



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Fellowship
OF HUNTINGTON

ANNUAL REPORT

CONGREGATION YEAR 2022 - 2023

June 4, 2023

President's Report for the Congregation Year 2022/23

It has certainly been quite the year for our Congregation! We have faced many changes and challenges, some expected and some surprises. And yet we continue to move forward and even grow.

This past August we welcomed Dr Reverend Debra Haffner as our new Interim Minister.

In September we had our first in-person In-Gathering Service in two years and officially welcomed Reverend Debra as our new Interim Minister.

Rev Debra has continued to be a well needed breath of fresh air! She has stirred things up and continues to help the Board and the congregation take a hard look at who we are.

Her services bring a renewed, much needed energy to the Fellowship. She continues to challenge us and bring joy to our Sunday mornings. Reverend Debra digs deep into her 20 years of ministerial experience and brings her expertise, knowledge, energy and love to our co-ministry in leadership.

During Rev Debra's year plus with us we have begun to attract new visitors, many who have gone on to sign the book and become new members. We have even seen the return of past members too!

I know she will continue to guide us as we start to consider who we want to be as a Congregation and help us in our search for a Settled Minister.

As we cautiously made our way out of the pandemic, the Board of Trustees was happy to have our first in-person Retreat in 2 years! With the help of Pat Infante from the UUA, the members examined who we are as a congregation and tackled how to go about the search process for a new Settled Minister. The Board also established 5 goals for Reverend Debra to accomplish during her time as our Interim Minister.

After the retreat the Board quickly set to work, examining how our Board functions and how our committee structure works. We realized that if we wanted to grow, we needed to change. In working towards this goal, the Board was asked to read Dan Hotchkiss' book, 'Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Ministry'. Afterward the Board discussed how our present governance structure wasn't allowing us to grow. A new governance model was proposed to the Board by Rev Debra, Gerri Farrell and Shelley Lauder-Bader and was unanimously approved for a two-year trial. Rev Debra, Gerri Farrell and I presented the new governance model through a

series of presentations on zoom meetings and in-person to our leaders, committee chairs and congregation members.

The work on our new governance model is still in the early stages. We will be establishing new committees and chairs. Certainly, this work will be an ongoing process!

In December we were informed that our long-term tenant would be vacating their space as of the end of the month, resulting in a large financial hit to our budget. We also discovered that the high windows in the Main Hall worship space had begun to rot, were leaking and in need of replacement. A Special Congregation Meeting was called to approve the monies for new windows to be installed.

Over this past year our Covid Task Force has continued to monitor the important COVID numbers and conditions. As numbers of cases have gone down, we were able to safely make masks optional.

Our Board of Trustees played a crucial role in addressing our challenges during this congregational year. I am proud and grateful to work with this team of dedicated volunteers who didn't never shy away from the work at hand. Please join me in thanking Gerri Farrell for her service as Vice President, Terry Donaldson as Past-President, Gerard Neber as Treasurer, Shelley Lauer-Bader as Secretary, and Vivian Storm. I'd like to extend a special thanks to Jason D'Orazio, Leslie Speed and Rima Muth who will be leaving the Board at the end of this year.

I would especially like to thank our Past President Terry Donaldson as she rotates off the Board after her three-year term. As Vice President, Terry took on the leadership of the Covid Task Force as we struggled to figure out how we would continue worship services. In addition to her duties as Board President, Terry was faced with the challenge of losing our minister Reverend Jude Geiger. As President Terry established the Safety and Security Team. As Past President Terry has continued to the work of the Covid Task Force and the Safety and Security Team's work. Terry may be leaving the Board, but she will go onto to do valuable and important work on our new Settled Minister Search Committee. I am personally indebted to Terry, who has always been willing to roll up her sleeves, dive and help whenever I asked. Heck, Terry even volunteered to take items off my plate when things became overwhelming. I can never thank you enough Terry!

This year the Board was tasked with helping the Nominating Committee canvas and pick a fantastic slate for our Settled Minister Search Committee. