

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF  ONEONTA  
Creating beloved community... Freely seeking the light... Reaching for a better world...



# 2021-2022 Annual Congregational Report

Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta  
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# Minister's Report

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*Submitted by Rev. Rachel Baker, Interim Minister*

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

### Accomplishments

- As the Interim Minister, my primary focus is the interim work that the congregation and I do together. There is a complete recap of this work below.
- The other major accomplishment of the congregation this past year was purchasing the adjacent property at 10 Ford and selling the long-time religious education and office building at 16 Ford. The year was filled with meetings, discussions, fundraising, and last minute figurings. With this purchase the congregation has the potential to fulfill a long-time dream to expand the historic Chapin Memorial building in the future.

### Challenges

- The primary challenge for the congregation is encouraging members and friends to serve the congregation through committee and team leadership. This is true for all congregations but knowing this does not make the challenge less challenging. See the Worship Ministries for specific examples of how the lack of congregational service is negatively impacting the congregation.
- After months without an office, the balcony in Chapin was designated as the temporary minister's office. I moved some of my office items and books to the balcony in February. I share the space with music, choir, office, and bookkeeping supplies, and the video camera for multiplatform worship and events. I work from home often. This arrangement works fine for now, but it may not be sustainable for long time use without additional adjustments.
- The balcony is not readily accessible by all. With a predominantly aging population, I have begun offering to meet with folks in the balcony, in the sanctuary, outside, and sometimes, if I suspect that it may be challenging for someone to climb the stairs, on members' balconies or in homes. Though it is lovely to meet with folks in their homes, it may set precedents and/or expectations that the minister visits with members and friends at their homes. This has the potential to look like there are insiders and outsiders of the congregation or that the minister is closer to some congregants than to others. This dynamic is not healthy for a congregation.

### Future Goals

- In the coming year, I will continue with the Interim Ministry work, though this work seems to be slowing down as we enter the third year together. Soon the congregation will have a new Mission and Vision, which will guide the search for a new settled minister. As part of the interim work, I hope to spend some time with the Social Action Team to review the connections they have with the community.

- I will take a strong lead on developing a collection of Financial Management Policies. The existing financial polices are scattered within and among financial procedures, guidelines, and other miscellaneous documents. Some financial decisions are made based on relationships and perceived trustworthiness, rather than transparent polices. I hope the Financial Management Policies will help the congregation move to a more transparent way to manage the finances.
- I feel that the endowment management is the most opaque financial area of the congregation. I have not been able to do any interim work on the endowments or with the Endowment Committee. If I am unable to pursue interim work with the Endowment Committee in the coming year, I recommend that the next settled minister, the Board of Trustees, and the congregation as a whole develop ways to help the endowments, and the Endowment Committee's actions, to be more transparent.

## **Interim Ministry Recap**

During an intentional Interim Ministry, the congregation engages with five focus areas. These are: Heritage (reviewing how the congregation has been shaped and formed); Leadership (reviewing the membership needs and its ways of organizing and developing new and effective leadership and staffing); Mission (defining and redefining sense of purpose and direction); Connections (discovering all the relationships a faith community builds outside of itself); and Future (developing congregational and pastoral profiles). These five focus areas help a congregation prepare to search for and settle the next minister.

Over the past two years, the InterCOM (the Interim Ministry Team and the Committee on Ministry combined), the Board of Trustees (BOT), staff, and Minister led the congregation through the following focus areas with the following activities and events:

### **Heritage**

- Two online storytelling sessions in November 2020
- One listening circle on August 15, 2021
- Two in-person storytelling sessions in September 2021
- Creation of the Heritage Tree in the sanctuary
- A gathering of Religious Education (RE) families evolved into a storytelling session, November 2021
- Two worship services about the history and heritage of UUSO

### **Leadership and Internal Systems**

- Three sessions on the finances of the congregation in November 2020 and January 2021
- Staff and lay leadership changes
- Ongoing review of all policies and other procedures

### **Mission**

- Three fun "Getting to Know UU Again" gatherings in December 2021, January 2022, and February 2022
- Healthier Communication Styles worship and workshop, "We Should Talk," March 2022
- Launched new mission and vision development on March 6, 2022, and 13 Vision Circles gathered over two months. 46 UUSO members participated, answering the following questions:

1. When have you felt most joyous/most full of life? ALTERNATE/  
ADDITIONAL: How has the congregation transformed me to be a better person?
  2. How has the congregation made a positive impact in the wider community? What is the congregation known for in the wider community?
  3. In 5, 15, and 25 years what could the congregation be known for in a way that makes me proud?
- Mid-May 2022, 40 pages of formatted notes from the Vision Circles were given to Adrienne Martini. Adrienne reviewed and compiled notes. Then she wrote a draft of the Mission and Vision Statements.
  - Early July, InterCOM, Rev. Rachel, and Adrienne met to discuss how to present the draft Mission and Vision Statements to the congregation.
  - Following a Special Congregational Meeting to vote on the slate of Ministerial Search Committee members, the congregation discussed and offered feedback on the draft of the new Mission and Vision of the congregation. The InterCOM hopes to offer additional discussion and feedback opportunities. At the time of writing this report, these have not yet been scheduled. The draft and feedback will return to Adrienne for additional edits.
  - There will be a Special Congregational Meeting to vote to approve the new Mission and Vision. It is hoped that this will be scheduled at the end of August 2022.

### **Connections**

- This has not been formally addressed.

### **Interim Ministry Appraisals**

- The Board, InterCOM, and I prepared Interim Ministry Appraisals in spring 2021 and spring 2022. In the coming year we will prepare one in fall 2022 and a final appraisal in late spring at the end of the three years.

## **Committee on Ministry Activity**

Some congregations have built into their policies about the Committee on Ministry (COM) to anonymously give an annual report about their activities through the year to the Board of Trustees and the congregation. The COM agreed to an annual report; however, because a report has not been given in the past, I have included the last few years here. This information was previously included in a Report to the Board.

### **Activity since January 2019**

- Covenant Conflict Resolutions with Minister: 3 discussed and documented. (This does not include issues raised by members who then did not wish to resolve the issues in relationship with the Minister.)
- Covenant Conflict Resolutions among Members: 0 documented. (This does not include reported conflicts where one or the other party did not wish to pursue a resolution together.)
- Limited Access Agreements: 0 active. (These might be for folks on sexual abuse registries who agree to specific actions to create a safer congregation, or for members/friends who have specific guidelines about congregational participation related to their behavior/presence.)

Note: In a covenantal community conflict cannot be addressed or resolved without the participation of the parties involved. When one party, or the parties, are unwilling to come together, both or all involved may remain hurt or unsettled and the conflict is not resolved, which maintains a discomfort within the relationship and within the congregation.

# Board of Trustees

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*Submitted by Ben Friedell*

## **Board Members**

*President:* Ben Friedell (2020-2023, first term)

*Vice President:* Rosemary Summers (2021-2024, second term)

*Clerk:* Elayne Mosher-Campoli (2022-2025, second term)

Keith Wilcox (2019-2022, second term)

Cathi Wiltsey (2020-2023, first term)

Zanna McKay (2022-2025, first term)

Donna Behrendt (2020-2022, resigned)

At the end of the 2021-2022 fiscal year, Cathi Wiltsey and Zanna McKay replaced Ben Friedell as Board Co-Presidents. Elayne Mosher-Campoli will continue on as Board Clerk. There will be no Vice-President during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

## **Mission**

The Board of Trustees' mission is to facilitate the spiritual and financial growth and sustainability of the Society. The Board strives to carry out the mission of the congregation.

## **Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals**

The Board met monthly by Zoom. We had two retreats over the course of the year, as we realized that we did not have time during our regular Board meetings to delve more deeply into some of the issues facing the Congregation. We adopted the use of a Consent Agenda, which allowed us to accept reports and minutes which had been previously distributed; any BOT member could request that an item be separated out for discussion before accepting it. Many of our meetings started with discussion of an educational reading selected for us by Interim Minister Rev. Rachel Baker.

With the ongoing pandemic, the sale and purchase of property, and starting the search process for a settled minister, it was a very busy year for the BOT. Through the efforts of many UUSO members, the Congregation was able to successfully negotiate the sale of the Olympia Brown House at 16 Ford Ave. (purchased 20 years earlier because we had run out of space in the church building for Religious Education and administrative offices) and the purchase of the property at 10 Ford Ave. adjacent to our church. This process required several special BOT and Congregational meetings.

The BOT members also spent a great deal of time recruiting UUSO members to join the Board and other important committees. The Congregation approved a Bylaws change reducing the number of BOT members from nine to "seven to nine." Despite these struggles with recruitment, the BOT was able to find seven Members to form an excellent and diverse Ministerial Search Committee to find a settled minister before the end of Rev. Rachel's third and final year of Interim Ministry with UUSO.

## Committee and Team Reports

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# Aesthetics Committee

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*Submitted by Kathy Paranya*

## Committee Members

*Chair:* Kathy Paranya

*Board Liaison:* Donna Behrendt

Arleen Benedict

Bob Brzozowski

Heidi Siegfried

Rosalind Thomas

Zanna McKay

Anne Ray (Emeritus)

Doug Hallberg (Resigned summer 2021)

Rich Stelling (Resigned spring 2022, after Siegfried Windows were completed)

## Mission

The Aesthetics Committee makes recommendations to the Board related to furnishings and décor. These recommendations carefully consider the nature of each space, including historical context and function. The committee collaborates with affected and interested parties.

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

The Aesthetics Committee has been busy and has accomplished quite a lot this year. We have been meeting via Zoom for most of the year, but have met a few times in person when necessary.

### Completed Projects

**Wayside Pulpit:** Thanks to a generous gift from Chuck and Dotty Hudson, we were able to fully fund and complete the installation of a new Wayside Pulpit sign in front of the church. The sign was built by RAPP Signs of Greene, NY and is lit with solar-powered lighting from Silicon Solar Company in Bainbridge, NY. We also had funds donated for the Wayside Pulpit from the 2020 year-end-appeal. The sign was constructed with windows on both sides and built with a shatter resistant glass. However, a stray icy snowball or rock was thrown into the sign on a frigid winter night in January, and one side was broken. We have now replaced the glass with polycarbonate panels on both sides. With some of our funds, we have had several colorful new posters printed for the sign, and we will probably have more printed in the future. In addition, we have many old Wayside Pulpit statements that we will continue to use and post in the sign when the messages are changed periodically.

**Alice Siegfried Stained Glass Windows:** The family of Alice Siegfried generously funded the design, fabrication, and installation of two arched stained glass windows at the front of the church sanctuary. This has been a multi-year project, but it was completed this spring when the windows

were installed to replace the amber-yellow windows that had been installed many years ago. The new windows were designed and built by Fabio Pizzol of Italy and Niantic, CT. The frames for the windows were built by Adam Scudder of Maryland, NY. Adam Scudder also built custom storm windows for the two Siegfried windows, as well as the old half-circular stained glass window on the same wall of the church. We are very thankful for the gift of these wonderful new windows that will be in the church as long as the building stands. Having the windows made was a long-time wish of Alice's, and they are a very fitting addition to the church sanctuary in her memory.

**Minister's Chairs:** The three large chairs in the front of the sanctuary that the Minister and assistants use during the church service were all reupholstered this year by Sue Beames of Oneonta. In addition to the new covering for the chairs, all springs were replaced and new padding added. The funding for reupholstering the chairs was provided by a grant from the Endowment Committee.

# Audio Team

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*Submitted by Scott Segar*

## **Team Members**

*Chair:* Scott Segar (resigned December 2021)

Julian Pecenco

Elizabeth Small

## **Mission**

The Audio Team is responsible for set-up and operation of the sound system for Sunday services. The team also records services for archival purposes and the production of podcasts. On occasion, the members of the team are called upon to provide technical support for other events sponsored by UUSO. As services moved to an online format due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has provided technical support for Zoom services.

## **Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals**

This year marked several significant transitions. UUSO returned to in-person services and incorporated a Zoom option to continue to serve members and friends who are unable or not comfortable attending services in person. In December 2021, Scott Segar left the team and supervision fell to Rev. Rachel Baker. Regular operations were assumed by several of the young-adult members of the congregation while Scott continued producing podcasts. A part-time paid audio position has been proposed by Rev. Rachel.

