

Sustain the Flame



Annual Report 2023
First Unitarian Church of St. Louis

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
2023 Annual Report
Table of Contents

Agenda	2
May 15, 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes	3
2022/2023 Policy Board Roster	6
2022/2023 Church Council Roster	6
Minister's Report	7
Church Policy Board President's Report	11
Church Council Chair Report	13
Nominating and Leadership Development Report	14
Church Treasurer's Report	15
Special Gifts and Bequests	23
Secretary's Report	24
Faith Development Report	25
Music & Choir Directors' Reports	28
Administration & Programming Report	30
Policy Board Committees	31
Finance and Stewardship Cluster Reports	32
Facilities Cluster Reports	36
Growth and Engagement Cluster Reports	37
Programming Cluster Reports	40
Outreach and Social Action Cluster Reports	43

**2022-2032 Annual Meeting Agenda Sunday, May 21, 2023 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	Steve Wilke, President
Opening Words	Rev. Kim Mason
Reading of the Congregational Covenant	Erin Milligan, Vice President
Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting	Alison Lamothe, Church Secretary
President’s Report and Remarks	Steve Wilke
Minister’s Report	Rev. Kim Mason
Church Council Chair’s Report	Cathy Rauch, Church Council Chair
Church Treasurer’s & Finance Report and Budget Presentation	Jeremy Colton, Treasurer Kathy Wire, Finance Cluster Chair
To Consider Adding Congregational Values to the Bylaws	Jeremy Colton, Policy Board Member
To consider and vote upon the proposed slate for the Policy Board and Church Council which Reduces the Size of the Board	Margaret Weck, Nominating and Leadership Development Committee
Presentation of the Melanie & Anthony Fathman and William W. Ross Awards	Erin Milligan
Recognition of Officers, Trustees and other Leadership	Steve Wilke
Closing Words	Rev. Kim Mason
Adjournment	

**First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
2021-2022 Annual Meeting Minutes
15 May 2022**

held in person in the Sanctuary and online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order by President Gene Rubin at 11:39 am.

Gene welcomed the congregation. Lynn Hunt counted the in-person attendees and Andrea Berin counted those attending via Zoom. They confirmed that a quorum of at least 54 members was present.

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

Vice President Steve Wilke read the **Congregational Covenant**.

Secretary Alison Lamothe directed members to the **Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting** included in the Annual Report. She asked for a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and that they be approved. Dan Wilke seconded. Motion passed.

Affirmation of Business from 2020 and 2021 Annual Meetings

We obligated ourselves to affirm all business that transpired at the 2020 and 2021 Annual Meetings that were held on Zoom. The following motions were all passed by the congregation during these meetings:

- Motions to dispense with Reading and Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes from each prior year.
- Motion in the 2020 meeting to amend bylaws in Article VI Section 2, Article VII Section 1 and Article VIII Section 4 in such a manner to make the Programming Cluster Coordinator on the Church Council an elected member of the congregation rather than the minister.
- Motion in the 2020 meeting to allow Secretary to correct punctuation, misspellings and formatting errors within the Bylaws.
- Motions to approve the slates of nominees for the Policy Board and Church Council from both years.
- Motion in the 2021 meeting to amend the bylaws to amend the Mission Statement of the church.

Alison asked for a motion that we affirm the official business conducted during the 2020 and 2021 Annual Meetings. Margaret Weck seconded. Motion passed.

President's Report and Remarks

Gene referred members to his full report included in the Annual Report. He commended church members for their strengths, skills, opinions and force of their personalities. He noted the strengthened organizational structure of the Policy Board and the Church Council and how they worked extremely well together to accomplish their differentiated tasks. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its various variant surges, throughout his tenure Gene focused on “safety, safety and safety.” In addition, he prioritized “welcomeability,” and communication via his “Rubin’s Ramblings.”

Minister's Report and Remarks

The Rev. Kim Mason referred members to her full report included in the Annual Report and shared some highlights. She opened with a reference to a 2019 sermon by the Rev. Molly Housh Gordon entitled, "How to Survive the End of the World." The Rev. Housh suggested two lists of necessities: one, a list of material supplies; the second, a list of cooperative behaviors required. The Rev. Kim noted that shortly after the sermon was delivered, the pandemic proved its author right: for society and for our congregation, "it was our community oriented, connection-based practices that dictated our survival during the pandemic – and not whether we stockpiled toilet paper."

Rev. Kim celebrated the return of in-person events to our congregation and increasing in-person attendance for church services. She reminded us that, although our canvass did not meet its goal, our shortfall was modest compared to other congregations of ours and other faiths. Overall, we raised more than last year and 92% of those who pledged contributed the same amount or more than last year. Additional funds were raised to help pay for a Cost-of-Living Adjustment for our staff. She thanked the congregation for its resilience and generosity.

Church Council Chair's Report

Cathy Rauch referred members to her full report included in the Annual Report. She named and thanked all Church Council Cluster Chairs. She remarked that church committees were very active in spite of the church being closed during much of the past fiscal year. Finally, she noted that "the Council's main focus this year was on the Unitarian Universalist principles and how those principles relate to and inform the work of the committees."

Church Treasurer's Report and Budget Presentation

Kathy Wilke noted that she is concluding her 6th year in the role of Church Secretary. She recognized other people who are also involved in the church's finances and with whom she worked during her tenure. She explained that the **FY 2022-2023 Budget** published in the Annual Report is generally flat except for 1) a Cost-of-Living Adjustment for members of our staff; and 2) an increased contribution to the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Consideration of and Election for Proposed Slate of Candidates for Policy Board and Church Council for FY 2022-2023

Catherine Hunter of the **Nominations and Leadership Development Committee** presented the following slate to the congregation:

Policy Board

Board President – Steve Wilke (2023)

Vice President – Erin Milligan (2023)

Secretary – Alison Lamothe (2023) second term

Treasurer – Jeremy Colton (2023)

Member – Rebecca McBride (2025)

Member – Norma Vogelweid (2023) filling a vacancy

Member – Luke Steffen (2024) filling a vacancy

Church Council

Council Chair – Cathy Rauch (2023) second term

Cluster Chair Coordinator, Stewardship – Kathy Wire (2025)

Cluster Chair Coordinator, Growth and Engagement – Kevin Kellogg, (2023) filling a vacancy

Catherine made a motion to accept the slate of candidates as presented. Emily Jaycox seconded. Motion passed.

Gene commended the members of the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee for their important work.

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

Although Sarah Francois served on the Awards Committee and recommended the award recipients, she was out of town and unable to present the awards. Instead, Gene Rubin had the honor of bestowing the **Melanie & Anthony Fathman Award** to **Pamela Geppert** and the **William W. Ross Award** to **Betsy and George Grimm-Howell**. Gene explained that the former is like a Most Valuable Player award and the latter akin to a Life-Time Achievement Award. Pam was able to accept her award in-person; Betsy and George made their acceptance speech via Zoom.

Gene recognized **Officers, Trustees and other Leadership**, as well as staff.

Remarks from the new Policy Board President, Steve Wilke

Steve recounted his three-year journey towards this leadership role. While serving on the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee, he decided to help fill a vacancy on the Policy Board by becoming a nominee for Trustee himself; in that role, he agreed to be a nominee for Vice President the following year, and now is assuming the role of President. He and Gene met weekly throughout the year in preparation for this transition.

He thanked the Covid Task Force for their efforts during the past year and stated the following goals for the next: he would like to see more members volunteer, and he would like all members to see themselves as part of the Membership Committee and help us to GROW.

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

Meeting adjourned at 12:34 pm.

Roster

2022/2023

Church Officers

Steve Wilke	President
Erin Milligan	Vice President
Alison Lamothe	Secretary
Jeremy Colton	Treasurer

Policy Board Members

Joel Hickman	2023
Norma Vogelweid	2023
Susan Lammert	2024
Luke Steffen	resigned
Becca McBride	2025

Church Council Roster

2021/2022

Church Council Members

Cathy Rauch	Council Chair (2023)
Sue Herzberg	Programming Cluster (2023)
Kathy Wire	Finance & Stewardship Cluster (2025)
Kevin Kellog	Growth & Engagement Cluster (2025)
Clint Cruse	Facilities Cluster (2023)
Lisa Ross	Outreach & Social Action Cluster (2024)

Minister's Report

Submitted by Rev. Kim Mason

We've been partners in ministry for four years now, and this is our first full year in person together! We began this program year with the theme of renewal and I'm pleased to say that we spent much of the year renewing and building - in some cases literally! Since January we've welcomed 15 new members into the congregation and we've brought back many in person traditions as well as learning new ways to include folks virtually. We also worked together to figure out some challenging building issues! Multiple committees and the board spent a lot of time learning and listening on how best to handle our water management issues - which culminated in a unanimous decision to fund a new roof on the RE wing and several other smaller projects with a withdrawal from the endowment. While we ended pandemic restrictions this year and the federal emergency has expired, we're still figuring out how we gather in community after being virtual for so long. And we still have folks getting COVID for the first time, so the effects of the pandemic shutdown will continue to ripple out for some time. I'm looking forward to another year together as we continue to rediscover who we are in a new endemic era.

Worship

We began the year with the first in person water communion since 2019! The wonderful feeling of community and togetherness has continued throughout the year with our First Unitarian traditions such as Cornbread Communion, Music Sunday, the Christmas Pageant, Jazz Sunday, Youth Sunday, Easter, etc. For the second year in a

row I offered a Fire Communion service, which means we have four special "communion" services a year: Water, Bread, Fire, Flowers. We also made the decision as a staff to have only one Christmas Eve service. Attendance numbers on December 24th bore out that decision, though I'd love it if we need to return to two services next year!

With Christmas and New Years falling on a Sunday, we also gathered in new ways: Christmas morning a casual "unboxing" service and New Years morning with a potluck brunch. The staff and worship committee made it possible for me to be away on January 1st when my aunt died unexpectedly.

We've been livestreaming on YouTube for a year now! Moe has continued to tweak our system to better suit our needs and our streaming services have a regular live viewership of about 20 people each week. Services are also viewed during the week, and I'm encountering more and more folks who are watching online first before they take the initiative to attend in person. A quality livestream is a valuable tool!

The Worship Committee, headed by Pam Geppert, was once a wonderful partner in crafting worship. They have delved deeper into our monthly themes and have put our subscription materials to good use in planning worship. This year the committee made a commitment to do a "Perspectives on ____" service on the months with five Sundays and these services have been a wonderful way to include multiple voices

into worship. I recommend revisiting these special Sundays if you weren't present for them.

Groups in the congregation also lead special holiday observances for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, the Fall Equinox, the Winter Solstice, the Spring Equinox and Beltane.

Pastoral Care

With pandemic restrictions lifted, I have been able to visit folks at home and in the hospital, to schedule meals and coffee. With the return to in person services I feel much more in touch with the regular concerns of folks in the congregation.

We had five memorial services this year, some for members and some for long time friends who maintained connections within the congregation, including services for Shirley Kirby, Bob Pierce, Jackie Carpenter, Cecily Barker and Mary Broida.

We held a baby dedication for Aurora “Rory” Van Ryn, whose mother Trina grew up in the congregation.

The Pastoral Care team continues to do a wonderful job keeping in touch with folks and providing support when needed. Please thank Judi Crouch, Larry Dusenberry, and Karen Siegrist as well as the numerous volunteers who give rides, deliver food and visit members, as well as Claire Birge’s card ministry. As we do things in person, don’t forget to reach out to folks who no longer drive and see if you can offer a ride on Sundays or other days.

Religious Education

Children & Youth RE: As of January, Danielle Kozemczak has been on staff for a

year! While the program has struggled with volunteering, the stability of regular staffing shows with Sunday programming and the renewed energy around the Boston Trip and other traditions. And, after years of planning and construction, the playspace officially opened in November!

Adult RE: Rather than offer a short-term program, this year I offered a year-long theology program that met once a month. Though we ended up with a small group. What Moves Us has prompted deep personal reflection and conversation. I also co-lead the UUA Common Read discussion with Kevin Kellogg in March, which resulted in thoughtful conversation around mission and engagement. I also lead a fall session and a spring session of New Member Orientation. I have crafted a three session series I am pleased with and the plan for the fall is that Membership will coordinate and lead this program, thus freeing me up for some other adult RE opportunities.

Stewardship

The Canvass co-chairs, Emily Jaycox and Sarah Francois did a great job this year and we had the best canvass we’ve had in 10 years. Our annual canvass still isn’t raising enough for our budget, but each year we’re a little closer.

Finance, with the leadership of Kathy Wire, looked thoughtfully at how to finance the roof repairs and worked with both Facilities and the Board to make a recommendation. The congregational approval of the Endowment withdrawal for needed repair work affirms the work of previous leaders to develop this “rainy day” fund.

Membership / Fellowship

We certified our membership just under 200 in January, but with a surge of new members this spring we back over 200. Our new members are engaging all over the congregation: joining the choir, volunteering at the Unfish Fry, teaching RE, restarting the Young Adult Group and revitalizing the Welcoming Congregations Committee.

With a full year in person we've also returned to traditions such as Hanging of the Greens and the Trivia Night fundraiser. These events foster our connections within and across the congregation.

Administration & Governance

We spent the whole year without any staff transitions! With a full year in person, we also returned to regular church office hours. We have adjusted office hours and staffing based on demand and are continuing to evaluate the best distribution of tasks as usage of the building changes. In consultation with the Personnel Committee, I did staff evaluations for the employees I supervise and other staff in supervisory positions were instructed to conduct evaluations.

In my work with the board this year, we built in monthly leadership training using materials from the UUA. Feedback was generally positive on the usefulness of the training. The MidWinter meeting was well attended and we used the time to go through a process of identifying congregational values. The values identified were: Community, Open Mindedness, Compassion and Knowledge. We will be voting to adopt these and add them to our bylaws at the 2023 annual meeting. The only other thing I'll identify here is the ongoing challenge of

volunteer recruitment. The nominating committee struggled to fill the slate for the Board this year and we are moving forward with a smaller board for next year. This challenge has been echoed in other areas as well. My approach for the moment is to support the places where we have energy and interest from volunteers, however it does mean that some projects have languished without volunteers, such as the Clark Lecture.

Professional Development

It's been quite a year! As one of the Central Midwest UU Ministers' Association vice-presidents, I was responsible for coordinating our fall retreat in October. Then I presented a paper at the Prairie Group Ministerial Study Group in November. In February, the Board, the Committee On Ministry, and I, submitted my third ministerial evaluation. In May the UUA awarded me Full Fellowship, which is the final stage in ministerial formation. I have been accepted into the Leadership St. Louis cohort for the 2023-24 year and will spend September to May learning about the many systems and structures of the St. Louis metro area and connecting with other non-profit, government and industry leaders. I'm looking forward to all the learning!

In Love and Faith,
Kim

Sunday Services 2022/2023

September 4th - *Bread and Roses*: Rev. Kim Mason
September 11th - *Cloud Burst and Rainbows*: Rev. Kim Mason
September 18th - *After the Storm*: Rev. Kim Mason
September 25th - *Welcome to the Year 5783*: Adam Lunter
October 2nd - *The Ministry of Both/And Part II*: Rev. Kim Mason
October 9th - *Inspiring Wonder, Awe and Empathy*: Rev. Kim Mason
October 16th - *Transylvanian Unitarianism*: Rev. Kim Mason
October 23rd - *The Ministry of Both/And Part III*: Rev. Kim Mason
October 30th - *Ghost, Spirits, Specters, and Shades and the Spaces Between Here and There*:
Pamela Geppert

November 6th - *Remembrance Sunday*: Rev. Kim Mason
November 13th - *The Land has Memory*: Rev. Kim Mason
November 20th - *Cornbread Communion - Thank You Party*: Rev. Kim Mason
November 27th - *Gesture and Becoming: Grace and Authenticity*: Dwight Homer
December 4th - *Music Sunday - Seven Joys of Christmas*: Rev. Kim Mason, Earl Naylor,
Music Director; Joel Knapp, Choir Director

December 11th - *Joy Comes in the Morning*: Rev. Kim Mason
December 18th - *Children's Christmas Pageant*: Rev. Kim Mason
December 24th - *Christmas Eve*: Rev. Kim Mason
December 25th - *Christmas Morning with Rev. Kim*: Rev. Kim Mason
January 1st - *Brunch at Church*
January 8th - *A Unitarian Jazz Sunday*: Adam Lunter and Worship Committee
January 15th - *The Man, The Dream, The Movement*: Rev. Kim Mason
January 22nd - *Ignite the New Year*: Rev. Kim Mason
January 29th - *Perspective on Wintering*: Pamela Geppert
February 5th - *Mission Resilience*: Rev. Kim Mason
February 12th - *Love can be at the Center*: Rev. Kim Mason
February 19th - *Yes, And . . .*: Rev. Kim Mason
February 26th - *Things we Learn Outside of School*: Youth Group
March 5th - *Sustain the Flame*: Rev. Kim Mason
March 12th - *The Facts of Life and Dementia*: Norma Vogelweid
March 19th - *Made for Joy*: Rev. Kim Mason
March 26th - *Ministry of Both/And Redux*: Rev. Kim Mason
April 2nd - *Desert Journey*: Rev. Kim Mason
April 9th - *Resurrection Hope*: Rev. Kim Mason
April 16th - *The Poetry of the Present*: Dwight Homer
April 23rd - *The Language of Trees*: Rev. Kim Mason
April 30th - *Perspectives on Grief*: Adam Lunter
May 7th - *Music Sunday*: Rev. Kim Mason, Earl Naylor, Music
Director; Joel Knapp, Choir Director

May 14th -: Rev. Kim Mason
May 21st - *Religious Education Sunday*: Danielle Kozemczak, Director of Religious Ed.
May 28th - *Get Over Yourself: The Walls we Build*: Tom Finan
June 4th - *Flower Communion*: Rev. Kim Mason
June 11th - *Born this Way*: Rev. Kim Mason & Welcoming Congregation Committee
June 18th - : Rev. Kim Mason

Church President's Report

Submitted by Steve Wilke

When I think of the accomplishments our church has had this year, I am quick to remember all of the hard work from past boards and presidents who put us in a position to succeed. Compared to past years, my presidency was definitely born on third base, but I have no misconception that I had hit a triple.

When the church year began, we were still reeling from Omicron and everyone was just in a funk. Our past year's attempts of returning to normal church ended abruptly. We had to go back to virtual church, and many of our in-person events had to be canceled or severely limited. However, it was clear that there was a hunger to return to the before times, and that energy made it clear that this year had a chance to be a joyous one.

As I stated at last year's Annual Meeting, our theme for the year was RENEWAL. In doing so, we needed to return to some of our former activities, change some of the ways we did things, and find ways to do new ones. On that front, I think we largely succeeded.

The first step for RENEWAL was to bring back many of our all church events that had to be canceled the last several year. Many of them returned, including but not limited to: Fellowship Dinner 2022, Hanging of the Greens, the Mid-Winter Meeting, the Unfish Fry, RE's Trivia Night, a live Auction, and last weekend's Fellowship Dinner 2023. While it is clear we will not return to the way things were before the virus turned our life upside down, we were able to return to the things that make church the wonderful place I grew up in again.

Our second focus of RENEWAL was to bring new life into other aspects of our church. The first one was a promise to my Vice-President: we would strengthen the Membership Committee. During COVID, while they were doing awesome work keeping connection to our members, it was clear they were getting burned out. At the Annual Meeting, I challenged the congregation to think of ourselves as all part of the Membership Committee. As a result of a church wide focus, Membership has been strong and growing.

In the fall, the Church Council took the theme of RENEWAL and focused on many of the other Committees in the church. That led to our fall Committee Fair. It was a time where old and new members could see and hear what our various groups did inside the church, and hopefully recruit new members. As I continued to attend various committees this year, I was struck how well attended they were with people who brought new and positive energy to their work.

As we reached the end of 2022, it became clear the biggest RENEWAL project we would have to address was our Church Infrastructure. During this time, we heard Lynn Hunt, Administrator, describe all the work she and her family had to do to deal with the water intrusions last spring. Knowing our RE roof was on its last legs, we encouraged the Facilities Committee to look for a solution to a multi-year problem. After many meetings and discussions, the Facilities Committee recommended the Bartch Bid to replace the roof.

As you can imagine, we have no Board Members who are experts on roofs. Thankfully, we did have experts on the Facilities Committee, and they did an excellent job explaining why the new roof

was the most prudent course. It was clear to the Board that Facilities had done their due diligence, and replacing the roof was the right decision to make.

Of course, our job was not finished! After making the decision to replace the roof, we then had to decide how to fund it. After speaking with the Finance Committee, and discussing various options with financial professionals, it became clear the most viable option was to take the money from the Endowment. In order to do that, it would require a congregational vote.

In asking for the Congregation to make such an important vote, the Board believed it was important that the Congregation hear from our experts. In that, I am especially grateful to Clint Cruse and Kathy Wire for passionately explaining the roofing issue and why taking money from the Endowment was the most feasible option. I was more than happy to let them both cook and show why they are such important members of our church community.

As many of you know, what seemed so controversial to us at the beginning of the process was voted in favor unanimously. It was a fitting conclusion to our RENEWAL yearly theme.

Having had a largely successful year, one may ask why I am not James K Polking it and getting out after one term. The answer is both simple (I don't know how to say no!), and much more complicated.

Ultimately, while I have spent the last several paragraphs listing our successes this year, I still think there is much work to be done. And even though I had great mentors and teachers in learning about the ways of Church governance, I only feel now like I have a handle on it. Putting someone else in this position cold without any kind of instruction, mentoring or assistance seemed cruel. As a result, I agreed to serve one more year in this position and get our new

Vice President ready for the position, just as Gene Rubin did for me.

Many people have helped me this year achieve our church goals, but I need to make special mention of our minister, Reverend Mason. She has been an inspiration to me as we have navigated tough uncharted (at least for me!) governance waters, and it is comforting to know she has my back. She is quick with advice, is a great listener, and always talks through all of my questions and concerns, even (especially) the silly ones. We are so lucky to have her as our minister.

Moving forward, having (hopefully) found my replacement, our theme this year will be ENGAGEMENT. Put another way, we need to get as many people to learn how to do our church activities as possible. Like the Board and the Canvass, our hope is to have two leaders: one experienced person who has done it and knows the ropes, and someone who is eager to learn so they can perhaps lead the following year. Knowing we have at least two people in charge for every church function both alleviates the pressure on individuals, and readies us into the future. The hope is we can avoid burnout and allow everyone to actually enjoy the work rather than dread it.

I am incredibly grateful to our church community to help through this year. It was a pleasure working and talking to you all, and I look forward to another fantastic year!

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 the work of the church. The Council works with the Policy Board.

The Cluster Chairs this year are:

- Kathy Wire-Stewardship
- Sue Herzberg-Programming
- Lisa Ross-Outreach and Social Action
- Kevin Kellogg-Growth and Engagement
- Clint Cruse-Facilities

Rev. Kim Mason, Lynn Hunt and Policy VP Erin Milligan are also members of the Council.

Our Council's focus this year has been on our Active Hope project which was a charge from the Board to discern how to focus our energies as a church body to fully implement our Mission Statement. "We strive to be a welcoming congregation, inspiring lives of loving kindness and integrity by nurturing spirituality, building community and advancing justice." The Policy Board felt the need to find out how our members understood what "advancing Justice" meant in practice. A group formed that committed to contacting every member of the church to have individual conversations around that topic.

Our committees were busy this year as we continued opening up after Covid. More and more is happening in person and we also use our multi-platform option for many of our meetings.

- The Worship committee along with Rev. Kim Mason have offered meaningful and creative services.
- Membership and Outreach have given monthly Newcomer Chats and we're reaping the benefits as we have many new members this year!

- Young Adults has had a successful re-booting with an active group of 20 and 30 year olds participating.
- Welcoming Congregations has reorganized this spring.
- Towards Justice continues with our Black Lives Matter vigil, has supported a protest for Transgender Youth in Jefferson City, hosted a presentation by Omali Yeshitela from Uhuru, and is offering ARREST 3 focusing on Economic Justice.
- Rev. Kim Mason and Kevin Kellogg led a book discussion on the UUA's Common Read for this year Mistakes and Miracles which gave us an overview of how other UU congregations in the US have tackled the difficulties of Multiculturalism and how they are living into our UU Principles.
- Social Responsibility offered speakers from The Veterans Community Project which supports unhoused Veterans, and from Southside Early Childhood Center.
- Partner church committee had a very successful dinner/trivia night as well as a bake sale and worship service.
- The Playspace was completed and was dedicated in late November.
- We grieved with Central Visual and Performing Arts High School after yet another mass shooting in our country.
- The Unfish Fry was conducted in person and was a raving success.
- Facilities had their work cut out for them this year as they tried to keep the roof up. With the support of the Council and Policy board the replacement of the roof over the RE wing and other repairs to seal our building will keep us safe and dry for

many years to come. And the landscaping crews are out in fall and spring weeding and planting to keep us looking beautiful.

- Nominations and Leadership have worked hard to fill positions on the Board and in the Council.

Nominations & Leadership Report

Submitted by Margaret Weck

The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee (NLDC) is a committee appointed by the Policy Board and charged with nominating candidates to fill elected leadership positions and continuously improving and executing the process for developing leadership. The roles of: Policy Board Officers, Policy Board Members, Church Council Chair and Cluster Coordinators are all elected positions. NLDC members are appointed for three year terms and their nomination takes into consideration the member's depth of experience with the church and knowledge of the congregation. Terms of committee membership are staggered to facilitate transition and provide for continuity of knowledge and experience. The NLDC Policies/Operating Procedures are available on the church website.

The FY22-23 Nominating and Leadership Committee (NLDC) consisted of Andrea Berin, Sidney Watson, and Margaret Weck. Rebecca McBride served as Policy Board liaison and Lynn Hunt served as staff liaison.

The committee accomplished the following during the church year:

- Margaret gave a presentation at the Mid-Winter Meeting (Jan. 21, 2023) to help the larger church community become better acquainted with (and more deeply understand) our governance structure which contains both elected and volunteer/committee opportunities. In addition, contacts for committees,

Church Council and Policy Board were identified.

- Discussed but tabled a Nominations and Leadership Development Committee (NLDC) Policies/Operating Procedure specifically prohibiting multiple family members (including spouses) serving on the policy board and council at the same time. It is still the unwritten policy of the NLDC to spread out elected offices among as many different households/pledge units as possible.
- Identified leadership development opportunities with the goal of fostering a larger pool of candidates for future leadership vacancies. This will entail future resources being available on the church website.
- Generated lists of members as possible candidates for each position, designated member(s) to contact and determine willingness to serve. The slate of nominees recommended for FY 2023-2024 are:

Policy Board

- **Board President** – Steve Wilke (2024)
- **Vice President** – Alison Lamothe (2024)
- **Secretary** – Sidney Watson (2024)
- **Treasurer** – Jeremy Colton (2024) re-election
- **Member** – Chris Kocher (2026)

Church Council

- **Council Chair** – Sherry Bassi (2024)
- **Cluster Coordinator, Facilities** – Tom Finan (2026)
- **Cluster Coordinator, Programming** - Grace Munie (2026)

Note: Year indicates year completing term

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Weck

Treasurer's Report Submitted by Jeremy Colton

I have included 3 reports that demonstrate the present state of the financials for First Unitarian Church as of January 2023.

The first is a reporting of The Statement of Activity for Fiscal years ending in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2022. This report shows that the Support and Revenue have stayed somewhat constant with the largest increase in years when there was an auction (2019). The expenditures have been adjusted to offset the reduction in support and revenue.

The second is a copy of the Budget vs. Actuals for Fiscal Year (FY 2022/2023) It is current as of January 31, 2023. It also shows the Budget amounts for the total Fiscal Year that ends June 30, 2022. It should be noted that the Policy Board approved using funds from several funds that were not restricted for use in paying for several capital expenditures such as the live streaming and the new tables and chairs for Fellowship Hall. The play area on the East side of the building has been financed through special contributions. These revenue sources and expenditures are noted in this report.

The third is the Balance Sheet as of January 31, 2023. This report lists the current balances for the Reserve funds. If you have any questions, feel free to email questions to jeremyc@bigfrog.com. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you all.

First Unitarian Church
Statement of Activity
July 2018 - June 2022

	Jul 2018 - Jun 2019	Jul 2019 - Jun 2020	Jul 2020 - Jun 2021	Jul 2021 - Jun 2022
Revenue & Support				
40000 Operating Pledges	388,574	380,579	381,325	375,079
40200 Contributions & Collections	24,832	31,789	29,346	32,304
40300 Women's Alliance	0	0	3,050	2,000
40400 Building Use Income	20,595	12,100	0	8,635
40500 Investment Income-Endowment	30,170	31,000	39,864	42,527
40520 Investment Income-General	4,306	4,539	2,484	2,250
40700 Miscellaneous Income	1,423	1,490	318	2,412
40800 Fundraisers	25,621	728	1,393	60
40910 Interest Income	25	12	7	9
40950 Landscaping	5,100	5,100	5,100	3,842
41000 Transfer from Lewis-Wallis Fund	0	0	200	0
41050 Transfer from Intern Fund Reserve	0	0	0	3,600
41500 Transfer from General Fund	0	10,930	0	11,660
41550 Transfer from Membership Coordinator Fund	3,796	0	0	0
41600 Transfer from Memorial Fund	0	0	775	35,759
41610 Transfer from Cap. Maint. Res.	0	0	10,086	3,360
41615 Transfer from Partner Church	0	0	0	2,000
41620 Transfer from RE Res.	0	0	8,749	25,534
41630 Transfer from Soc. Resp. Res.	0	0	1,875	642
41640 Transfer from Special Gifts Res	0	0	0	8,594
Total Revenue & Support	\$ 504,442	\$ 478,267	\$ 484,572	\$ 560,267
Gross Revenue & Support	\$ 504,442	\$ 478,267	\$ 484,572	\$ 560,267
Expenses				
50000 Staffing	298,322	316,510	297,100	297,207
51000 Administrative	16,347	19,766	15,039	17,138
52000 Building	108,721	107,146	106,386	192,167
53000 Worship	3,157	4,815	3,697	4,395
53500 Education	7,443	5,882	5,314	8,386
54000 Membership	3,637	7,352	377	1,725
55000 Social Action & Outreach	17,530	14,180	19,025	18,613
56000 Denominational Support	4,450	6,291	9,683	20,635
Total Expenses	\$ 459,608	\$ 481,942	\$ 456,622	\$ 560,267
NET OPERATING Revenue & Support	\$ 44,834	\$ -3,675	\$ 27,950	\$ 0
Net Income	\$ 44,834	\$ -3,675	\$ 27,950	\$ 0

Tuesday, Mar 14, 2023 01:16:29 PM GMT-7 - Cash Basis

	TOTAL		
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET
Total 50100 Salaries and Wages	261,559.46	152,184.81	109,374.65
50200 Benefits			
50210 Health Insurance	10,108.13	5,582.50	4,525.63
50220 Dental Insurance	-180.00	441.00	-621.00
50230 Retirement--401(a) Expense	20,089.88	12,444.03	7,645.85
50260 Life Insurance		397.25	-397.25
50270 Payroll Taxes	10,982.55	6,634.81	4,347.74
Total 50200 Benefits	41,000.56	25,499.59	15,500.97
50300 Sabbatical Accrual		2,333.31	-2,333.31
50500 Staff Expenses			
50510 Administrator Staff Expense	1,029.27	300.00	729.27
50520 Religious Educator Staff Expense	3,594.67	2,333.31	1,261.36
50530 Music Director Staff Expense		250.00	-250.00
Total 50500 Staff Expenses	4,623.94	2,883.31	1,740.63
50600 Minister's Expenses	8,185.83	4,084.00	4,101.83
Total 50000 Staffing	315,369.79	186,985.02	128,384.77
51000 Administrative			
51050 Canvass	130.28	700.00	-569.72
51100 Internal Communications	1,273.31	1,200.00	73.31
51200 Board Expenses	702.45	150.00	552.45
51400 Office Supplies	2,570.45	1,810.00	760.45
51500 Office Equipment & Repairs	3,637.28	1,750.00	1,887.28
51600 Bank Charges	57.98		57.98
51650 Payment Processing Fees	1,705.62	1,050.00	655.62
51700 Computer Expense	2,706.98	1,050.00	1,656.98
51800 Legal & Accounting	2,761.25	1,925.00	836.25
51900 Postage	574.57	1,500.00	-925.43
91997 Leadership Dev & Nominating Comm		1,000.00	-1,000.00
Total 51000 Administrative	16,120.17	12,135.00	3,985.17
52000 Building			
52100 Building Maintenance	18,364.83	5,860.00	12,504.83
52125 Capital Improvements	10,000.12		10,000.12
52150 Housekeeping & Supplies	5,505.02	2,580.00	2,925.02
52200 Insurance	20,757.86	13,535.00	7,222.86
52250 Telephone	5,831.18	3,350.00	2,481.18
52300 Utilities	21,106.66	14,450.00	6,656.66
52350 Equipment & Repairs	20,638.20	14,400.00	6,238.20
52400 Contract Labor	30,618.50	18,000.00	12,618.50
52500 Landscaping	7,939.47	4,600.00	3,339.47
52550 Security	10,522.20	5,925.00	4,597.20
52600 Capital Maintenance Reserve	642.96	500.00	142.96
Total 52000 Building	161,896.00	83,200.00	78,696.00
53000 Worship			
53100 Music			
53110 Guest Musicians	1,300.00	800.00	500.00
53120 Music Supplies & Materials	60.00	90.00	-30.00
53190 Miscellaneous	1,242.00	750.00	492.00
Total 53100 Music	2,602.00	1,640.00	962.00

Cash Basis Tuesday, March 14, 2023

2/3

	TOTAL		
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET
53200 Worship Expenses	933.85	360.00	573.85
Total 53000 Worship	3,535.85	2,000.00	1,535.85
53500 Education			
53510 Children and Youth RE	7,546.94	2,520.00	5,026.94
53520 Adult Religious Education	420.62	500.00	-79.38
53530 ERDE	295.00	100.00	195.00
53600 John Learned Library	231.76	190.00	41.76
Total 53500 Education	8,494.32	3,310.00	5,184.32
54000 Membership			
54100 Membership Expense	152.63	800.00	-647.37
54200 Hospitality	1,451.15	600.00	851.15
54300 Feasts & Festivals	216.12	500.00	-283.88
54600 Website	250.00	250.00	0.00
Total 54000 Membership	2,069.90	2,150.00	-80.10
55000 Social Action & Outreach			
55100 Social Responsibility Committee	1,498.77	100.00	1,398.77
55110 Fair Trade Coffee		150.00	-150.00
55150 SRC--Other	833.61	200.00	633.61
Total 55100 Social Responsibility Committee	2,332.38	450.00	1,882.38
55300 Designated Collections	12,211.24	8,200.00	4,011.24
55600 Minister's Discretionary Fund	450.00	250.00	200.00
55750 Care & Concern Ministry	370.94	250.00	120.94
55800 Other Outreach	250.00		250.00
Total 55000 Social Action & Outreach	15,614.56	9,150.00	6,464.56
56000 Denominational Support			
56020 UUA	17,039.96	11,081.00	5,958.96
56050 Partner Church	2,450.00	200.00	2,250.00
56055 Covenant Groups	268.00	250.00	18.00
56060 Internship	1,800.00		1,800.00
Total 56000 Denominational Support	21,557.96	11,531.00	10,026.96
Total Expenses	\$544,658.55	\$310,461.02	\$234,197.53
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$63,409.26	\$40,794.76	\$22,614.50
NET INCOME	\$63,409.26	\$40,794.76	\$22,614.50

First Unitarian Church

Balance Sheet
As of January 31, 2023

	TOTAL
Long-Term Liabilities	
23000 Reserves	
23200 Sabbatical	2,917.00
23300 Capital Maintenance	47,322.14
23310 Windows	30.00
23400 Partner Church	9,423.31
23600 Intern Fund	238.46
23610 Ministerial Search	616.22
25011 Memorial Fund	9,822.98
25012 Special Gifts	1,712.92
25020 Social Responsibility	3,469.92
25050 Staff Recognition Fund	4,908.45
27000 Other Custodial Accounts	
27005 Auction Items	105.16
27020 Bookstore	2,104.85
27024 Boston Trip Reserve	3,713.31
27030 Music Reserve	7,920.37
27060 RE Reserve	6,882.32
27065 Sandwich Making	4,590.68
27067 Trinity Hot Lunch	1,137.17
27070 Women's Alliance Op Shop	25.00
27080 Caring Ministry Reserve	6,655.95
27100 Healthy Congregation Reserve	2,526.48
27110 PR / Marketing	1,246.49
27120 Library	50.00
27130 Men's Wellness Ministry	434.00
Total 27000 Other Custodial Accounts	37,391.78
Total 23000 Reserves	117,853.18
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$117,853.18
Total Liabilities	\$122,353.83
Equity	
33000 Building Fund	
33100 Building	956,091.09
33500 Building Improvments	2,376,965.91
Total 33000 Building Fund	3,333,057.00
35000 Fund Balances--Restricted	
35110 Endowment Fund	1,202,935.60
35200 Lewis-Wallis Intern Fund	416,700.22
35300 Clark Fund	163,478.05
35400 First Church Community Fund	154,472.82
35500 Dodson Fund - Prin	43,529.25
35520 Dodson Fund - Res	30,315.63
Total 35000 Fund Balances--Restricted	2,011,431.57

Cash Basis Thursday, February 23, 2023

2/3

First Unitarian Church

Balance Sheet
As of January 31, 2023

	TOTAL
39000 General Fund--Unrestricted	89,901.02
Net Income	97,385.83
Total Equity	\$5,531,775.42
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$5,654,129.05

First Unitarian Church

Budget vs. Actuals: CY 2022-23 Operating Budget

January 31, 2022 - January 31, 2023

	TOTAL		
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET
Income			
40000 Operating Pledges			
40010 Current Year Pledges	400,520.95	286,000.00	114,520.95
40030 Matching Pledges		1,100.00	-1,100.00
40090 Prior Year Pledges	5,500.00	4,500.00	1,000.00
Total 40000 Operating Pledges	406,020.95	291,600.00	114,420.95
40200 Contributions & Collections			
40210 Regular Plate Collection	7,293.37	2,550.00	4,743.37
40230 Other Contributions	15,624.66	3,300.00	12,324.66
40250 Designated Collections	18,445.84	8,200.00	10,245.84
Total 40200 Contributions & Collections	41,363.87	14,050.00	27,313.87
40300 Women's Alliance	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
40400 Building Use Income	12,308.00	5,000.00	7,308.00
40405 Building Use - CRC	475.00	3,500.00	-3,025.00
Total 40400 Building Use Income	12,783.00	8,500.00	4,283.00
40500 Investment Income-Endowment	49,344.78	28,080.78	21,264.00
40520 Investment Income-General	2,801.73	1,225.00	1,576.73
40700 Miscellaneous Income	4,096.94	2,800.00	1,296.94
40800 Fundraisers			
40810 Auction	3,139.90	5,000.00	-1,860.10
Total 40800 Fundraisers	3,139.90	5,000.00	-1,860.10
40910 Interest Income	8.04		8.04
40950 Landscaping	1,292.20		1,292.20
41050 Transfer from Intern Fund Reserve	1,800.00		1,800.00
41500 Transfer from General Fund	11,660.17	0.00	11,660.17
41600 Transfer from Memorial Fund	32,136.40		32,136.40
41615 Transfer from Partner Church	2,000.00		2,000.00
41620 Transfer from RE Res.	12,628.19		12,628.19
41630 Transfer from Soc. Resp. Res.	854.15		854.15
41645 Transfer from Staff Recognition	3,485.00		3,485.00
41650 Transfer from Trinity Hot Lunch	652.49		652.49
42000 Transfer from Endowment Fund	20,000.00		20,000.00
Total Income	\$608,067.81	\$351,255.78	\$256,812.03
GROSS PROFIT	\$608,067.81	\$351,255.78	\$256,812.03
Expenses			
50000 Staffing			
50100 Salaries and Wages			
50120 Gross Wages--Salaries	190,763.99	106,580.86	84,183.13
50125 Gross Wages--Bonus	550.00		550.00
50130 Gross Wages--Hourly wages	32,683.48	23,100.00	9,583.48
50135 Gross Wages-Contract Labor	17,062.00	12,110.00	4,952.00
50190 Housing Allowance	20,499.99	10,393.95	10,106.04

Cash Basis Tuesday, March 14, 2023

1/3

01.31.2023

First Unitarian Church

Balance Sheet
As of January 31, 2023

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
10000 Cash-Busey Bank	98,637.59
Total Bank Accounts	\$98,637.59
Other Current Assets	
13000 Investments - Unrestricted	0.00
13100 General Fund	205,152.89
13105 Transfers - Unrestricted	-56,276.82
Total 13000 Investments - Unrestricted	148,876.07
13109 Investments - Restricted	
13110 Endowment Fund	1,202,935.60
13200 Lewis-Wallis Intern Fund	416,700.22
13300 Clark Fund	163,478.05
13400 FCCF	154,472.82
13500 Dodson Fund - Prin	43,529.25
13520 Dodson Fund - Res	30,315.63
13900 Transfers - Restricted	56,276.82
Total 13109 Investments - Restricted	2,067,708.39
16800 Employee Cash Advance	5,850.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$2,222,434.46
Total Current Assets	\$2,321,072.05
Fixed Assets	
17200 Real Estate & Improvements	956,091.09
17300 New Chapel & Improvements	2,376,965.91
Total Fixed Assets	\$3,333,057.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$5,654,129.05
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
20100 Payroll Liabilities	0.00
20200 Federal Liabilities Payable	1,710.23
20300 State Withholding Payable	533.00
20400 City Withholding Payable	179.86
Total 20100 Payroll Liabilities	2,423.09
20500 Benefits Liabilities	
20530 Retirement--401(a) Payable	2,077.36
Total 20500 Benefits Liabilities	2,077.36
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$4,500.45
Total Current Liabilities	\$4,500.45

Cash Basis Thursday, February 23, 2023

1/3

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:

Capital Maintenance Reserve Fund

Anonymous

Caring Fund

Anonymous

Endowment

Bequest - Delores Blehm Estate

Anonymous

In Honor of Jeannette Myers

In Honor of the Roof

First Church Community Fund

Anonymous

In Honor Renni Shuter and her daughter

Lynn Shuter

In Memory of Bob Pierce

Library Fund

Anonymous

Memorial Fund

In Memory of Roy Taylor

In Memory of Bill & Jane Ross

In Memory of Rosemary Armbruster

In Memory of Audrey Glossop

In Honor of Dori Miller

In Memory of Jackie Carpenter

In Memory of Mary Broida

In Honor of Earl Naylor

In Honor of Pamela Geppert, Tom Finan & the MUUSES

Partner Church Fund

Anonymous

Religious Education Reserve

(Play Area)

In memory of Edward and Ellen Kniep and Rosalie Kniep

In Honor of the Munie Family

Staff Recognition Fund

Anonymous

Secretary's Report

Submitted by Alison Lamothe

Sustaining Members **209**

(Includes 1 Out-of-Town Members)

Associate Members **17**

New Members **15**

Kurt Johnson
 Fran Hoffman
 Sarah Vaughn
 Roy Cole
 Gary Parks
 Kimberley Parks
 Scott Sinclair
 Mike Bray
 Bethany Miscannon
 Mitchell Kraus
 Thomas Begush
 Roz Cook
 Rachel Webb
 Amelia Ehmling
 Becky Asbury

Reinstated **2**

Jasmine Hall Ratliff
 Geoffrey Ratliff

Resignations **6**

Ron Glossop
 Corey Lovell
 Kathy Wildman
 Amanda Kracen
 Ronan Wallace
 Linda Fiehler

Dropped From Active Membership **13**

William Allen
 Mark Carlson
 Reena Chesla
 Jon Eman
 Lisa Eman
 Sean Fitzsimmons
 Susan Kelley
 Linda Kulla
 Abbey Loehner
 Graham Lane
 Ralph Noyes
 George Sessen
 Christine Sessen

Deaths **3**

Audrey Glossop
 Jayne Wright
 Jackie Carpenter*
**Memorial Garden Internment*

Weddings **0**

Child Dedications **1**

Faith Development Report

Submitted by Danielle Kozemczak,

Director of Religious Education & Communications

Group Programming-

PreK - Chalice Children

Average Attendance in Spring- 2

There have been 4-5 attendees throughout the year, but they don't all show up on the same days. One family also moved out of town. Sue Fazio and Jan Herzog have rotated teaching responsibilities. They are in the nursery for this class.

K-2nd Wonderful Welcome

Average Attendance in Spring - 1.5

The most regular attendee has been Amory, with Grayson and Emma rounding out the class.

Spirit Play was not an ideal curriculum for this group. They struggle to engage in a story because they are very active. Acting the story out has been the most successful approach to this problem. I switched over to the Wonderful Welcome curriculum in the spring to accommodate this group. Jon Hunt, Danielle Kozemczak, and Peggy Feinberg are teaching this level

3/4/5/6 History of Religion

Average Attendance in Spring - 4.5

This group has learned about the very early history of religions, indigenous religions, Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, and early Christianity. They seem to engage well in the story if they have a simple activity like coloring or drawing to keep their hands busy. There are about six regular attendees. Micheal Hamtil and April Sullivan have been teaching this group.

7/8/9 OWL

Average Attendance in Spring - 7

This group really struggled to engage in conversations in the beginning of the year. They have improved some with the addition of others. We did lose two participants due to a family moving out of state. There are eight regular attendees. Tara Perry and Shannon O'Boyle have been teaching **10/11/12 YG**

Average Attendance in Spring - 3

With only four (maybe five) regular attendees, this group struggles when by themselves. I did have the 7/8/9th graders join them for certain projects- i.e. Youth Sunday, Trinity Hot Lunch, Bake Sale, etc. There are two seniors this year- Eli Minor and Sarah Herzog. Sam Hunt and Jasmine Ratliff have been the youth group advisors this year.

Total Average Attendance- 18

\

Worship Services -

- Multi-gen
 - Sunday 9/11 Water Communion
 - 10/30/22 - UNICEF Collection
 - 11/20 Cornbread Communion
 - It was a struggle to get the cornbread made by the RE program and we may need to rethink this next year.
- 12/18 Pageant Sunday
- Sarah Vaughn is a newer member who stepped up to help with pageant this year along with Andi B.
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Service
- 1/15 MLK Multigen Service

- 2/26 Youth Sunday Multigen Service
- I felt like this was better organized this year. I had the group start earlier and Rev. Kim was able to meet with them as well. However, it was a struggle to get them to contribute content. They seem to find very little spiritual reward in worship service.
- 4/9 Easter Sunday
- Children's Chapel - this program was a struggle at first, but I feel like it flows better now.

