a great group of people and it has been wonderful to be able to support them.

A major project that I was able to accomplish was the set-up of a new website (with advice from the Church Council). This was something that was discussed for years, and it finally came together.

My plan is to fully retire at the end of August of this year. There are still things I would like to have accomplished while serving as the Administrator, but sometimes things like tornados come along and change your plans! The next person in the position, once they have gotten settled in the post, will be able to make recommendations and implement new ways of doing things.

I started with the congregation in August of 2001 as the new Religious Educator as the church was coping with major staffing changes, and then, of course, we were all rocked by the devastating events of September 11th, 2001. The macro and the micro were a lot to cope with for all of us.

In the intervening years, I have worked with many people (many now sadly deceased) and learned from so many. I have seen many staffing configurations and know that changes are hard (we all like stability), but I am confident that with the reasoned, compassionate and steady leadership of Rev. Kim Mason, this congregation will continue to thrive and function as a bulwark of

liberal, religious thought and action in the City of St. Louis and the metro area.

May calm winds prevail for a while as this wonderful congregation builds the beloved community that our fellow citizens need and deserve.

**Submitted by Lynn Yarrington Hunt**

---

## **Policy Board Committees**

---

### **Committee on Ministry**

The Committee on Ministry is a Policy Board Committee. This group assists Rev. Kim with various administrative topics and supports her continued growth and personal development. We meet quarterly, and more often as needed. This year Rev. Sabrina Trupia joined for our Spring meeting. This year's committee members were: Frances Hoffman, Michael Hamtil and Sue Ashwell. Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant serves as the Board Liaison.

**Submitted by Sue Ashwell**

### **Personnel Committee**

**Members:** Jama Dodson (Chair), Erin Milligan, Paula Hanssen (resigned), Betty Neill (Board Liaison)

**Staff:** Rev. Kim Mason, Lynn Hunt

The committee started the year with 3 members, but Paula Hanssen resigned to preclude a conflict of interest due to the church's employment of her partner as Music Director.

The committee's major goal for the year was to review, update and (in some cases) revise all job descriptions of the staff, while updating the organizational chart to include the new position of Minister of Congregational Life. Each person was assigned to update one or two job descriptions as part of the process. This goal was significantly accomplished and all job descriptions will be presented to the board for approval in the near future.

Based on a staff request, the committee recommended the Board approve an additional holiday: Juneteenth. The board approved the new holiday.

With the retirement of Allen Hoffman, the committee was required to revisit the Music Director Job Description to reconfigure the position for the future. The committee was asked to provide HR support to the Music Search Committee. A temporary accompanist, who will serve during Sunday services, until September, was engaged through efforts of Choir Director, Joel Knapp and other choir members. Search for a permanent pianist will now take priority.

The final Personnel matter for the committee to address was the position of Church Administrator being vacated by Lynn Hunt at her retirement. The search for a new administrator is set to begin right away. I want to thank Erin, Betty, Lynn and Kim for their excellent work as a team this past year. As our Board Liaison, Betty will be stepping down after this year, and I want to sincerely thank her for all the extra effort. She was more than a liaison, working just as hard as any member. Finally, special thanks is also due to Lynn as this will also be her last year staffing this committee. She was always available and responsive to our many requests.

**Submitted by Jama Dodson, Committee Chair**

---

# Finance & Stewardship Cluster Reports

---

## Finance Committee

Non-Canvass Fundraising for the Capital Maintenance Fund:

The First UU community stepped up beyond all expectations to support the church's Capital Maintenance Fund. Pledges to support the fund over three years totaled over \$200,000. The Fund also benefited from UUA congregational disaster-recovery support following the May 16 tornado. And looking ahead, Tom Finan has been successfully pursuing grants to cover damage caused by copper thieves.

Finance Committee:

The Finance Committee has three roles:

- To help develop a balanced budget
- To oversee the investment of church assets
- To monitor the church's utilization of budgeted funds as the eyes and ears of the Council and the Board.

The 25-26 year was uneventful. The church's investments, held in index, bond, and money market funds, have benefited from a strong market, with input from investment advisor Jeff Cary.

The successful building fundraiser has enabled the Facilities Committee to make the necessary plans in response to the tornado and copper thefts without needing to seek additional funding. With input from investment advisor Jeff Cary, the committee maintained a favorable allocation of the church's invested funds.

The Finance Committee thanks everyone whose generosity has made its work so much easier.

**Submitted by Kathy Wire, Finance & Stewardship Cluster Chair**

## Canvass Committee

We set our Canvass goal for the coming church fiscal year (July 1 2026-June 30, 2027) at \$425,000.

Thanks to everyone who participated, we EXCEEDED that goal!

To date we have received over \$427,000 from 122 households plus the Women's Alliance. Your pledges help the church thrive.

We received 5 new pledges, and a whopping 49 households increased their pledges. This includes several people who had previously put their pledges on auto-renew. Eight pledges decreased, and the rest remained the same.

Here are the ranges:

- ¼ Below \$500 per year
- ¼ \$500 to \$1499 per year
- ¼ \$1500 to \$4000 per year
- ¼ More than \$4000 per year

I firmly believe that the church needs pledges at **all** levels to be financially healthy. I am very encouraged at the number of new members and regular visitors who understand the importance of making a regular financial commitment to sustain our community and have jumped right in.

The Canvass theme was Count Your Blessings - inspired by a song that guest musician, Nick Page sang with the congregation on Canvass Kickoff Sunday.

I have served as Canvass chair numerous times. This year was **by far** the strongest show of support I've ever experienced during the canvass period itself. By the end

of coffee hour on March 29 (the final week of the official Canvass), this congregation had raised 99% of our goal of \$425,000. One week later we had surpassed it!

The congregation seems excited that Rev. Kim is back from sabbatical, Rev. Sabrina is on board in a new role, and we have so many activities, initiatives, as well as wonderful community partners using our building. The strong canvass seems like a vote of confidence in all of these things. People's personal financial situations also seem a bit less up in the air compared to a year ago.

Before we launched, I did wonder... Would our astoundingly successful capital campaign fundraiser - just a month before Canvass - reduce pledges to next year's operating fund? Answer: On the contrary! Would the amazing Unfish Fry reduce the number of people in church two days later on Canvass Kickoff Sunday? Answer: Not at all... in fact, it worked out great - we were able to serve the extra Unfish desserts at brunch!

The only thing that did not come together was a series of Circle Suppers / coffees. Many thanks to the hosts who offered their homes. We still plan to offer these events, but spread out throughout the year.

The Canvass Committee this year consisted of myself, Rev. Kim Mason, Lynn Hunt, and Kathy Wire (head of the Stewardship cluster). Sheryll Coulter, Tom Finan and the Maker's Ministry provided great raffle gifts.

Ideally, each year there's a seasoned Canvass chair and a "trainee", who will then lead the following year with a new trainee. If you've ever wondered what goes into this role (or how much fun it is to wear a sailor hat in the pulpit!) please reach out. I love questions!

**Submitted by Emily Jaycox, Canvass Chair**

---

# Facilities Cluster Reports

---

## Facilities Committee and Cluster

Resilience was the hallmark of the First Unitarian Facilities Cluster in 2025–26, along with the tenacity to see difficult projects through to fruition.

We began the year with members of the cluster leading the charge with dumpsters and chainsaws on the church grounds following the May 17 tornado. Soon afterward, we completed repairs to the Sanctuary slate roof — a project that, after the storm, grew to nearly double its original scope.

Diligent work by cluster member Mike Bray — our “MacGyver” for all things mechanical — began with sleuthing out and cleaning long-neglected drain lines. His efforts expanded to inspecting a damaged HVAC unit in the RE basement, installing thermostats and CO monitors, and overseeing long-overdue maintenance on the Sanctuary boiler.

Through the hard work of Jane Hoekelman and Bill Chilton, assisted by Clint Cruse, the library project — which began with mold mitigation in early 2025 — was recently completed.

We also lost the beloved general of our efforts to maintain and restore the grounds after the tornado with the passing of Karen Siegrist. Since then, Stan Birge has diligently and tenderly worked with volunteers from Facilities and the broader congregation to repair tornado damage and restore grounds of which we can all be proud.

The Facilities Cluster, with substantial work from Jane and Mike, has also begun documenting building systems and assembling a long-needed maintenance schedule for the campus.

In January, we experienced the theft of newly installed copper from the peak of the Dodson roof. This was followed by the theft of copper HVAC lines. The greatest loss was not the value of the metal itself, but the damage inflicted on the roof and mechanical systems. The total cost of repairs reached \$38,730.

We recently secured a grant from Partners for Sacred Places of \$39,867 to cover the repair costs. We have also received assistance from Tech Electronics and Guarantee Electrical to install camera, lighting, and alarm systems. In addition, we are installing wrought-iron fencing in vulnerable areas and are working with the Central West End Neighborhood Security Initiative. We continue to pursue additional grants to support these security improvements.

We also received the donation of approximately \$6,000 in restoration services for the Hosmer Room exterior door from Sue Wheeler, a restoration expert who lives in our neighborhood and empathized with our losses. Roanoke Construction volunteered to remove the door, transport it to Sue’s shop, and reinstall it once restoration is complete.

In recent months, we also completed repairs to the church’s front walkway, the Sanctuary wells, and the kitchen steps.

We are eternally grateful to the entire Facilities Cluster team: Jane Hoekelman, Mike Bray, Clint Cruse, Stan Birge, Bill Chilton, and Ian Simmons.

As chair, I also want to give special thanks to Clint Cruse for honoring the commitment he made to me when I took over the chair three years ago: to always make sure there was wine and chocolate at our meetings.