Two new pieces of equipment were purchased: a new computer for the A/V room and a wireless lapel microphone.

# Committee on Ministry

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*Submitted by Scott Segar*

## **Committee Members**

*Chair:* Scott Segar  
Kate Seeley  
Laura Reyda

## **Mission**

The Committee on Ministry (COM) works with the Minister to monitor the ministries of UUSO and encourage right relationships within the UUSO community.

## **Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals**

The COM continued to hold listening circles focused on who we want to be as a congregation and issues surrounding the departure of Rev. Craig Schwalenberg. In conjunction with the Interim Committee, the COM also led a service about healthy communication and conflict management/resolution. Also with the Interim Committee, the COM held a series of sessions with members of the congregation to shape the new Mission and Vision Statements. A draft has been submitted for comment with the goal of approval at the Fall Congregational Meeting.

Scott Segar's second term has come to completion and Sue Cotter has been elected to replace him.

The plan for the COM in the upcoming year is to work closely with Interim Minister Rev. Rachel Baker and the Interim Committee to finalize our Mission and Vision Statements and to assist with the transition to a settled minister.

# Cookies and Crafts Fundraiser

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*Submitted by Justine Roefs*

## **Team Members**

*Co-Chair:* Justine Roefs

*Co-Chair:* Rhiannon Ham

Jenny Bagby

Jane Bachman

Brian Bendlin

Jeane Bennett-O'Dea

Deb Bruce

Vickie Andritz

Liz Jacob-Carter

Jennifer Kemper

Prue Stelling

Pam Strother

## **Mission**

Our mission is to raise funds for UUSO and bring cheer to the UUSO and Oneonta community around the holidays.

## **Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals**

### **Cookies and Crafts 2021**

- Overall Sales: \$9,598
- Vendor Sales(UUSO keeps a percentage): \$6,125
- Cookies, Gourmet Table, Kitchen and Raffle Sales (100% UUSO profit): \$3,473
- Total Profits to UUSO: \$4,455

### **Future Goals**

We are currently planning our in-person event for this year. The eat-in cafe portion is still in limbo, but we should have vendors, gourmet items, assorted cookies, and a raffle table all ready to go for Saturday, December 3, 2022.

# Endowment Committee

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*Submitted by Karl Seeley*

## Committee Members

*Chair:* Karl Seeley

*Financial Secretary:* Margaret Davis

Paul Agoglia

Deb Bruce

Keith Willcox

## Mission

The Endowment Committee is charged with the stewardship of all endowed funds of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta, Inc. This stewardship includes the raising, administration, and disbursement of funds given to the Society for all its endowed funds.

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

The committee rolled out an online grant application form, developed by Deb Bruce.

Applications seem to have slowed during the pandemic. We hope to see them pick up this fall, as well as moving forward with procedures for planned giving.

Larry Armstrong has stepped down from the committee; we are thankful for his many years of dedicated service.

As of June 30, 2022, the balances of the funds overseen by the Endowment Committee were:

FUND	BALANCE
Community Fund	\$168,736
Legacy/Love Alice Fund	\$51,475
Mara Kern Library Fund	\$34,618
Mali Education Endowment	\$16,100

# Finance Committee

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*Submitted by Mary Ruhoff and Alan Zimmerman*

## Committee Members

*Chair:* Mary Ruhoff (term ends 2022)

*Treasurer and Board Liaison:* Alan Zimmerman, ex officio, non-voting member

*Assistant Treasurer:* Tracy Verma, ex officio, non-voting member

*Staff Bookkeeper:* Taylor Czyzewski, non-voting member

*Secretary:* Jendy Murphy (term ends 2024)

Rev. Rachel Baker, ex officio, non-voting member

Bill Benedict (term ends 2025)

Laura Reyda (term ends 2023)

Kari Reynolds, Stewardship and Fundraising Committee Chair, was a regular attendee.

## Mission

The Finance Committee (FC) oversees all UUSO finances (with the exception of the funds managed by the Endowment Committee), with the goal of establishing and following best practices.

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

The FC followed the current FC Annual Calendar to be sure that financial obligations were addressed in a timely fashion (i.e., payment of UUA dues, submission of Payment Card Industry (PCI) forms, worker's comp and disability filing, review of payroll adjustments, if any, etc).

From July through June, the FC met on the second Wednesday of each month via Zoom. Bill Benedict began each meeting with insightful opening words. The monthly Balance Sheet and the Profit and Loss statement were reviewed. Alan gave monthly financial reports to the Board and served as the FC liaison to the Board. Because non-pledge donations for the year were significantly above the projected figure and expenses were below the projected figure, UUSO finished the 2021-2022 year with a small surplus.

With in-person services resuming, the procedure for counting, reporting, and securing the weekly collection was updated, as was the procedure for handling monies from fundraising events such as Cookies and Crafts, Muffins for Mali, the Book and Plant Sale, etc.

Alan, Treasurer, and Taylor, Staff Bookkeeper, assisted in recording the sale of 16 Ford Avenue and the purchase of 10 Ford Avenue. There were a lot of hoops to jump through (requirements imposed by New York State when a non-profit organization sells a property, moving expenses, etc). In addition, there were logistical issues to resolve (where to keep the safe, what space is there for Taylor to do her work, where to store financial records, application for tax exemption for 10 Ford, etc). We have yet to determine what work needs to be done at 10 Ford — both short-term, so that the space can be used in the near future, and long-term, which could mean razing 10 Ford and building a new structure in its place.

The FC functioned with the minimum number of four voting members. Throughout the year, the FC submitted to the Board for approval the names of UUSO Members who might serve on the FC; however, attempts to recruit new committee members were unsuccessful.

The FC reviewed the fundraising requests from the Stewardship and Fundraising Committee for the Year-End Appeal. In addition, the FC suggested that the undesignated funds be divided between the Preservation Fund and 10 Ford Avenue projects.

The FC suggested that an application to NYSCU for a capital project be postponed until we have a settled minister.