I have created a system so kids can claim a job in the service and it is more interactive. However- it is really hard to do activities plus the service in the time frame I have. May switch it up next year, especially with gardening activities.

- 10/2 Children's Chapel - 7
- 11/6 Children's Chapel - 6
- 02/05 Children's Chapel - Attendance - 7
- 3/5 Gardening Day - Attendance 6
- 4/2 Children's Chapel - Attendance 6

Events -

Fundraisers

- Sunday 9/11 Pancake Breakfast
- Rebecca O'Laughlin spearheaded this event and it was a success. We had a contract company come in to cook the pancakes.
- Sunday 10/2/22 RE Bake Sale
- Fri 3/10 RE Fundraiser (Unfish Fry)
- 02/12 RE Bake Sale
- 4/15 Trivia Night
- This was the first time we had trivia in three years, and things went pretty well. I did not have one volunteer leading it, but a solid group of volunteers did a lot of the work.

Community Building

- 10/30/2022 Halloween Party
- 11/13 Eliot Youth Group Visits

- 11/19 Cornbread Communion Potluck
- 11/20 11:30am Play Area Dedication
- 12/17 Pageant Rehearsal
- 1/8 Field Trip to Hindu Temple
- 3/5 YG Breakfast
- 4/9 Egg Hunt
- Service Projects
- 11/13 RE Families fill LFP
- 11/6 Trinity Hot Lunch (Youth Group)
- 3/19 RE Families fill LFP

Training

- OWL 7-12th
- New DRE Webinar
- Fall LREDA Con 10/12-10/15

Initiatives

- Parent Support Group/Covenant Group
- RE Garden

Summary

This year saw many of the COVID-19 restrictions that limited in person attendance lifted. Despite this, our attendance numbers have remained rather flat. At the beginning of the year we were averaging 16 total children and youth, as of this past Sunday 4/23/23 we are averaging 18.

Growth in the younger grades has not happened as much as I was hoping. We are still struggling to attract new families and retain them. We do have visitors on a regular basis, but they do not always stick it out. Our Whole Lives was the best attended class by far. Expanding that program into other grades may help increase regular attendance. Recruiting volunteers was difficult and many of the teachers volunteered the entire year to cover the classes.

We saw the return of several events, such as trivia night. The Play Area officially opened. The pageant returned to the sanctuary. Unfish Fry was well attended. Youth Sunday Service went pretty well. I attempted to start a parent covenant group- I have three moms

who are very into it, but it is struggling with attendance. However- I do think it has helped the three moms involved connect with each other and get involved in the church more.

I feel more confident about planning things out over the summer. I think working through the whole year with people in the building was a giant learning experience for me. I definitely have room for improvement in terms of the administrative side of the program. I recently created a better spreadsheet for attendance and a spreadsheet to track visitors and follow/ups moving forward.

Looking Ahead

Early Registration

It was a struggle to get everyone to register in the fall. If I can set up registration soon I may start before everyone scatters for summer vacation

RE Sunday - 5/21/23

Boston Trip- We have three youth from the 2022 COA class going to Boston in the first week of June.

Summer RE-

I have been working on the garden more this spring than last year. I am hoping to use the garden for summer RE as much as possible. One thing I struggled with this year was not having time for the children and youth to help with gardening in April. We have curriculum to finish and adding gardening days was not possible. I did plan some RE Gardening days for May to get more help before the summer.

RE Brochure and Outreach

I would like to work on marketing material for the program over the summer. If I had a brochure and a board and some talking points for opportunities I think we could recruit families better.

2023/2024 Programming

Coming of Age -8/9/10

I plan on running the Coming of Age Program for youth entering the 8th/9th/10th grades this fall.

OWL K-6th

I have one volunteer interested in doing OWL training for the younger grades. Currently the best training option is an online course in October of this year. There are much fewer workshops for the younger programs so I am hoping to run either 4-6 or K-1 in the Spring of 2024. OWL 7/8/9

I would love to run this program for our seventh graders and also those in the community. I think it could attract new families. However, it is a lot of work and I am uncertain if I can make it work next year. I may not run it again until 2024/2025

Grandfriend program- I am interested in creating a program that would pair up a child in the RE program with an older member of the church. I know there was a program in the past for this, but I have not looked into it yet.

Music Director's Report

Submitted by Earl Naylor

Music in our church is alive and well. This past year the choir (and the organist) have been relearning how to operate on site as opposed to by zoom. Joel and I are thrilled to be able to meet with the choir in person, and the choir members were chomping at the bit to get back together. We practiced in the sanctuary at first to keep safe distances between singers but now are using the choir room. As I write this we are closing in on our spring Music Sunday performance of Mozart's Mass in D Major.

When talking about the choir we must mention our choir director, Joel Knapp. Of all the musicians I know in the area, I can think of no one better suited to this congregation than Joel. He brings to us an extensive choral repertoire, fine musicianship, and a personality and temperament perfectly matched to the choir. We are lucky to have him.

Besides the special Sundays, we strive to provide an exciting variety of music that will enrich and inspire the church. Our goal is to wow the congregation and ourselves with the music we present, whether it is a rousing spiritual or a soft ballad. (I know a musician who likes to say, "even soft can be loud.") A thriving choir can attract people to our church. We look forward to the choir being a catalyst for renewed growth and enthusiasm in the whole church.

Many people commit a lot of time to our church and various ministries, and the choir is no exception. Choir members come to church six times a month. I don't know of another committee/group that meets more than that on a regular basis. That is over

100 hours a year, and that doesn't count travel time, or time spent on individual study. They deserve a pat on the back. Beyond that, many choir members also share their individual talents by serving as guest musicians and performing in small ensembles.

Many thanks to Chris Kocher and the Music Committee. He has done a wonderful job of thanking many people in his report and I heartily echo those thanks.

Expenses include tunings of the organ and piano, and guest musicians when the choir doesn't sing. Occasionally we purchase a new song. Every expense serves to further the worship experience of the congregation.

We continue to provide a wide diversity of quality music to enrich our services. Music is infused in our lives. We wake up to it and go to sleep to it. Oftentimes it is in our cars. I can't think of a single ritual, or rite of passage that doesn't involve music. Music involves the body, soul, and mind. I hope that more people will receive the benefit that comes from actively participating in music (i.e., joining the choir).

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our spring Music Sunday performance of Mozart's Mass in D Major.

When talking about the choir we must mention our choir director, Joel Knapp. Of all the musicians I know in the area, I can think of no one better suited to this congregation than Joel. He brings to us an extensive choral repertoire, fine musicianship, and a personality and temperament perfectly matched to the choir. We are lucky to have him.

Besides the special Sundays, we strive to provide an exciting variety of music that will enrich and inspire the church. Our goal is to wow the congregation and ourselves with the music we present, whether it is a rousing spiritual or a soft ballad. (I know a musician who likes to say, "even soft can be loud.") A thriving choir can attract people to our church. We look forward to the choir being a catalyst for renewed growth and enthusiasm in the whole church.

Many people commit a lot of time to our church and various ministries, and the choir is no exception. Choir members come to church six times a month. I don't know of another committee/group that meets more than that on a regular basis. That is over 100 hours a year, and that doesn't count travel time, or time spent on individual study. They deserve a pat on the back. Beyond that, many choir members also share their individual talents by serving as guest musicians and performing in small ensembles.

Many thanks to Chris Kocher and the Music Committee. He has done a wonderful job of thanking many people in his report and I heartily echo those thanks.

Expenses include tunings of the organ and piano, and guest musicians when the choir doesn't sing. Occasionally we purchase a new song. Every expense serves to further the worship experience of the congregation.

We continue to provide a wide diversity of quality music to enrich our services. Music is infused in our lives. We wake up to it and go to sleep to it. Oftentimes it is in our cars. I can't think of a single ritual, or rite of passage that doesn't involve music. Music involves the body, soul, and mind. I hope that more people will receive the benefit that comes from actively participating in music (i.e., joining the choir).

Choir Director's Report

Submitted by Joel Knapp

The choir is singing well and maintains a close-knit and positive spirit. I am humbled by their sense of responsibility and commitment to the choir and each other.

Talent runs deep in our choir. We have been able to fill non-choir Sunday's with our own talented singers.

In December, the choir presented The Seven Joys of Christmas by Kirke Meechem. In May the choir presented Mozart's Missa Brevis in D major, which included two violins and one cello. Judy Meyer, Alice Montgomery, Esley Hamilton, and Chris Kocher soloed.

In summary, the choir had a good year. I am happy where we are now, and to be singing without masks. I am so proud of the positive attitude they have maintained throughout the pandemic. Rev. Kim Mason deserves some of the credit because of her inspiring ideas on ways the choir can contribute.

Administration and Programming

Submitted by Lynn Yarrington Hunt

This year we were able to meet in person (all year!) and eventually drop all COVID precautions. It is wonderful that we have the capability to reach out to those who are not able to attend services and programs in person with YouTube and Zoom. Zoom also continues to be a useful tool for meetings and other gatherings. COVID still has a presence in our community with members and staff contracting it, but I think everyone agrees that we are through the worst of it, and it is a testament to this congregation how resilient it was in coping with such an unexpected and life altering event.

This is also my first full year working part-time as I transition to full retirement in a few years. There have been occasions when more hours were needed, but for the most part, it seems to be working well. I appreciate having the flexibility this schedule allows.

In a given week, most of my time is spent on bookkeeping tasks, membership updates, supporting programs like the Fellowship Dinner and trying to tend to the building.

At times the water issues we have had were almost overwhelming but it seems like we have a good plan in place to address these issues going forward. It is a blessing that we had the resources available to address several major building projects. It is also a blessing that so many people have put time and effort into addressing these projects and

that the congregation, as a whole, came together to fund our infrastructure.

A big joy this year was seeing the completion of the 7 Spaces play area – a project that was initiated when I still served as the Director of Religious Education. It is a lovely area and exceeds expectations, and I hope children for many years will have fun and hijinks in the space.

As for next year I look forward to seeing our building projects completed, planning (inevitably) for more updates, working to improve our office functions, and supporting the many wonderful traditions and new areas of exploration that this congregation will surely venture towards.

Policy Board Committees

Covid Task

The COVID Task Force was formed in the spring of 2020 as the church closed to in-person activities and the need for guidance going forward became clear. We have continued to meet throughout the pandemic, though less frequently in recent months as the situation has stabilized. As always, we strove to balance safety, inclusivity, and community in our recommendations to the Policy Board. These recommendations continued to be based on information from various sources, including UUA guidelines, CDC and COVID ActNow data for the metro St. Louis area, and the needs and wishes of the congregation. This year's members included Lisa Ross (chair), Lynn Hunt, Danielle Kozemczak, Rev. Kim Mason, Clint Cruse, Jama Dodson (Personnel) and Steve Wilke.

In-person services resumed in November of 2021 (with a brief closure again in Jan. & Feb. 2022), and continued throughout 2022 and 2023. We weathered the omicron surge in June of 2022 without having to tighten restrictions. One of the gifts of the pandemic is that worship services continue to be available online, enabling participation of our friends and members who are unable to attend or uncomfortable attending in person. At the end of August 2022, masks became optional in all areas of the church except indoor worship services, where the mask mandate was maintained in order to have a safe space in which everyone could participate. As community risk level dropped to low, all COVID restrictions were lifted in the spring of 2023. The COVID task force will continue to monitor the status and impact of COVID 19 in the community, keep the congregation apprised of any developments, and advise the Policy Board accordingly. *Submitted by Lisa Ross, chair*

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee continued to meet to review the church's finances, investments and (this year) funding recommendation for several large building projects. The committee also worked on preparing the 2023/202 budget.

Chalice Lighters

Inactive during this year.

Canvass Committee

Our 2023 Canvass Theme was Sustain the Flame. This built upon the Auction theme of Rekindle the Flame.

As of this writing, 147 households pledged \$ 399,605.00 to support First Unitarian in the fiscal year starting July 1, 2023. We received an amazing 20 new pledges. 67 pledges were new or increased pledges; 13 were decreased pledges; and 69 were the same amount as last year. **Thank you to everyone who pledged, in whatever amount, to make that happen.**

Many people have asked, Did you meet your canvass goal? Since we are Unitarian Universalists, we have at least as many answers as canvass co-chairs. The canvass committee set three goals.

Goal 1 - \$430,000. We selected that stretch goal because it would mean that 80% of our congregation budget would be funded by pledges - an ideal percentage. This would have exceeded any pledge amount raised during the last 10 years. We did not reach this goal.

Goal 2: \$400,000. *We are only \$400 away from Goal 2!*

If you are reading this and have not yet pledged, or feel moved to increase your

pledge by \$400, just think - You could be the one to make that happen!

Goal 3: To raise what several years. **We are thrilled to say that in 2023, we significantly exceeded what was raised during our eight previous canvass seasons.**

Participation level was at least as important to us as dollars raised. Participation in the canvass was 85%, a significant increase over the 75% in the previous 10 years. And the best news of all, we received 20 brand new pledges this year! When more people take ownership to support the church financially, it's a healthier dynamic for the life of our community, and the church is less vulnerable to the loss of any one pledge.

Activities and initiatives to support the canvass: We repurposed the logo and table centerpieces from our February 2023 auction, Rekindle the Flame. As well as reducing waste, this turned out to be a nice way of extending the theme throughout the church season. Canvass kickoff Sunday more or less coincided with lifting the mask mandate in the sanctuary, which added to the festive mood of reconnection. People seemed really excited to come together IN PERSON.

During the 5-week canvass, affirmations were given by Stan Birge, Caitlin Hill, Sam Rezansoff, Jama Dodson and Tom Crouch.

At the celebration brunch on April 2, over 70 people enjoyed purchased vegetarian quiches and juice; members and friends provided fruit salads and baked treats. We had a drawing for new pledges and increased pledges: a pottery chalice and LED yard chalice. Also, all who pledged received car magnets with the church logo and mission.

We were somewhat surprised (and very relieved) that participation in the canvass did not seem dampened by launching canvass one month after the auction and at the

beginning of messaging about funding the roof repairs. In our canvass updates, when referring to the different funding messages that were being presented throughout the canvass season, we noted:

We are fortunate that the generosity of past members provides an endowment that gives us an option to cover major expenses such as roof repairs. It's our **ongoing** financial support of the church – the staff, the programs, the gathering space, the tech to reach those who can't be here in person – that makes First U a vibrant, evolving community – a source of strength, support and growth through a range of life stages - a place where it matters whether the roof is even fixed.

Looking ahead to future canvasses: Rev. Kim recruited Sarah Francois, who has never chaired canvass before, to work as co-chair with Emily Jaycox, a seasoned canvass chair. Sarah agreed to co-chair again next year with a new co-chair. We would like to acknowledge Rev. Kim's thoughtful approach to developing lay leadership, her development of the theme of generosity throughout the March services, and her willingness to speak with new members about financially supporting First U, as well as Lynn Hunt's deep knowledge of every aspect of the church, and the entire staff's support of canvass activities.

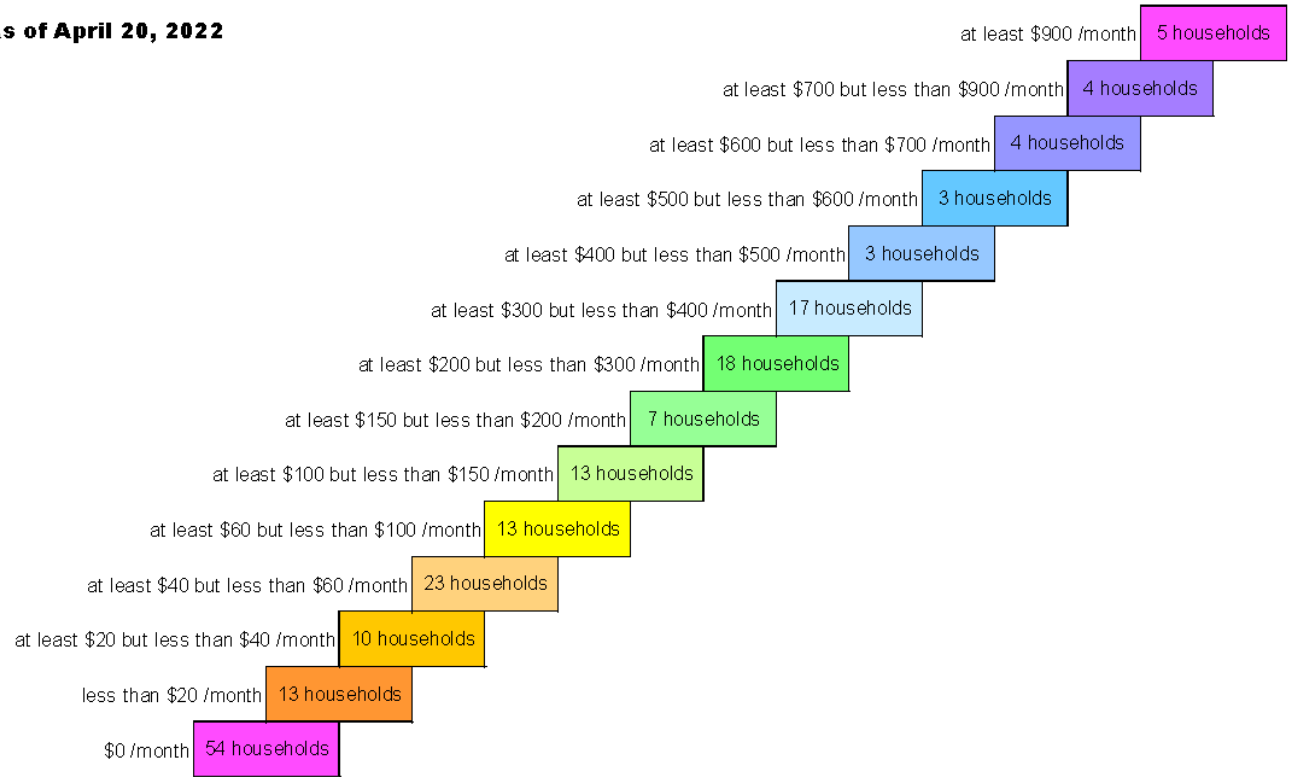
Submitted by Emily Jaycox and Sarah Francois

The final distribution:

First Unitarian Church

2022-2023 Pledging

As of April 20, 2022



Auction Committee

The theme for the auction was “Rekindle the Flame,” a reflection on our return to a more normal church life and the need to support that.

Seventy-two people attended in person, and 10 attended online. The theme, activities, and the mobility afforded by using the app made it feel like a party that happened to include an auction. It’s hard to convey how festive it felt to gather in this manner for the first time since Covid restrictions had largely eased.

Party: Jane Hoekelman organized a team to plan and carry out the auction party, including food, drink, decorations and activities. Many participants chose to dress up in the spirit of the ‘20s theme. A photo booth captured memories of the event. Heavy appetizers and signature cocktails made it easy for attendees to roam and mingle.

Auction. Auctioneer: Jonathan Miller (Emily’s brother) had served as our auctioneer twice before. He agreed to do this auction as well if he could participate remotely, AND if we used an app to manage the auction. He mentioned several he had experience with that had worked well from his point of view.

- Auction app: After reviewing several options, Kathy Wire selected PayBee. Among the benefits of using an auction app are its ability to manage background record-keeping, which made analysis and reporting much easier. While the technology did not perform flawlessly, we concluded that it wasn’t a bad first try.
- In person and remote bidders could bid on the same items

- Each bidder could see their winning bids and how much they had spent in real time. This meant we did not have to schedule a segment of the evening to count up everyone’s totals manually so that people would know how much they’d spent before the silent auction began
- Streamlined communication / acknowledgments with auction donors and winning bidders
- Automatically compiled a full list with contact info to provide to donors and winners of “sign up” events
- There were some glitches with the app and some tech issues with live streaming a remote auctioneer.

Live auction: Highlights included a week’s stay in Santa Fe at the casita of former members Joanne and Scot Boulton.

Paddle Raise: Former member Rob Harding led the paddle raise with a \$2000 donation, which was matched by several other participants.

Funds Raised: Over \$23,000

Paddle Raise: \$13,000+

Silent Auction: \$4200+

Live Auction: \$3300+

Tickets: \$2400+ (covered auction expenses such as food / drink)

Raffle tickets + “Second Chance” sales: \$300+

THANK YOU to all who bought a ticket, donated auction items / experiences, bid on items, helped with the party, worked on tech for the hybrid event, and assisted with check in and check out.

Auction committee: Kathy Wire (team leader, worked with app); Margaret Weck (silent auction); Emily Jaycox (live auction); Jane Hoekelman (Party planning). Special

thanks to the church staff, especially Lynn Hunt and Moe Hurst.

Submitted by Emily Jaycox and Kathy Wire

Facilities Cluster Reports

Overview:

The Facilities Committee oversees maintenance, repair, modification and upgrades to the building and grounds owned by the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis. Facilities, Landscaping, Green Sanctuary and Esthetics are fall under the Facilities Cluster and meet together as “Facilities”. All focus specifically on maintenance, beautification and the “greening” of the church and church grounds with an intent to provide a safe and welcoming environment for our congregants and visitors. Our slogan is “The Facilities Cluster- Keeping the Roof Up and the Weeds Down.”

Current Members: Clint Cruse (Facilities Chair/Cluster Captain), Lisa Cary (Landscaping Co-Chair), Karen Siegrist (Landscaping Co-Chair), Tom Finan, Mike Bray, Jane Hoekelman, John Cuntz, Hunter Hart, Luke Steffen, Alison Beehr, Rebecca Bolen, Stan Birge, Lynn Hunt (staff liaison). Thanks to the many additional volunteers who have helped out on Facilities and Landscaping work days.

During the period encompassed by the current budgetary cycle the Facilities committee has facilitated/assisted in the following facilities projects:

- We continue to work closely in support of the staff’s heroic efforts to keep everything in the building working properly and/or quickly repaired.
- Support of the Play Space completion
- Conducted work days (roof repairs, water damage repairs, door repairs,

cleaning and various and sundry smaller repair projects).

- Assisted in repairs to reduce/eliminate water issues in the building.
- Getting contractors in to evaluate RE and West flat roof, library wall damage, leaking gutters, Hosmer room water damage. Advocating for repairs of same.
- Provided safety training for greeters

Ongoing/Pending projects:

Recently approved roofing projects

- Library wall repair
- Gutter replacement
- Fellowship Hall water infiltration repair
- Hosmer room water damage repair
- Kitchen grease trap repair/replace
- Finishing plaster repairs at the rear of Fellowship Hall
- Make plaster and floor repairs and add shelves for the A/V control room
- Continue support of lighting enhancements as well as the livestreaming and sound systems
- Implement more formal training for things like boiler and A/V and sound systems
- Touch-Up Hope Chapel Overhang
- Repair concrete in front of main entrance
- Repainting of iron piping, more railings and fencing
- Various additional interior painting and plaster touchup

Facilities projects under consideration and/or anticipated next 1-5 yrs:

- Repaving/replacement of parking lot.(~\$6k-\$40k).

- Repair/Replacement of additional HVAC systems (~\$3k+ each).
- Replacement of appliances (stove ~\$5k).
- Acoustic treatments for Fellowship Hall (\$1500-\$5K).
- Conduct structural building inspections to identify current or pending issues.