**Submitted by Tom Finan, Facilities Cluster Chair**

## **Landscaping Committee**

**Stan Birge** has been creative and diligent in his oversight of the church grounds. He created a delightful new design for the Memorial Garden. He is also overseeing re-trees of the grounds after the destruction of the tornado last May.

---

# **Growth and Engagement Cluster Report**

---

## **Care and Concern**

Our mission is to provide help to those of our congregation who are disabled, ill, bereaved, or experiencing a life crisis and in need of hands-on and emotional support from fellow members. We also recognize and celebrate life's joys such as births, anniversaries, graduations, and other personal achievements. About twenty-three Care and Concern Team volunteers work in collaboration with the minister. We consider our mission to be part of the church's covenant to be a caring community and to lend support to one another. The C and C Team assisted with three memorial receptions, made and delivered holiday breads to over 20 individuals in December and delivered colorful kalanchoe houseplants to over 20 recipients on Flower Sunday. We introduced a new event in April - a celebration of the elders in our congregation. This initial event honored those who are 90 years old or older. We continued our practices of sending cards, providing meals, delivering groceries, providing transportation, and making phone calls. The Team coordinators are deeply appreciative of the efforts of our resolute Care and Concern volunteer team, Rev. Kim, and Rev. Sabrina.

**Submitted by Team Coordinators: Judith Crouch, Karen Siegrist, and Gene Rubin**

## **Makers Ministry**

The Maker's Ministry provides service to the church by providing church members or friends of the church with hand-made

comfort items such as small blankets, quilts, hats, or shawls. The Maker's Ministry also offers casual fellowship with group discussions focused on themes of sharing projects, creative ideas, joys, and concerns. We are currently meeting monthly for in-person meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month at 11:30AM.

In 2026, we enjoyed a high level of member engagement. We have 15 people on our email list and the average attendance at meetings was around 10. We have had several new members join in the last year. Newcomers wanting to learn skills such as knitting or crocheting are always welcome. Attendance is very flexible, and members are encouraged to attend "whenever" and are always welcomed even if we have not seen them for a while.

We enjoyed our second annual "Wrapped in Love" scarf project. Maker's Ministry and other church members created over 90 scarves and hats for community donation. On MLK Day, scarves were draped over the fence, at the Kingshighway /Waterman corner, with a "free scarves" sign. All the items were gone within a few days and the event was considered a great success.

Especially meaningful this year, we were involved in offering support for the O'Brien family by sharing a handmade "knit-a-square" afghan. Karen Albin was also able to help the RE program with the design of a beautiful, embroidered pillow for the O'Brien family.

Our mission is continually involved to serve the church and wider community by sharing creativity and love through the gift of hand-made comfort items. New project ideas and new members are always welcome.

**Submitted by Sherry Bassi**

## **Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee for 2025-6 has consisted of Tom Crouch, Tom Finan, Jan Herzog, Gwenne Hickman, Joe Katrosh, Kevin Kellogg, Erin Milligan, Lisa Richter, Chris Tighe, and Rev. Sabrina Trupia. We have held Newcomer Chats in the fall and spring, but membership classes have been put on hold. We are trying more eye-catching ways to attract new members, such as a question table in the ramp room leading to Fellowship Hall. As in previous years, we organized the Fellowship Dinner on Saturday, May 9; one big difference this year is that it became a potluck.

The First Unitarian Church of St. Louis has been enriched this year by eight new members:

Ian Simmons, Nita Penfold, B.J. McGough, Fred Anderson, Mary Anderson, Steve Gibbs, Liz Allinder, and Roger Walker. These new members were honored on New Member Sunday, May 10.

**Submitted by Gwenne Hickman, Chair**

## **Women's Alliance**

The Women's Alliance of the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis promotes support for our members and the church community through service, friendship and learning. Our funding comes from dues of \$30 a year, investment funds, donations, fundraising events, and proceeds of the Opportunity Shop (OP Shop). We currently have 32 members.

The Alliance operates the OP Shop in Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings and

during some gatherings. Co-chairs are Judi Crouch and Pamela Gempel. This resale shop offers clothing, jewelry, toys, housewares and other items at very reasonable prices. The funds raised by the shop are used for scholarships and donations to charitable organizations.

The Alliance sponsors a Zoom Room every Tuesday where members and friends can meet and spend time getting to know each other. The second and fourth Tuesdays of the month are Hybrid meetings (in person in Fellowship Hall and Zoom). There is one business meeting per month, usually on Zoom. On the second and fourth Tuesdays our in-person meetings have a program following the brown bag lunch. This year, programs have included speakers, field trips, group activities, and tours. We are planning a luncheon for area UU women's groups in April.

Each year the Women's Alliance offers a scholarship to a woman 21 or older who is continuing or finishing her education, is a member of a Unitarian Universalist church or fellowship in our area, and is a registered student.

The recipient for the 2025-2026 school year was Jen Salamone. She is scheduled to speak to us in May.