To prepare the annual budget for 2022-2023, budget requests were sent to committees, teams, Personnel Committee, Minister, staff, and others. The FC — along with the Stewardship and Fundraising Committee — used the requests and spending reports to prepare a preliminary budget. A budget review meeting was held prior to the Congregational Meeting on June 12, 2022. Although the stewardship campaign was successful (in spite of there being fewer pledging units than the previous fiscal year), there is the expectation of significant increases in expenditures for 2022-2023. As a result, the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 has an operating budget deficit of about \$24,000, plus the estimated \$19,000 in expenses for the ministerial search. The congregation is looking at a total deficit of about \$43,000. Meeting our financial obligations in the FY 2022-2023 will be a challenge.



# Historian

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*Submitted by Bob Brzozowski, Historian*

## **Mission**

The mission of the UUSO Historian is to collect and preserve archives and artifacts reflecting the Society's history over the 170 years that Universalists and Unitarian Universalists have met in Oneonta. Knowing our past enriches our present and prepares us for the future, as individuals and as a congregation.

## **Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals**

With the sale of 16 Ford Avenue, all its contents, including the archives, were removed. Rev. Rachel and I took some important documents for safekeeping and the rest were put in storage by the Properties Committee, awaiting the time when the collections can be accessed again at 10 Ford Avenue.

On November 7, 2021, Mary Ruhoff and I presented a Sunday service based on one that Rev. Dr. Tony Larsen gave in 1982 during his transformational six-week tenure at UUSO as a minister-on-loan from Olympia Brown UU Church in Racine, WI. Tony's sermon "What Are We Doing To Your Child?" was read, along with the hymns and readings from the original service. Thanks to Rev. Dr. Larsen for his cooperation and to Tim Horne for his musical talent.

With the approval of the Board of Trustees, in January 2022 I sent a framed panoramic photo of the campus of St. Lawrence University to the SLU library archives in Canton, NY. The photo depicts the campus some 100 years ago. St. Lawrence is an historic Universalist institution with a divinity program from which Olympia Brown received her degree. The photo had long been in the UUSO collections but did not have a direct relationship to the UUSO. The donation was much appreciated, as the SLU archives had not previously included this early view of the campus.

As UUSO Historian and a member of the Aesthetics Committee, I was part of the May 22, 2022, service at which the new stained glass windows were dedicated. At both the service and the public open house which followed, I spoke about Chapin Memorial's historic windows and the donors who made them possible almost 125 years ago.

Plans for the future include the completion and distribution of an informational handout about Chapin Memorial's stained glass windows, the religious symbolism reflected in them, and their donors. Additionally, I look forward to the archives once again being accessible in their new location at 10 Ford Avenue.

Thanks to Rev. Rachel, Cynthia Squires, and Mary Ruhoff for their assistance during the past year.

# Mali Education Project

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*Submitted by Annemarie Hosnedl*

## Team Members

*Chair:* Annemarie Hosnedl (resigned June 2022)

*Sponsorship Coordinator:* Shirley Ferguson

Shirley Ferguson

Susan Ryder

Dottie Hudson

Zanna McKay

Suzanne Miller

Jeanette Grimes

Pat Donnelly

Prue Stelling

Carolyn Wolf-Gould

Karen Palmer

Ellen Phillips

Abbie and Lewis Wendell

Rev. Rachel Baker

## Mission

The Mali Education Project partners with Youchaou's School in Mali to support education for children and to promote intercultural growth for ourselves and our communities. The project supports the mission of UUSO in that we have created beloved community among ourselves and across the world to our partners in Africa. We allow the sponsored children to "seek the light" through their education and hope that they will reach for a better world for their families and community.

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

### Accomplishments

We sent our annual collected sponsorship fees to Youchaou for 56 students at Youchaou's School along with some additional funds for a total of \$16,000. The bank transfer fees are extremely high — with assistance from the UUSO treasurer, we are searching for an alternative transfer method that will not expend as much of our collected funds. This is an ongoing problem that Susan Ryder is tackling for our next transfer in the coming months.

We held our monthly meetings over Zoom or in person outdoors as weather permitted. We were able to have a modified "Muffins for Mali" event around the holidays, as the sanctuary was open for limited use during part of this fiscal year. We plan to do the same this coming holiday season, since the sale was well-received and allowed us to raise some funds again after being limited by the pandemic shutdown. We were not, however, able to hold our Mali Banquet fundraiser, but we hope to hold it once again this spring. The endowment money that we received from the Lane Foundation has not yet been invested — after talking with Larry Armstrong, we know that he does not want to commit it to the recently volatile stock market, but instead intends to put it into laddered CDs that are paying a better return since the increase in interest rates by the Federal Reserve.

## **School News**

We are in periodic contact with Youchaou and are elated that his students, including our sponsored children, are doing extremely well on their national exams, and many have graduated and are going on to universities. The political unrest in Mali is concerning, with threats by Al Qaeda and a government coup of their elected president. In spite of these events, the school continues its day-to-day operations and we are encouraged that they seem to be coping and moving forward with their mission.

# Memorial Committee

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*Submitted by Arleen Benedict*

## Committee Members

*Chair:* Arleen Benedict

*Chair:* Linda Wilcox (reigned from position in 2022, remains on committee)

*Book of Records:* Jendy Murphy

*Book of Records:* Mary Ambrose (resigned from position in 2022, remains on committee)

*Plaque Manager:* William Benedict

*Garden Placement:* Julia Gregory

## Mission

The Memorial Committee has a threefold purpose:

1. To maintain the Memorial Plaque in the sanctuary and to record on the plaque the names and dates of deceased members and friends of UUSO.
2. To maintain permanent records which will contain information on the Memorial Plaque and standard biographical data (when found and provided) for historical and family use.
3. To monitor the maintenance of the Ruth Achenbach Memorial Garden so that it endures as a place for quiet reflection, remembrance and the interment or scattering of cremains.

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

The following names and birth and death dates of UUSO members and friends were added to the Memorial Plaque at the back of the sanctuary:

Carol Lewis-Coryell

George Misner

Paul Robinson

Bob Rothenberg

Robert Rightmire

Gerri Scheele

Paul Sheele

Alice Siegfried

Joseph Story

Ruth Tarter

Letters were sent to the families of the deceased informing them we wished to honor and remember their family member by adding their name to the Memorial Plaque. Engraved brass plates were ordered and families were informed that the name plates had been added to the plaque.