The efforts, support and comradery of all the committee members and volunteers is VERY deeply appreciated!

Submitted by Clint Cruse, Chair

Landscaping Committee

Landscaping was overseen by Karen Siegrist and Lisa Cary. Regular Gardening Days were held in the Fall and Spring.

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. Twenty-five 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.

This year, with the number of Covid cases greatly reduced, we were able to resume various activities, such as providing transportation, assisting with three memorial services, and making home visits. We continued our practices of sending cards, providing meals, delivering groceries, and making phone calls. The Young Adult Group baked bread for volunteers to take to homebound members of the congregation during the winter holidays. Volunteers delivered flowering plants in the Spring to folks who have not been able to attend services or who have been bereaved.

The Team coordinators are deeply appreciative of the efforts of our resolute Care and Concern volunteer team and Rev. Kim. We also want to thank Claire Birge for her continued practice of sending out the wonderful, handcrafted cards that she creates.

Submitted by Team Coordinators: Judith Crouch, Karen Siegrist, and Larry Dusenbery

Film Group

It has been a challenge keeping a film discussion group functioning during the COVID pandemic, but a group of about twenty members have continued to meet.....usually virtually. The usual setup is to view a film that is available on a streaming platform and then meet via ZOOM to discuss it. Occasionally the film is also being shown in a local theater. The group has been able to meet monthly and enjoyed some in person get togethers during the summer months.

If the pandemic continues to diminish, it is hoped that the group can once again meet monthly in person, either outdoors or indoors in groups of six to eight with a ZOOM link provided for anyone who is unable to attend in person. Getting together for live theater events like the MUNI is also on the group's "wish list."

The Film Discussion Group is open to everyone interested in viewing and discussing film and theater.

Submitted by Judi Crouch, coordinator

Makers Ministry

This group continued to meet regularly (in person and via zoom) with facilitator Sherry Bassi.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee this year has consisted of seven very active and very participatory people: Emily Colton, Peggy Feinberg, Tom Finan, Catherine Hunter, Kevin Kellogg, Erin Milligan, and Gwenne Hickman.

Various members of the committee have attended three Newcomer Chats in the Fall and 3-5 Newcomer Chats in the Spring, as well as attending three New Member Orientation classes in each of both the Fall and Spring. Newcomer Chats are for new visitors to First Unitarian Church of St. Louis who are curious to find out about Unitarian Universalism. New Member

Orientation classes provide those seeking to become members a historic background and a general idea of what is offered at our church.

The Membership Committee, with the invaluable assistance of Lynn Hunt, Administrator, planned and executed the annual Fellowship Dinner on May 13, and will welcome new members with a luncheon after the service on New Member Sunday—June 4.

Most importantly of all, due to the efforts of both Rev. Kim and our committee, twelve new members have been welcomed into our congregation this year! Their bios are appearing in the Friday enews, as well as being posted in Fellowship Hall. These new members are:

- Kurt Johnson
- Fran Hoffman
- Kim and Gary Parks
- Sarah Vaughn
- Roy Cole
- Mike Bray
- Scott Sinclair
- Bethany Miscannon and Mitch Kraus
- Roz Cook and Thomas (T.J.) Begush

Now it's up to the entire congregation to get to know these terrific new members!

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 various sources including dues of \$30 a year, investment funds, donations and fundraising events.

Another source of income is the Opportunity Shop. The Op Shop was closed due to the pandemic but has now reopened. It has been

great to be open again after Sunday services. During the hiatus a number of members used the time to clean out and organize the Op Shop. It looks great and we have been running monthly specials.

2022-2023 marks our first full year of in person meetings. In addition the Alliance has committed to holding meetings on Zoom every Tuesday. The second and fourth Tuesdays of the month are Hybrid meetings (in person and Zoom). There is one business meeting per month.

The addition of the zoom room during the pandemic has helped us to stay in touch with members who are unable to attend in person. In addition, access to the Alliance Zoom room has expanded participation in our 2nd and 4th Tuesday programs as well.

Each year the Women's Alliance offers a scholarship to a woman 21 or older who is finishing her education, is a member of a Unitarian Universalist church or fellowship in our area, and is a registered student. There were no applicants for the scholarship this past year. The decision for this year's selectee will be made by the Women's Alliance Scholarship Committee in May. This year's selectee will receive a \$3,000 award.

This past year the Alliance continued maintaining the Little Free Pantry on the first week of each month. Members have donated items, cash and time to maintain this worthwhile project. We have contributed \$2,000 to the annual Canvass, \$400 to the Partner Church Scholarship Fund and \$200 to the First Church Community Fund. We also provide holiday gifts to church staff members.

The 2022-2023 Executive Committee:
President, Pamela Geppert; Vice-President, Kimberly Perry; Secretary, Vacant/Volunteer; Treasurer, Judith Crouch; Finance Chair, Sheryll Coulter; Program Chair, Carole Watson; Scholarship Chair,

Lori Calcaterra; and Churchmanship Chair, Judy Till.

Women's Alliance members can be found actively participating in every facet of First Unitarian Church of St. Louis. Our meetings and programs are open to anyone who wishes to attend.

Submitted by Pamela Geppert, President

Young Adult Group

The Young Adult Group (YAG) hosted the first formal meeting in November of 2022 & have had regular meetings every 3rd Sunday since. In December 2022, the YAG baked bread for the Care and Concern committee to deliver to administration & homebound members. In January, we celebrated the New Year together via an online chat group & watched the New Year's Celebration. The group also baked cookies for the February RE bake sale. The YAG has also started a group on the social media app Discord, moderated by members and church administration, where they stay connected. The YAG works to attend monthly events & have participated in church events, such as the auction & trivia night. Over the next year, we will continue to meet & connect outside of church. We continue to meet & invite new friends & church attendees when they come to service or reach out. For the remainder of the year, the YAG plans on supporting the church in volunteer opportunities, as well as host a YAG holiday dinner & bake bread in December. Some members may also be interested in attending the 2024 General Assembly Meeting & will look to plan for that in the future.

Submitted by Sam Rezanoff, facilitator

Programming Cluster Reports

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.

Clark Lecture

There was no lecture or committee this year.

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.

Covenant Groups adapted to the pandemic restrictions by meeting online via Zoom. This year they were able to start meeting in person.

The facilitators were:

Jan Herzog, Karen Siegrist & Erin Milligan, Tom Crouch & Peggy Feinberg, and Terry Yokota & Dan Franklin.

Covenant Groups continue to be one of the strongest ways for members and friends to get to know each other on a deeper level. Plans are being made to further expand the program in the next programming year.

Submitted by Lynn Hunt, Staff Liaison

ERDE (Earth Reverent Dedicants Extraordinaire)

ERDE which stands for Earth Reverent Dedicants Extraordinaire is a group established to support and honor our 7th principle, the earth is an interconnected web of existence. This past year ERDE has been returning to in person gatherings for winter and spring solstice and will also celebrate Beltane the arrival of late spring. The ERDE

group is an earth based worship group that honors ancient rituals and traditions and is open to anyone seeking a greater spiritual connection to nature.

Submitted by Sue Herzberg, Chair

Flowers

I hope everyone has enjoyed the return of fresh flowers for Sunday morning services this year! The flower arrangements are provided through the generosity of members and friends of the Church. Flowers contribute to the ambience of worship while giving the donors the opportunity to commemorate special people and occasions in their lives. In addition, poinsettias purchased by members and friends helped decorate the sanctuary during the winter holidays. Finally, special thanks go to Kimberly Perry for creating the beautiful Thanksgiving cornucopia this year.

Submitted by Dottie Kinscherf, coordinator

John Learned Bookshop

Inactive this year.

John Learned Library

Between May 1, 2022 and April 30, 2023, the Library Committee purchased 5 books, all of which are new titles. Library Committee activity over the past year has been primarily focused on preparing a new computer for library use, along with an updated version of the ResourceMate program that is used to catalog books and audiovisual materials as well as manage circulation. The library collection is available for browsing online at <https://www.firstuustlouis.org/learning/john-learned-library>. Books can be searched by title, author, publisher, subject area, and keyword. Members of the Library Committee in 2022-2023: Sarah Dashner, Dottie Kinscherf, Dori Miller, Joel Minor, and Terry Yokota.

Submitted by Terry Yokota, Chairperson

Music Committee

The Music Committee members are Pam Geppert, Greg Hoeltzel, Dwight Homer, Chris Kocher (chair), Judy Meyer, Carolyn Toft, John Watson, and Anna Roach. Ex-officio members are Joel Knapp and Earl Naylor. The Committee's focus this year was on supporting Joel and Earl in providing music for various services throughout the year.

Among the many contributions made by people both within and outside the committee are:

- Carolyn and Judy Meyer presented their traditional "First Sunday in Advent" two short pieces in November as well as a second contribution in April 2023.
- Judy Meyer substituted for Earl on December 11 when we would not have otherwise had someone to fill his role for the service.
- Various members of the choir donated their talents throughout the year. These include, but are not limited to, Tom Finan, Greg Hoeltzel, Pam Geppert, Dwight Homer, Alice Montgomery, Caitlin Hill, Matt Sluder, Chris Kocher, and others.
- Especially noteworthy was the Jazz Sunday organized primarily by Pam Geppert and Greg Hoeltzel, with participation from Tom Finan, Caitlin Hill, Alice Montgomery, Dwight Homer, Chris Kocher, Matt Sluder, and others.

The willingness and enthusiasm of members and friends within our church to contribute their many musical talents is greatly appreciated.

Submitted by Chris Kocher, Chair

Religious Education Committee

Members: Grace Munie, Rebecca Linz-O'Laughlin, Caitlin Hill, Elisa Reeves (part-year) and Danielle Kozemczak (Director Religious Education and Communications).

The major completion event of the RE Committee this year, in collaboration with Playspace and Facilities Committees, was the grand opening of the 7 Spaces Playspace on Sunday, November 20. The Playspace was installed by Seasons Cycle. The area is being used as an outdoor classroom and by families and facility renters and guests to run, play and enjoy nature. It is wonderful to see the completed project after all the planning, fundraising and work by everyone involved to get this major project completed.

Following review and discussion by the committee, recommendation was made to revise wording of the Safe Church Policy for Religious Education. Recommendations were presented to Church Counsel and then submitted by Counsel to Policy Board for final approval.

RE Family events that Committee supported the DRE and Religious Education Program this year included:

- Members of the Committee welcomed families upon arrival to church and helped them submit paperwork and go to correct classroom locations the first few weeks of the year (August/September).
- Sponsoring Week of Collecting Donations for/and Stocking the Little Pantry (2) (November and March)
- Coordinated Ornament making activity at Hanging of Greens Celebration (December)
- Helped with Pageant Rehearsal and Event (December)

- Youth Group Cooked and served Trinity Hot Lunch (November)
- Annual Unfish Fry Event was both Community Engagement activity (Visibility Central West End Community) and Fundraiser for the RE Program (March)

Boston Trip Group Fundraising takes lots of effort by committee, families and DRE. Thank you for the generous support of the congregation of these efforts, including:

- Car Wash Fundraiser (June)
- Hosted Chris Cakes Pancake Breakfast for Homecoming Sunday (September)
- Bake sales (2) hosted by the different classes in the RE Program (October, February)
- Trivia Night Fundraiser (April)

Boston Trip Group 2023 will travel in June 2023. Fundraising activities will continue for the 2024 Trip which is separated by one year instead of two due to pandemic delays of the 2023 trip.

Submitted by Grace Munie, Chai

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee usually meets on the last Wednesday of each month. The March meeting will be March 29th at 6PM. We hold our meetings both in-person and on Zoom.

The committee members, along with Rev. Kim Mason, are Tom Finan, Pamela Geppert (Chair), Dwight Homer, Adam Lunter, Mike Lunter. We also have a wonderful church staff who provide their talent and creativity to our worship experiences.