The Alliance continues maintaining the Little Free Pantry. We stock the LFP every Sunday and during the week of each month that contains the 2nd Tuesday. We donate items, cash and time to maintain this worthwhile project.

We have also contributed \$2,000 to the annual Canvass.

The 2025-2026 Executive Committee: President, Mindy Allen; Vice-President, Pamela Geppert; Secretary, Kimberly Perry; Treasurer, Judi Crouch; Finance Chair, Lori Calcaterra; Program Co-Chairs, Sue Ashwell and Peggy Feinberg; Scholarship Co-Chair, Pamela Gempel and Mindy Allen; and Churchmanship Chair, Cindy Baker. Our meetings and programs are open to anyone who wishes to attend.

**Submitted by Mindy Allen, President**

## **Young Adult Group**

The Young Adult group was reconstituted by Revs. Mason and Trupia with a once a month evening Mocktail gathering.

---

# **Programming Cluster Reports**

---

## **Adult Religious Education**

See reports of Minister Rev. Kim Mason and Minister of Congregational Life Rev. Sabrina Trupia.

## **Archives**

The mission of Archives is to preserve the records and history of the church including The Church of the Messiah and The Church of the Unity. The archives continued to be maintained by Melanie Fathman.

## **Covenant Groups**

Covenant Groups are small groups (up to 10 participants) who meet monthly to share and engage in deep listening on various issues of values, ethics and beliefs. This year the groups used materials from Soul Matters.

At this time there is one group meeting that is led by Jan Herzog.

## **ERDE (Earth Reverent Dedicants Extraordinaire)**

ERDE celebrates the various cycles of the year (solstices, etc.)

## **Flowers**

Flower arrangements for Sunday services are provided through the generosity of members and friends of the church. Flowers contribute to the ambience of worship while giving donors opportunities to commemorate special people and occasions in their lives. I would like to take this

opportunity to thank everyone who donated flowers this year and give a special shout-out to folks who donated more than once.

In addition, poinsettias purchased by members and friends added to decorations in the sanctuary during the winter holidays. Special thanks also go to Cathy Rauch for creating the beautiful Thanksgiving cornucopia and Karen Albin for her lovely chancel creations.

There are almost always open Sundays to donate flowers, so if you are interested, please contact [flowers@firstuustlouis.org](mailto:flowers@firstuustlouis.org).  
**Submitted by Dottie Kinscherf, coordinator**

## **John Learned Library**

Due to the tireless efforts of the Facilities Cluster, the library will likely open sometime this summer. The Library Committee would like to thank every member of the Facilities Cluster for their contributions toward resolving the moisture issues that had plagued the library for years, having the resulting mold mitigated, and getting the walls plastered. In addition, members of the cluster personally replaced molding, renovated a cabinet, painted, and cleaned. We all will be enjoying the result of their labor for years to come.

This year, the Library Committee has been engaged in transferring the library catalog to a cloud-based database management system. Joe Katrosh took the lead in this endeavor, and the rest of the committee is appreciative

of the considerable amount of time he spent on this project. We plan to post a link on the church website, and people will be able to search the collection on their own digital devices. With that in mind, a computer will no longer be needed in the library. Members of the committee plan to be available in the library on Sunday mornings with their own digital devices to help folks wishing assistance.

We did not import the old patron database into the new system, so we are going to ask borrowers to provide us with at least one point of contact (email address or phone number) the first time they borrow a book.

Committee members for 2025-2026 included Sarah Dashner, Joe Katrosh, Dottie Kinscherf, Joel Minor, Gene Rubin, and Chris Tighe.

**Submitted by Dottie Kinscherf, chairperson**

## **Love at the Center Book Club**

Sherry Bassi and Erin Milligan co-lead book club, which is still going strong! Each month's book pick will reflect one of the UU Love at the Center values- generosity, pluralism, interdependence, transformation, equity, and justice. Interest in the group has continued and attendance is strong with roughly five to ten congregants gathering on Sunday nights. Last year, we read *Tattoos of the Heart* by Greg Boyle, exploring the theme of transformation, and *The Sum of Us*, by Heather McGee, exploring the themes of justice and equity. Our next book was *Why Fish Don't Exist*, by Lulu Miller, exploring the theme of pluralism. Next, we discussed *Theo of Golden*, by Allen Levi, with themes of generosity, listening and presence. For our November meeting, we discussed *How We Learn to Be Brave*, by Bishop Mariann Bishop Edgar, and in December, we discussed *James*, by Percival Everett. Starting the new year of 2026, we discussed such books as *Raising Hare*, by Chloe Dalton, exploring the theme of

transformation, *The Fall of Affirmative Action* by Justin Driver, exploring the theme of equity, *Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working on the Intersections of Race, Class and the Environment*, exploring the themes of justice and pluralism, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown, and *My Friends*, by Frederic Backman, exploring the theme of transformation. For June, we will be discussing *Heart Lamp*, by Banu Mushtaq, and it's not too late to join us! We will take a break in July, and discuss *Vigil*, by George Saunders in August. Our meetings are held monthly on Zoom on Sunday evenings at 7:00 pm, the first Sunday of every month. Newcomers are welcome and encouraged to join at any time. Generally, we try to find books that can be read in a month and are readily available through the public library. Book club members take turns as the discussant of the book.