Obituaries, photographs, mementos, and Orders of Memorial Services, if found or donated, were put in The Book of Records with at least a page dedicated to each person.

The Chancel Table was decorated for the service on Sunday, May 29 of Memorial Day weekend. The Books of Records were included in the display and were made available after the service for the congregation to look through.

# Nominating Committee

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*Submitted by Bob Brzozowski*

## Committee Members

*Chair:* Bob Brzozowski (2019 - 2022)

Margaret Davis (2020 - 2023)

Justine Roefs (2021 - 2024)

Susan Ryder (2022 - 2025)

## Mission

The Nominating Committee's purpose is to recruit and nominate able people for leadership positions in our Unitarian Universalist congregation in order to uphold and foster UUSO values both within our congregation and in the community at large.

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

Per the UUSO Bylaws, the Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Board of Trustees and the Minister, is to prepare a list of nominees for all positions to be voted on at the Annual Meeting. We began meeting early in 2022 to prepare a slate of nominees for the elections at the Annual Meeting on June 12, 2022.

The Committee was challenged again this year by several factors, including the continued presence of Covid-19 in our community and the reduced size of the UUSO membership. The Nominating Committee was not involved with the Ministerial Search Committee, but with that committee also being formed, there were more positions to be filled this year than usual.

The following slate was nominated and elected by the Committee, all for three-year terms:

*Board of Trustees:* Katy Bridgers, Zanna McKay, Elayne Mosher Campoli

*Endowment Committee:* Keith Willcox

*Committee on Ministry:* Sue Cotter

*Nominating Committee:* Susan Ryder

The committee was unable to find a nominee again this year for the position of Moderator. We recommend that the Bylaws be revised to address the course of action if a Moderator has not been elected. On the recommendation of Rev. Rachel, the Office Administrator will now keep a spreadsheet of elected officers and their terms. I assisted Katie Huntington in setting up such a spreadsheet. This should be useful to all committees, including the Nominating Committee, in the future.

# Office Administrator

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*Submitted by Katie Huntington*

## **Mission**

The Office Administrator manages all UUSO facilities, office procedures, equipment, and internal/external communications. Additionally, the Office Administrator tracks membership data and completes administrative requests as directed by the Minister and in consultation with the Treasurer, UUSO staff, and leadership.

## **Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals**

There were a number of major administrative tasks that happened to converge this year. The following is a brief summarization of atypical projects that were accomplished or initiated during the 2021-2022 fiscal year:

- Redesigned Orders of Service in order to save paper.
- Helped facilitate the move out of 16 Ford, including overseeing the donation and disposal of unusable items and supervising the moving crew as they transported items into 10 Ford and Chapin for storage.
- Because 16 Ford shared a key with Chapin, the front door lock on Chapin had to be replaced for security. Additionally, two separate locks were added to the Chapin loft and kitchen so that these spaces can be used as temporary, makeshift offices while repairs are made to 10 Ford.
- Developed a Channels of Communication Guide in consultation with Rev. Rachel. This guide provides information about the many different ways UUSO members and friends may communicate with each other and with the UUSO community as a whole.
- Began uploading and organizing UUSO's documents to Google Drive for long-term storage. This is an intensive project that I have not yet finished, but the end goal is for each Committee, Team, or area to have a private folder where members may easily store and access relevant documents.
- Researched, purchased, and set up a new office computer with help from Jon Dyer after our previous office computer stopped working.
- The current office copier does not have a functional scanning feature, nor can it print in color. I researched various copiers that would address these needs, but I have not yet purchased a new office copier due to supply-chain issues.
- Developed a Sunday Service Helper schedule to coordinate Worship Associates, AV Technicians, Zoom Assistants, Ushers, Chancel Table decorators, Social Hour Hosts, Welcome Table volunteers, and Time for All Ages volunteers.
- Transitioned all UUSO email addresses from Round Cube to Gmail. UUSO staff members were having myriad issues sending and receiving their email with Round Cube — switching to Gmail appears to have resolved these problems. Additionally, Gmail allows the Office Administrator to easily set up and remove UUSO email addresses whenever necessary, as well as set up and remove email forwarding from UUSO addresses to the personal addresses of Committee Chairs and Team Leaders.

I began this position in May of 2021 — during the past year, I have learned a tremendous amount about UUSO and how I might best serve the congregation and community in my role as Office Administrator. My goals for the upcoming year are to continue the process of uploading and organizing UUSO's documents to Google Drive for long-term storage, and to work with Rev. Rachel and the UUSO staff members, officers, and leadership to begin the process of creating a more functional, accessible, and aesthetically cohesive website.

# Personnel Committee

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*Submitted by Rev. Rachel Baker*

## **Committee Members**

Rev. Rachel Baker  
Kathy Shimberg  
Amy Forster-Rothbart

## **Mission**

The Personnel Committee exists to monitor and maintain the personnel policies and procedures of the congregation. The committee provides administrative accountability for the Minister in their role as Head of Staff and works to ensure compliance with all relevant employment laws and guidelines. (Excerpted from the revised charter dated September 23, 2020)

## **Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals**

### **Accomplishments**

The Personnel Committee reviewed the UUA's recommendations for employee salaries. Based on this the Committee recommended increased staff salaries based on cost of living. Additional flex hours were recommended for the Office Administrator and Custodian.

In response to the volunteer AV Techs expressing a desire to reduce or end their time in this service to the congregation, the Board of Trustees, and Personnel Committee agreed to the Interim Minister's suggestion of hiring four teens to run AV on Sunday mornings until a better or more permanent solution can be found. The teens were already employed as childcare providers. Four teens eagerly agreed to this new position. Though it is in no way related to either of her positions as Office Administrator or Acting Religious Education Coordinator, Katie Huntington schedules the teens for AV duty at the same that she schedules the teens for the nursery.

The Interim Minister/Head of Staff, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, Board of Trustees, and longtime volunteer Audio/Visual Technicians, created job description for a staff AV Technician, whose title might need to be something like, AV Manager. The new position includes running AV for services; researching, recommending, installing and maintaining equipment; and scheduling AV techs when needed. This position has not been posted at the time of writing this report.

### **Challenges**

The primary challenge for the Personnel Committee is finding members of the congregation willing to be on the committee.