The committee works 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. We have been so excited to be back in the sanctuary and the addition of streaming services has expanded our ability to reach both members and many new congregants.

The WC plans services for one out of four Sundays during the church year and approximately ten services during the summer (arranging for guest speakers, visiting ministers, or service leaders from our own congregation). On WC Sundays, we collaborate with Earl Naylor, Music Director and Organist; Joel Knapp, Choir Director; as well as Danielle Kozemczak, RE Director and Audio-Visual (A/V) professional, Michael “Moe” Hurst for integrated inspiration. Technology has changed many of our experiences and we look at our practices to make sure that our worship experiences are enhanced by our use of technology.

Each month we look at our use of the Touchstones Worship Resources, a theme-based ministry program specifically for Unitarian Universalist congregations. The committee has been very satisfied with this worship resource and are looking forward to using it throughout the entire year since it is a twelve month program.

We have been building our worship team with experienced worship assistants and new worship assistants. We’ve held two worship assistant workshops. In addition, we are planning a workshop for Lay Leaders led by Reverend Kim. There is an on-going process for reviewing and updating our materials and guides for those involved in providing our worship experiences.

Over the last few months there has been an effort to add new music to our sung responses. It’s great when there are so many perspectives on our worship practices. We will continue working on providing a satisfying mixture of beloved ritual and new experiences.

Submitted by Pamela Geppert, Chair

Social Responsibility Cluster Reports

Social Responsibility Committee

The Social Responsibility Committee (SRC) offers opportunities to put our UU faith into action in the wider community through education, dialogue, fundraising, and volunteer activities consistent with our UU principles. Issues of health, hunger, and housing are primary.

The SRC focused attention this year on the Designated Collection program, SRC Coffee Hours and sponsorship of multigenerational volunteer activities.

2022-23 Selections Include:

The Caring Fund*
Arch City Defenders
The Partner Church Committee*
The First Church Community Fund*
Trinity Hot Lunch Activity*
Food Outreach
Little Free Pantry*
Gateway 180
Southside Early Childhood Center (SSEC)

*Denotes a First Church program, project or committee

From Homecoming Sunday through the end of March, Designated Collection totaled approximately \$11,000. Individual collections ranged from a low of \$487 to a high of \$2339.59; the latter amount was for the Christmas Eve collection which was split between SSEC and Gateway 180. The First Church Community Fund received the highest singular donation (\$1557.96) and the Trinity Hot Lunch the lowest (\$488); however, the Hot Lunch program is also the recipient of a second collection later in the year.

Through **First Church's Designated Collection** program members nominate qualified nonprofits or church committees as recipients of Sunday plate collections. Nonprofits must meet criteria that include serving needy families, children's educational access and success, or aid to the homeless and mentally ill.

Robert Ford Haitian Orphanage and School
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Prison Performing Arts
The Veterans Project
Robert Ford Haitian Orphanage
St. Martha's Hall
Dream Builders 4 Equity
SEED St. Louis
Women's Alliance Scholarship Fund*
Chips St Louis

SRC Coffee Hours Included presentations by staff of:

- Southside Early Childhood Center (SECC) with which First Church has had a relationship spanning over a century. Located on the city's southside, SSEC offers children equitable and inclusive learning opportunities and support. Many of its children come from disadvantaged families and benefit from SSEC's focus on early child development and critical developmental milestones.
- The Veteran's Project located in the heart of the Jeff Vander Lou

neighborhood builds specialized communities of tiny houses and wrap-around services to equip veterans with the tools needed to return to a stable, independent life. Services include housing, emergency assistance, food and employment support.

Volunteer Activities:

- The SRC coordinated the Sunday, March 5, Trinity Hot Lunch. A team of 15 volunteers of all ages prepared and served lunch for 80+ clients of Trinity Episcopal Church’s Food Ministry.
- Ongoing food collection (canned goods and pantry staples) for the Trinity Food Ministry

First Church Community Fund

Established in 1985, the First Church Community Fund (FCCF) supports First Church’s involvement in the community, social action programming, and members’ leadership in addressing community challenges.

Each July the FCCF committee issues an RFP to a wide variety of community organizations for micro-grants made possible by Fund income. For the 2022-23 CY, income of \$7600 enabled thirteen (13) grants. Selected organizations and grant awards are detailed below.

- **All Nana’s Kids Closet (allnannakids.org)** - Purchase of gloves and hats in aid of its mission of warm clothes for St. Louis’ children during winter
- **Energy Care (energycare.org)** - Purchase of electric blankets, heaters and smoke alarms for vulnerable seniors

- Each July, First Church volunteers participate in Operation Food Search’s food collection at Schnucks.

The SRC thanks our First Church members and Friends for their generous support of the Designated Collection program and participation in Sunday Coffee Hours.

SRC membership is open to all, and we invite interested individuals to speak with a committee member regarding our focus and work.

Respectfully submitted, Rosemary Lawton, Chair - Committee members: Kay Dusenbery, Kimberly Perry, Donald Jeffries & Dean Burns

- **Healing Action Network (healingaction.org)** - Healthy food options at its drop-in kitchen for victims of sex trafficking
- **Immigrant Home English Learning Program (ihelpstl.org)** - Educational supplies for youth participants
- **Joe’s Place (joesplacestl.org)** Outfitting of an additional bedroom/quarantine space for homeless teen boys
- **Lift for Life Gym (lifegym.org)** - support for its North City After School programming
- **Unleashing Potential (upstl.org)** – Infant formula for Strengthening Resilient Families program participants
- **AmeriCorps St Louis** - Shower services for the unhoused in Soulard
- **Bread and Roses** –Supplies for its Youth Initiative focused on the arts, health, and activism
 - **Community Mediation Services** - Support for its series of Ferguson police and community dialogues
 - **Crime Victim Center** -

Refurbished laptops to permit hiring of additional counseling staff

- **Dream Builders 4 Equity**
Support of its youth programming offering work skills, mentoring, educational support and training in entrepreneurship
- **St. Louis Art Works**
Stipends and program costs for sixteen teens in its Art Essentials program (art, educational skills and internships)

The FCCF committee is appreciative to all those in our church community and the community at large who financially contribute to the FCCF and enable its annual grants.

Submitted by:

The First Church Community Fund Committee:

Rosemary Lawton, Chair. Members: Lori Calcaterra, Kay Dusenbery, Julia Hart, Donald Jeffries, Stephany Kniep, Debbie Van Ryn, Lynn Shuter, 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

Current committee members are: Claire Birge, Stan Birge (Treasurer), Judith Crouch, Tom Crouch, Peggy Feinberg, Betsy Grimm-Howell, Gwenne Hickman,

Mike Nolan, Kimberly Perry (Chair), Nadine Vlietstra, Carole Watson, John Watson, Laura Zacher, and new member Robert Kokenyesi.

Several successful fundraising events were held during the year, including the holiday bake sale Sunday December 4, designated collection October 16 (P.C. Sunday), and the dinner/program Saturday October 22. The last was part of "Partner Church (P.C.) Week." The programming publicizes, educates, and encourages greater involvement by the entire Church community in our church's partnership with our Partner Church in Csókfalva, Romania. The P.C. Committee is grateful to the church community for its support.

First Church members of the P.C. committee Kimberly, Carole, Peggy, Judi, and Mike conducted a service October 16 titled "Transylvanian Unitarianism" for the annual P.C. Sunday. The service explored our Partner Church's theology, which can be described as Christian Unitarianism. A comparison with historic American Unitarianism was made. The service began with playing a recording of the Csókfalva church bells and included music by the choir, piano music of Hungarian Unitarian Bela Bartok played by organist Earl Naylor, the duet "Székely Blessing" sung by Kimberly and Pamela Geppert and accompanied by Jeanette Myers, and a Transylvanian history story told by Carole.

The Saturday night October 22 P.C. Dinner was the first since 2019. The event included a trivia contest organized by Tom and Judi, a raffle, a Transylvanian Blessing, recorded Transylvanian music, the traditional Hungarian goulash dinner, plus an update on our partner church presented by Kimberly. All committee members were involved in the dinner and bake sale.

The UUPCC (UU Partnership Church Council), which coordinates the partnership program, has disbanded. Fund transfers to the partner churches are being done by the

UUA International Office. An organization to continue the activities of the UUPCC is being developed. We look forward to pilgrimages becoming part of the future partnership organization.

The long-time minister of our Partner Church Lóránt Tokes transferred to another church in April 2022. The Transylvanian Unitarian Church Bishop assigned an interim minister for our partner church; he was Rev. Csongor Benedek. Rev. Benedek grew up in the Csokfalva church and is the son of the minister in the early days of our partnership, Rev. Jakob Benedek. In October a new minister was appointed to serve Csokfalva; this new “practicing assistant pastor” is named Rev. Noémi Tamási and is our partner church’s first female minister. We look forward to working with Rev. Tamási. The past several years have been challenging for the congregation, area, and country. The people have been affected by the pandemic and by the war in neighboring Ukraine.

Funds raised by the committee supported student scholarships for Csókfalva church youth to attend a Unitarian High School in a nearby town. Since the beginning of our partnership in 1991, our church has provided over fifty scholarships. Other ongoing expenses are providing a supplement to the minister’s meager salary and making a donation to the UUA International Office Partner Church Program.

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

Submitted by Kimberly Perry, Chair

St. Louis Foundation for Children

The St. Louis Unitarian Foundation for Children is the name under which the Mission Free School Board 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 over \$265,000 to 13 agencies in St. Louis supporting children in various ways. You may be interested in knowing more about agencies we support, or have suggestions about worthy organizations we might consider. If so, the trustees would welcome your interest. They are Sue Ashwell, Claire Birge, Jama Dodson, Chuck Eby, Melanie Fathman, Jane Hoekelman, Erin Milligan, and Steve Smidowicz. Rev Kim Mason is an ex officio member.

Submitted by Sue Ashwell, President, Board of Trustees

Toward Justice

The Saturday morning Black Lives Matter Vigil continues. Cathy Rauch has approached the local and statewide Unitarian Churches to see if they will join us in raising money to erase medical debt. Every \$100 dollars raised erases \$10,000 dollars of medical debt. We would as a group be committed to raising \$10,000 over 3-4 months. We would make a sign with a QR code so that people passing by on Kingshighway could donate.

Several of our group have been volunteering for the Ashrei Foundation Voter ID project. Also we are still working with MCU. We are hoping to engage Holy Ground institutions to adopt a project to canvas our neighborhoods to determine what issues most concern the residents. This would be a good opportunity to get to know our neighbors and to raise an awareness of our Church.

Rev Kim Mason and Kevin Kellogg co-lead a series of discussions on the UUA Common Read, *Mistakes and Miracles*. The book was written by two UU Ministers who researched how five

congregations were able to successfully become more diverse. There were seven additional participants.

Lisa Ross, chair of the Outreach and Social Action cluster, led the Active Hope Project. This arose out of the Policy Board's request to get input from congregants about their views of "advancing social justice" and how the church should live out that part of our mission statement. Several of our group participated in leading one-on-one conversations and listening circles. The project is ongoing.

We have been writing letters to the editor at the Post Dispatch about current issues.

Rev. Kim, Danielle Kozemczak, and nine members drove to Jefferson City to protest the Legislature's attack on Trans children and adults.

Cathy, Margaret and Kevin organized ARREST III - Economic Justice, four sessions which started on April 20.

First Unitarian hosted a panel discussion on April 27 on the Freedom of Religion Lawsuit, by the Ashrei Foundation, Rev. Tracy Blackmun, Rabbi Susan Talve and several other ministers, challenging the Missouri ban on Abortion.

Submitted by Susan Lammert, chair

Welcoming Congregations

Welcoming Congregations, which is an advocacy and community group for LGBTQ individuals, reformed this year. The group is planning a Pride Service for June and Coffee House in June.