**Submitted by Erin Milligan**

## **Religious Education Committee**

This was an exciting year for religious education at First Unitarian. Most exciting was the hiring of Rev. Sabrinia Trupia as the Minister of Congregational Life (Religious Education and Membership).

The RE Committee and volunteers, in conjunction with the Interim Director of Religious Education, Michele Grove, met on June 30, 2025, to attend the 'Dreaming into our Religious Education Future' Zoom meeting. We looked at the RE program through the following lenses:

1. The theme for the year is UU Identity
2. Our Whole Lives for 7th and 8th graders will take place in some form
3. We have a handful of leaders in place and room for more to volunteer
4. Times are changing, and the way we structure Sunday morning

religious education can also transform.

Much has transpired since the June 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

1. Rev. Trupia developed a unique and engaging curriculum focused on the UU Values, titled *Everything is Awesome: Building UU Identity Brick by Brick* (A LEGO®-assisted Experiential Curriculum on UU Values).
2. After several years without holding an OWL (Our Whole Lives) program for middle school youth, Rev. Sabrina, working with facilitators Jasmine Hall Ratliff and Steve Wilke, started the program on January 18 with fifteen students.
3. The members of the Religious Education Committee are Caitlin Hill, co-chair; Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, co-chair; Rebecca Bolen; and Sarah Vaughn. The Elementary & Middle School teachers include Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, Sue Hertzberg, Caitlin Hill, Tara Perry, Ian Simmons, and Sarah Vaughn. Michael Hamtil and Caitlin Hill serve as Sunday Superintendents.
4. The RE program has been restructured. The nursery, led by staff member Anna Drendel and volunteers Kay Dusenberry and Sue Fazio, provides care and activities for children from birth to five years. Elementary- and middle-school-age youth attend a “one-room classroom” that uses the above curriculum. And the high school youth, led by Sam Hunt and assisted by Marti Muni, meet weekly.

Other Items of Note

The Family Lounge and Children's Library became a reality.

In August 2024, the Church Council began exploring ideas for repurposing the former bookstore space in the alcove off Fellowship

Hall. In response, Lynn Hunt reached out to the RE Committee and shared that coffee hour has long been a challenge for families with children. She suggested transforming the alcove into a kid-friendly space with casual seating, a few games, and some art supplies. This would make it much easier for families to participate in coffee hour while ensuring children have a welcoming and engaging area nearby.

In response, Anna Drendel took the lead on developing design ideas for the space. Others involved were Karen Siegrist and Sheryll Coulter. The room has now been repainted (thanks to Caitlin) and updated with new shades, rugs, furniture, and artwork. Several items were generously donated including a table and chairs from Jane Hoekelman and toys from Sarah. Thanks also to Anna, Caitlin, Deborah and Sarah for transferring all of the books to the new space.

Next steps: In June, the RE Committee will remove and replace the existing shelves, followed by a full reorganization of the Children’s Library. **Submitted by Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant and Caitlin Hill**

## Worship Committee

“Worship is our shared Unitarian Universalist practice of exploring, connecting to, and creating the ways that our individual lives fit into a larger whole.”

The Worship Committee consists of members of the congregation who work with our minister in offering worship that supports our mission - to be a welcoming congregation, inspiring lives of loving kindness and integrity by nurturing spirituality, building community, and advancing justice. This year we have again used Soul Matters to provide themes for our services and are focusing on the UU values expressed in the updated Article II of the UUA By-Laws.

This year's members were Rev. Kim Mason, Roz Cook and Pamela Geppert, co-Chairs, Tom Finan, Dwight Homer, Annette Peterson, Sue Fazio, Nita Penfold, and Steve Wilke. Jan Herzog joined the worship committee midyear. The committee meets on the second Thursday of the month from 6PM-8PM in person and on Zoom. The August meeting was a 4 hour Worship Retreat. Special guests at the retreat were Joel Knapp and Allen Hoffman to discuss music in our ministry. This year there was also a three hour Winter Retreat on Saturday, February 7th.

For a while now there has been an expectation that there will be a Sunday Service year round and the 2025-2026 Worship Planning Calendar reflected Rev. Mason's move toward year round ministry. Rev. Mason will be in the pulpit two Sundays a month during June, July and August. The Worship Committee in collaboration with our minister and church staff works on providing Sunday services when the minister is out of the pulpit.

This year we continued the practice of having announcements before the 10AM service. This serves to separate the business of the congregation from the act of worship.

A new change has been to provide a more physical connection to Joys and Concerns. During the reading of submitted joys and concerns people come forward and place a stone in the water to symbolize the weight of

their concerns and/or to blow bubbles on the way back to your seat to celebrate their joys. And, with the addition of Rev. Dr. Sabrina Trupia as our Minister of Congregational Life, the "Story for All Ages" has been transformed into the "Connection Moment". The worship committee is working to apply this concept to our services throughout the year.

The Worship Committee restarted the 12-part UUA *Worship for Transformation* training series. This training for Worship Arts teams offers a deep dive into what makes worship transformative.

Recently Roz Cook, Sarah Dashner and Annette Peterson have participated in a workshop for Lay Leaders at Eliot Chapel - *So You Think You Can Preach*. They will lead services connected to this workshop. There is an on-going process for reviewing and updating our materials and guides for those involved in providing our worship experiences.

**Submitted by Roz Cook and Pamela Geppert, co-Chairs**

---

# Outreach & Social Action Cluster Reports

---

## **Social Justice Committee**

Members: Cathy Rauch, Kevin Kellogg, Fran Hoffmann, Susan Lammert, Chris Tighe, Rosemary Lawton, Sherry Bassi, Dean Burns, Sheryll Coulter, Margaret Weck, Lisa Richter, Lisa Ross, Tom Craddock, Caren Stelson, Cynthia Bauer, Wanda Manhanke, Lori Calacatera, Chris Peterson, Annette Peterson

We continued participation in the Tabernacle Community Development Corporation partnership with members volunteering in the food pantry, the scholarship initiative, at the annual Evening of Hope, through tornado relief and with neighborhood clean up.

First UU provided lunch for the Trinity Hot Lunch program three times this past year. The Social Justice Committee initiated First Sunday Lunches each month to ensure that members and friends have the opportunity to sit and share a meal and conversation with other people at least monthly.

The Immigrants Rights Task Force coordinated a Holocaust Museum Tour and presented sessions on the history of immigration and on civil disobedience. MICA ICE Watch Training was hosted at First UU.

The Social Justice Committee raised awareness of Indigenous peoples by initiating a land acknowledgement at First UU, hosting Cherokee speaker and historian, Galen Gritts, participating in the annual Remember the Removal Walk, Ride and Bike in Steelville MO, recommended *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* as a read for the Love at the Center book club and sponsored the program, Indigenous People's History, at the Missouri Historical Society Library

The Human Rights Matter Vigil continues weekly throughout the year.

Members of the Social Justice Committee initiated the process for First U to become a site for Freedom School. This will take place Summer 2026.

Sandwich making has successfully resumed with Gateway 180 receiving sandwiches each month.

Members and friends of First UU attended rallies in the wider community coordinated by the Social Justice Committee.

The Social Justice Committee sponsored a food drive in October to support the Little Free Pantry, Trinity Food Pantry, and the Food Bank of St. Louis, a diaper drive in February to support the Southside Early Childhood Center, and a personal hygiene drive in April for clients of the Healing Action Network.

Members and friends of First U attended a tour of the Mill Creek: Black Metropolis exhibit at the Missouri History Museum followed by community building over dinner.

The Social Justice Committee held a Winter retreat to discern our roles in social change movements based on Deepa Iyer's book, *Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and*

*Connection* and to create some SMART goals for the year.

Monthly Coffee Hour action was initiated with opportunities for members and friends to create posters for the Human Rights Matter vigil, write postcards, create green wrapping paper and gift bags, and participate in sandwich making.

**Submitted by Annette Peterson, Chair**

## **Designated Collections**

### **First Church's Designated Collection**

**Program** was created over twenty years ago as a Social Responsibility effort to link First Church more closely with key issues in our community and the nonprofits working to address them. Members may nominate qualified nonprofits or church committees or projects to receive the proceeds of Sunday plate collections. Designees must meet criteria including serving needy families; focusing on children's educational access and success; and/or aiding the homeless, mentally ill or underserved.

### **Recipients, in order of assigned dates, for the 2025-26 Church Year included:**

- **Tabernacle CDC**
- **CWE Street Outreach**
- **The First Church Facilities Cluster**
- **St Louis Area Food Bank**
- **The First Church Community Fund (FCCF)**
- **Dream Builders 4 Equity**
- **Gateway 180**
- **SouthSide Early Childhood Center (SSECC)**
- **Welcome Neighbor**
  
- **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)**
- **Food Outreach**
- **St. Martha's Hall**
- **Arch City Defenders**
- **Trinity Food Ministry**
- **Beyond Housing Freedom Schools**
- **Wellston Loop CDC**
- **Forest ReLeaf**
- **The First Church Little Pantry**

- **The Construction Forum**
- **Tabernacle Food Pantry**
- **First Church Partner Church Program**

In recent years, the Designated Collection Program generated annual donations to community nonprofits and First Church programs totaling \$13,000-\$15,000. Designated plate collections were particularly strong this year with almost \$16,000 received just though March alone. At the time of this report postings had not yet occurred for remaining collections through mid-June.