## **Future Goals**

The Sexual Harassment Policy needs some clarification. Additionally, the Employee Handbook does not include information about the accrual of paid time off, borrowing PTO before it has accrued, and what happens to unused PTO when an employee ends their employment or is terminated from employment.

# Properties Committee

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*Submitted by Paul Agolia*

## Committee Members

*Co-Chair:* Rosemary Summers (resigned as of June 2022)

*Co-Chair:* Robert Baker (resigned as of June 2022)

*Staff Custodian:* David Ray

Paul Agolia

## Mission

The mission of the Properties Committee is to steward the maintenance and improvements of UUSO's historic Chapin Memorial and the newly acquired property at 10 Ford Avenue.

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

### Accomplishments:

In the summer of 2021, the Properties Committee addressed a number of issues with 16 Ford Avenue in anticipation of selling the property:

- Sealed off a squirrel entrance at the attic window.
- Replaced the porch roof shingles above the front door.
- Painted all interior walls with block-out white paint.
- As temperatures dropped and 16 Ford sat idle while we waited for the closing, the Properties Committee began regular checks of the property. On one occasion we discovered the heat had been out for multiple days, resulting in frozen pipes. Upon thawing (which included several plumber visits), we found two leaks and had them fixed. We also had the furnace worked on to get through the winter.
- The ceiling of the kitchen at 16 Ford had water damage that was repaired in-house.
- Filled many dozens of holes from screws and nails in the walls of 16 Ford.
- Changed several doors locks to the office at 16 Ford.
- After the initial closing fell through, the Properties Committee received input from UUSO's real-estate agent and determined to apply another coat of block-out paint to all the rooms in 16 Ford. Additionally, a small area of wallpaper was replaced in the dining room. This work was done in-house in short order so that 16 Ford could quickly be shown to a prospective buyer.

Other accomplishments:

- Installed a neoprene runner on the ramp in front of Chapin.
- Changed all batteries in smoke detectors and thermostats in Chapin and 16 Ford.
- Disposed of all the dentistry-related items that were in the downstairs of 10 Ford.

- Removed carpets from both the upstairs and downstairs of 10 Ford.
- Monitored heat in 10 Ford due to intermittency.
- Had water-heater draft in 10 Ford corrected by a professional.
- Had many feet of basement copper pipe removed and ends capped, resulting in about \$200 revenue from sale of copper.
- Secured two doors to 10 Ford garage with locks.
- Requested police assistance in handling a small encampment behind the 10 Ford garage.
- Took part in the Aesthetics Committee and bidder (Eastman) walk-throughs of 10 Ford.
- Trimmed back shrubs in the Memorial Garden behind Chapin.
- In an attempt to resolve the water issue in the Chapin basement room, a downspout was lengthened so as to put water out on the front lawn rather than near the foundation. So far there has been no water in the basement, but the Committee is waiting for a severe day of soaking rain before claiming a possible fix.

### **Challenges:**

- Low committee numbers. This necessitated a focus on only immediately pressing properties-related issues.
- Determining what to do regarding the leak of water into the front basement room in Chapin. A quote for repair was pursued — there has been some debate on the best approach to fixing the issue, which has not yet been resolved.

### **Future Goals:**

- Work with and/or independently of the Aesthetics Committee on the 10 Ford Project.
- Major pruning of trees and shrubs in the yard of Chapin.
- Continue regular maintenance and scheduled items (fire extinguisher and boiler inspections, etc.)
- Regardless of whether or not the garage at 10 Ford is demolished, at least one dead tree must be removed.
- Recruit more committee members.
- Deal with water intrusion at the main entrance to Chapin where it is coming in at the ceiling tiles just inside the double doors. Heavy rain yields a significant amount of water. This is a new leak since early June of 2022 — both occasions of water intrusion appear to have been caused by a heavy, wind-driven rain.

# Religious Education Team

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*Submitted by Katie Huntington*

## Team Members

*Acting RE Coordinator:* Katie Huntington  
Rev. Rachel Baker  
Barbara Sue Agoglia  
Amy Forster Rothbart  
Zanna McKay (joined in Fall of 2021)  
Justine Roefs (resigned as of August 2022)  
Cathi Wiltsey  
Carolyn Cooper (joined September 2022)

## Mission

“We are here for the spiritual growth of our Society’s youngest and most vulnerable members, guests, and friends. We are also here for our own spiritual growth and enlightenment. We will share our opinions, ideas, suggestions, and criticisms in the most respectful manner we can. This respect will be manifested towards ourselves, each other, the children of the UUSO, and the congregation.”

-Jon Powers

## Attendance and Participation

Approximately seven children attended program events with five volunteer teachers. Six regular nursery care providers were employed by UUSO, two of whom were scheduled to work each Sunday.

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

Following Susan Ryder’s retirement on May 31, 2021, Justine Roefs took over as temporary Acting Religious Education Coordinator. Due to low program attendance, the RE Team made the decision to have all children K-5 learn together in one classroom during the 2021-2022 school year. The team selected UUA’s “Love Will Guide Us” for the fall curriculum, and Justine began to plan and implement this program during her tenure as Acting RE Coordinator. Here is a brief description of “Love Will Guide Us,” excerpted from the UUA website:

*“Participants learn to seek guidance in life through the lens of our Unitarian Universalist Sources, with an emphasis on love. Together we ask questions such as, “Where did we come from?” “What is our relationship to the Earth and other creatures?” “How can we respond with love, even in bad situations?” “What happens when you die?” Sessions apply wisdom from our Sources to help participants answer these*

*questions. Participants will learn that asking questions is valued in Unitarian Universalism, even as they begin to shape their own answers.”*

In September of 2021, Justine stepped down from this position and Katie Huntington agreed to temporarily take on the role at 10 hours a week while the congregation deliberated and planned the hiring of a new DRE. In-person classes resumed on September 26, 2021, and the Love Will Guide Us program wrapped up the following January.

Because of low attendance and fluctuating class sizes, the RE Team selected a flexible spring curriculum, “Toolbox of Faith,” that allowed RE teachers to tailor the lesson and activities to meet the needs of the specific group of children that happened to be in attendance each Sunday. Each week, the children explored a different tool as a metaphor for a quality of UU faith. They decorated their own wooden “Toolboxes of Faith” and added a new tool to their boxes every Sunday. During each session, the children were invited to listen to a story, make an arts-&-crafts project, and play a game or conduct an experiment – all related directly to the week’s theme and tool. Tools and qualities included reflection (symbolized by a mirror), flexibility (duct tape), and justice (a flashlight).