Individual plate collections ranged from a low of \$700 (Food Outreach) to a high of \$1900; (Beyond Housing Freedom Schools). Other strong collections included: The Facilities Cluster for the purchase of trees following the tornado; the FCCF (\$1551.37), CWE Street Outreach (\$1499.70) and UUSC (\$1078.08). Variation in donation amounts is influenced by factors such as familiarity with the work of designees and church attendance on a particular Sunday.

The nomination process for Designated Collection for the 2026-27 church year will begin in June with nominations accepted through mid-July. Selections are made by committee with criteria and guidelines specified on the nomination form.

**Respectfully submitted, Rosemary Lawton, Designated Collection Program Chair**

## **First Church Community Fund**

The First Church Community Fund (FCCF) is an endowment created as CAEF in 1985 by one of our late members, Renni Shuter, to encourage our congregation's involvement in social action. The Fund committee, through annual microgrants, seeks to highlight and support good work done by community nonprofits serving the poor, unhoused and marginalized in our community. Fund guidelines prioritize grants to smaller nonprofits serving St. Louis City clients and those

with limited sources of funding; however, eligibility extends to nonprofits within the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Each July the FCCF committee issues a Request for Proposal for grants funded through endowment income. This year’s grants had a maximum of \$800 enabled by \$9600 in endowment income. Recipients were announced during the November 9<sup>th</sup> church service and participated in a “Meet and Greet” following the service in Fellowship Hall.

**Recipients included:**

<b>Nonprofit</b>	<b>Grant Focus</b>
All Nana’s Kids Closet	Purchase of child and teen winter gloves
AmeriCorps STL	Client cell phone lockers and temperature sticks for its Souldard shelter refrigerator and freezer to support year-round services to area unhoused
Cornerstone Center for Early Learning	Short-term childcare scholarships for families in crisis
Crime Victim Center	Translation services for non-English speaking clients
<b>Gateway 180</b>	Supplement of weekly food budget for its single women clients
Grace and Peace Winter Shelter	Gap funds for clients moving from its winter shelter to housing
Healing Action Network	Pantry supplies aiding adult victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking
Immigrant Help English Learning Program (IHELP)	Educational materials for its adult and youth language classes
Metro Trans Umbrella Group (MTUG)	Funds for adaptive wear items to support client transitioning and bus passes
Safe Connections	Assistance with marketing, recruiting and training hotline volunteers
<b>The Covering House</b>	Clothing and personal care items for child and youth victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking
Unleashing Potential	Infant formula for families in its Early Childhood Education program
Walker Scottish Rite Clinic for Childhood Learning Disorders	Updated testing, screening, and evaluative hearing and language materials for child clients at Tabernacle CDC
Wellston Loop CDC	Supplement its food budget for its clients challenged by chemical dependency, mental illness and poverty

The FCCF committee engages in fund raising throughout the year to ensure visibility for the Fund and its long-term viability. It does this through a Fall Designated Collection and Spring “Goodies for Good” bake sale. These efforts, along with donations, raised approximately \$3000 this year. The FCCF committee appreciates our congregation’s ongoing generous support for our church grants program.

Submitted by: **The First Church Community Fund Committee:**

Rosemary Lawton, Chair. Members: Lori Calcaterra, Jama Dodson, Kay Dusenbery, Pam Gempel, Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, Julia Hart, Donald Jeffries, Wanda Manhanke, Margaret Weck and Laura Zacher

## **Litter Pick Up**

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis has continued participating in the St. Louis County Highway Department's "Adopt a Highway" project. We pick up trash four times a year along Forest Park Parkway between Big Bend Boulevard on the west and Skinker Boulevard on the east. This was a pretty challenging year due to the flood damage incurred in July, resulting in quite a large quantity of litter and some soil erosion in our target area. We did complete all of our scheduled pickups. Participation normally ranges from about 3 to 5 people.

**Submitted by Tom Crouch, coordinator**

## **Partner Church Committee**

The Partner Church Committee organizes the church's participation in our church's relationship with our Partner Church in Csókfalva, Romania. Current committee members are: Claire Birge, Stan Birge (Treasurer), Judith Crouch, Tom Crouch, Peggy Feinberg, Gwenne Hickman, Robert Kökényesi (Co-Chair), Mike Nolan, Kimberly Perry (Co-Chair), Nadine Vliestra, Carol Watson, John Watson, and Laura Zacher.

The committee began the year with a potluck at the Zacher's home September 13

at which we planned the Partner Church Committee activities and Sunday service. Robert continues to produce a newsletter to bring together the UUA Transylvanian partnerships. It includes information about the Hungarian Unitarian Church and Transylvanian life. Robert also participated in the David Ferenc Commemorative Pilgrimage in 11/25 at the town of Deva. Members of the former UUPCC (now the UUA Partnership Committee, part of the UU global network) have been periodically meeting via ZOOM to exchange information. The committee raised church-wide awareness of the partner church by asking the congregation to sign a

card at Christmas and by hosting a post-service Sunday lunch May 3. The committee invited the Partner Church's Rev. Noémi Tamási to visit St. Louis. Her visit will be scheduled at a later date. The committee sent a blanket created by the church's Makers' Ministry for Rev. Tamási's new baby boy and gifts for her ministerial installation 6/15/25.

Several successful fundraising events were held during the year, including the holiday bake sale Sunday December 14 and designated collections 11/16/25 (Partner Church Sunday) and 6/14/26. The P.C. is grateful to the church community for its support.

First Church Committee members organized the service November 16 titled "Transylvanian Unitarians Meet American Unitarian Universalists." Guest minister Rev. Dr. Lehel Molnár preached about the history of partnership between the Transylvanian and American Unitarians. He is currently the archivist in residence at the Unitarian Church Headquarters in Kolosvár, Romania. He has been conducting archiving work at the Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, CA. He also gave a talk after the service about his research. Rev. Kim Mason and members of the Partner Church Committee participated in the service. Partner Church committee and church members hosted Rev. Dr. Molnár and showed him historical sights of St. Louis. The Partner Church Committee is grateful to those who helped during his visit, especially Esley Hamilton, Emily Jaycox, Lynn Hunt, Judi Crouch, Laura Zacher and Robert Kökényesi (who contacted Rev. Dr. Molnár).

Funds raised by the committee support student scholarships for Csókfalva church youth to attend a Unitarian High School (Csókfalva has no high school), or college. Since the beginning of our partnership in 1991, our church has provided over fifty scholarships. Other ongoing expenses are

providing a supplement to Rev. Noémi Tamási's salary and paying dues to the UU global network.

Goals for the future include: 1) continuing our ongoing financial support of P.C. village scholarships and ministerial salary supplement, 2) raising First Church member awareness to the importance of partner church relationships, 3) continuing our contributions to P.C. building restoration projects, and 4) exploring opportunities to increase communication and travel between our congregations.

**Submitted by Co-Chair Kimberly Perry**

## **St. Louis Foundation for Children**

The St. Louis Unitarian Foundation for Children is the name under which the Mission Free School now does business. Since 1841, this board has been underwriting the living and learning of St. Louis' children. The board members want the congregation to know of the distribution this year of slightly over \$300,000.00 to 18 agencies in St. Louis supporting children in various ways. This includes a contribution for the Freedom School, based at First Unitarian Church of St. Louis this summer. To learn more about the other organizations we support, please reach out to the trustees: Sue Ashwell, Jama Dodson, Chuck Eby, Melanie Fathman, Jane Joekelman, Erin Milligan, Steve Smidowicz, and Kathy Wilke. Rev. Kim is an ex officio member.

**Submitted by Sue Ashwell, President,  
Board of Trustees**

## **Environmental Justice Task Force**

The Environmental Justice Task Force was born out of the UUA Climate Revival events of 2024-2025. First U hosted Part I of a Climate Revival in November of 2024, followed by Part II, scheduled for May 2025. The May event was rescheduled for August because of the May 16th tornado. When we didn't have enough RSVPs to pull off the event, we cancelled entirely and held

a brainstorming session with those people who had expressed interest.

Out of the conversation came two things: one, a desire for an ongoing engagement with environmental justice, two, a desire to recertify as a Green Sanctuary Congregation. To that end, we examined the new Green Sanctuary 2030 materials and identified several projects we could offer that would both be of interest and align with the goals of the recertification. Thus began a year of programming.

Starting in October, we offered Sunday morning opportunities to learn and engage. October was a table in fellowship hall about "Vampire" Energy. December was an activity to make your own recyclable wrapping paper. April was Bike/ Walk/ Carpool to Church Sunday.

Then in November, we started a documentary film series about environmental pollution in the St. Louis region that included panel discussions with the directors and the affiliated non-profit activist groups working on the related issues. November's film was *Atomic Homefront*. January's film was *Safe Side of the Fence*. February's film was *Target St. Louis: Volume I*. Each film drew participants from outside the church and each month attendance grew.

In April we had an Earth Day multigen service inspired by the animated film *My Neighbor Totoro*, followed by a book discussion co-hosted with the Love at the Center Book Group. We discussed *Justice on Earth*, a collection of essays from UUs working on environmental justice.

Our final actions are direct service related, involving tree planting and waste clean up. Several folks participated in a Forest ReLeaf work day in April, and we are joining the May 16th clean up day at Tabernacle CDC.

We hope to submit for recertification as a Green Sanctuary later this spring as well as

connecting with the Social Justice  
Committee on efforts moving forward. We  
do not know if the task force will continue,  
so stay tuned for more soon!  
**Submitted by Rev. Kim Mason**

## **Welcoming Congregations**

See Rev. Kim Mason's report for  
information.