In May of 2022, several of the kids did a show-and-tell of their toolboxes during the Sunday “Celebrating Family Ministries” service. The generous work of UUSO’s RE teachers was also recognized by the congregation at this time. A small end-of-the-year celebration took place in the backyard of Chapin, and RE classes then adjourned for the summer months.

Beginning in Fall of 2022, the RE Team has tentatively planned to put the K-5 Sunday RE classes on hold. Instead, children will be invited to attend the weekly service with their parents or spend time playing with the nursery care providers downstairs in Chapin. Once a month, the RE Team will host a “Second Saturday Celebration” at Chapin – these celebrations will provide a low-stress opportunity for UUSO’s children and families to gather, to build community, and to learn about UU faith without needing to make the commitment of weekly class attendance. The events will be open to all ages but are geared primarily towards K-5 children and their families. The Team also plans to resume the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program for 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> graders beginning in January of 2023.

As it stands, UUSO’s RE program is in a time of tremendous transition. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused many families to re-evaluate what they need and want from their spiritual community and their Religious Education program. As the congregation continues the ministerial search and mission and vision processes, continual re-evaluation of the RE program’s structure and direction will no doubt be necessary. For the time being, the RE team has recommended that the congregation continue to employ a part-time Acting RE Coordinator at 10 hours per week. The hiring process for a half-time DRE would subsequently be conducted with the assistance and input of UUSO’s settled minister sometime in 2023.

# Social Action Team

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*Submitted by Karen Palmer with editorial assistance from Kathy Shimberg*

## Team Members

*Social Action Team and Green Sanctuary Task Force Leader:* Karen Palmer

*Board Liaison:* Rev. Rachel Baker

*Treasurer:* Kari Reynolds

*Communications Coordinator:* Kathy Shimberg

*Note-Taker:* Dotty Hudson (and occasionally others)

Sandra Brooks

Rhiannon Ham

Dawn Kilts

Carol Malz

Rina Riba

Janet Sutta

## Mission

Our mission is to be a catalyst for congregational members and friends to organize and participate in opportunities to further social, economic, and environmental justice through financial contributions and gifts of personal time and effort. We also aim to connect, communicate with, and support other social, economic, and environmental justice groups.

SAT's mission furthers UUSO's mission of "Reaching for a Better World."

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

### Accomplishments

- We met monthly regularly via Zoom on the first Tuesday of the month, including planning our forthcoming activities during regular meetings instead of gathering in person for our usual annual retreat.
- We encouraged congregational participation in social action in general through multiple communication channels, including the UUSO newsletter, UUSO Chat, Sunday service announcements, flyers/posters, etc. Congregational members and friends are always welcome to attend our meetings, as noted specifically in all announcements of our scheduled meetings.
- We promoted Backpack Buddies to collect monthly donations for nutritious non-perishable kid-friendly foods and personal-care items, as well as some clothing items and books, for local families in need.
- We facilitated Share Our Plate for UUSO as a whole, designating and scheduling local nonprofit organizations for the congregation to support each month with half of the weekly worship-plate offering during Sunday services.

- Carol Malz stepped down as team leader in August, although remaining a team member. We gratefully acknowledged her leadership through several years of facilitating the team with wisdom, calmness, fairness, and dedication. We transitioned first to various team members serving as meeting facilitator through several months in rotation, and then Karen Palmer assumed the role of team leader.
- We supported UUSC's Guest at Your Table annual contributions and the Oneonta Family Service Association's Holiday Project (clothing for those in need).
- SAT integrated Green Sanctuary into its team structure, and a core group has been following the UUA requirements for UUSO to eventually receive Green Sanctuary accreditation. This year the Green Sanctuary Task Force collected congregational input on environmental actions through a survey; provided educational articles for the newsletter; planned and conducted the Earth Day Service; guided a group of congregants to determine their carbon footprint; and encouraged congregants to identify actions they will take to steward the Earth, by writing on paper "leaves" for a symbolic "UUSO transformation tree" displayed in the Sanctuary.
- We represented UUSO with UUSJ (UUs for Social Justice), UUNYJ (UUs for NY Justice), and Habitat for Humanity's local projects.
- Due to the pandemic curtailing in-person attendance at Sunday services for most of the year we were unable to set up our usual information table during social hour following the Sunday service to provide education and action opportunities.

## Future Goals

- We will continue to meet by Zoom on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm. We are experimenting with facilitating meetings through a process known as Sociocracy, a method of assuring equitable and inclusive member input and decisions.
- We held our annual retreat in July 2022, on Zoom, reviewing and reflecting on our 2021-2022 year and planning for the year to come, including the following activities:
  1. We reviewed, updated, and agreed to uphold and continue to review our SAT Covenant at several intervals during the year.
  2. We reviewed the list of local nonprofit organizations for UUSO's Share Our Plate and scheduled the ones to be UUSO's monthly recipients for the 12 months from September 2022 through August 2023. We retained most of the recipients from 2021-2022, while adding Girls on the Run and NAMI Delaware & Otsego Counties in place of NAACP and Delaware Opportunities' Little Buddy program, rearranging the monthly order of the lineup slightly to match NAMI Delaware & Otsego Counties with May, which is designated as "Mental Health Month" in the U.S.
- We will continue to support Backpack Buddies, Oneonta Family Services Association's Holiday Project, and UUSC's Guest at Your Table.
- We will continue to serve as UUSO liaison with UUSJ, UUNYJ, and Habitat for Humanity.
- We are keeping informed about League of Women Voters activities during the 2022 mid-term national and NY State elections.
- We are continuing to move forward with Green Sanctuary accreditation and are planning some related Food for Thought events during the coming year.
- We plan to make a presentation to the congregation in advance of our October Congregational Meeting, on UUA's proposal to add an 8<sup>th</sup> Principle to Unitarian

Universalism's Seven Principles, focusing on countering racism and oppression in our communities.

- Starting in September, we will re-establish the SAT table in the Sanctuary during social hour following Sunday services, offering educational materials and action opportunities.
- In response to a request from the Catskill Regional Teachers Association, SAT is co-sponsoring at UUSO in September 2022 a public screening and discussion of a new documentary film about civic engagement, "Something in the Water." UUSO member Joe Stillman is its co-producer and the film-maker.



# Stewardship and Fundraising Committee

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*Submitted by Kari Reynolds*

## Committee Members

*Chair:* Kari Reynolds

No one else served on the Committee during the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

## Sub-Committees:

*Cookies and Crafts Fundraiser:* Justine Roefs and Rhiannon Ham, Co-Chairs

*Book Sale:* Deb Bruce, Chair

*Plant Sale:* Julia Gregory, Chair

*Auction:* Kari Reynolds, Chair

## Mission

To develop financial resources for the current and future needs of the UUSO with integrity and with an awareness of the joy inherent in cultivating generosity as a spiritual virtue.

The fundraising events and pledge drive are the core of the UUSO operating budget. Our stewardship work aims to create a culture of generosity through service and financial contributions of members and friends which make our mission possible.

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

### Stewardship

Although the number of active households has decreased in the past three years due to attrition and deaths, we have managed to raise more pledge dollars each year. This is due to a better appreciation of our operating expenses and increased commitment by our members and friends.

FISCAL YEAR	# OF HOUSE-HOLDS	# OF PLEDGES	% OF TOTAL	AVERAGE PLEDGE	FINAL PLEDGE TOTAL	PLEDGE GOAL OF 180,000
2020 - 2021	140	115	82%	\$1,458	\$167,715	
2021 - 2022	112	98	88%	\$1,785	\$174,936	97%
2022 - 2023	105	89	85%	\$2,070	\$184,295	2% over

The 2023-2024 pledge drive may prove to be more challenging due to economic uncertainties. Hopefully, those who have not pledged their suggested “fair share” will do so during the pledge drive this year. The committee hopes to increase its membership.

## **Fundraising**

Due to Covid-19, in-person events were not practical. The Cookies and Crafts fundraiser did take place in December 2021 and was a wonderful community event. We are deeply grateful to all who made the event a success. See page \_\_\_\_ for a separate report on the event.

By late Spring 2022, we were able to plan the annual auction for June 19 even though Covid-19 would limit participation. Donations of events/dinners/experiences were limited, so the online and live auction income was \$3,000 — less than half of previous years.

The Plant and Book Sale was also able to return this year in June, raising about \$1,000. See page \_\_\_\_\_ for a separate report on the sale. Deb Bruce, Julia Gregory, and a small group of volunteers are to be commended for all of their efforts.

We welcome suggestions for new and improved events, and count on the support of our members and friends to volunteer and attend our events!

# Visitor Connections Team

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*Submitted by Karen Palmer*

## **Committee Members**

*Team Leader:* Karen Palmer  
Katie Huntington, Office Administrator  
Kari Reynolds  
Tracy Verma  
Kathy Shimberg

## **Mission**

To warmly welcome newcomers and visitors, and support them as they explore connections with the people and activities of UUSO.

## **Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals**

### **Accomplishments**

- The Welcome Table has been operating throughout the year and has facilitated having visitors complete a visitor's form to connect them with the newsletter, minister, RE, etc.
- Buttons with pronouns have been made as needed for visitors and members/friends.
- Attendance at in-person services has been reported to the Office Administrator each week.
- Our UUSO brochure has been updated and distributed to those interested.
- Welcomers have also been assisting with ushering and helping people to operate the hearing equipment when needed.
- Our Realm software has been used to track visitors' information and follow up with them.

### **Future Goals**

Our plans are to continue with all of the above as we anticipate more visitors attending our services in the coming year.

# Worship Ministry

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*Submitted by Rev. Rachel Baker*

## Worship Planners and Contributors

*Interim Minister:* Rev. Rachel Baker

*Music Director:* Tim Horne

*Musicians:* Michael and Dorothy Frye-Hunt  
The UUSO Choir members and Song Leaders

### Worship Associates

Cathi Wiltsey

Julian Pecenco

Rosemary Summers

Sue Cotter

Linda Wilcox

### AV Technicians

Julian Pecenco

Beth Small

Paul Carter

Scott Segar

The Teen AV Tech Staff

### Zoom Assistants

Jendy Murphy

Kathy Paranya

Ginny Scheer

Kathy Shimberg

Linda Wilcox

## Mission

Collaborate with the minister and guest leaders to offer Sunday morning and special worship services.

## Accomplishments, Challenges, and Future Goals

### Accomplishments

- Transitioned from online worship to multiplatform worship services
- Offered worship services almost every Sunday and Christmas Eve
- Experimented with different ways to share personal Joys and Sorrows during worship

### Challenges

The primary challenge has been finding members and friends to serve the worship ministry of the congregation. Though the minister is accountable for the worship life of the congregation, this is done in collaboration and shared ministry. Congregant participation is needed to have a vibrant worship experience.

This year we did not have a Worship Team or others to collaborate with the minister to create the worship arc of the year. Ideally, a Worship Team (possibly the Worship Associates as a team) would collaborate with the minister; schedule and support guest worship leaders; when needed, choose readings, hymns, and stories for guest-led worship; recruit, train, and schedule Worship Associates; coordinate with AV Techs; etc. However, this year there was a dearth of worship collaboration.

There was no one to recruit and schedule guest worship leaders, worship associates, or AV techs. All of this fell to the Interim Minister. She probably should not have picked up this slack as it may set up expectations for future ministers. She hopes to change this going forward.

Because of a lack of guest worship leaders and worship associates, worship was cancelled on December 26, 2021, January 2, 2022, June 26, 2022, and July 3, 2022. A few members self-organized and opened the building to do something. I do not recommend going forward with this.

### **Future Goals**

- Find a solution to the lack of worship help!

### **Gratitude**

Special thanks to Suzanne Miller for offering to decorate the Chancel Table most Sundays; to Scott Segar for coordinating AV for years; to Beth, Paul, and Julian for serving as AV Techs, training four teens as paid staff, and filling in as needed; to the Board members for serving as Worship Associates when needed; and to Cathi Wiltsey for her long-time service as a Worship Associate.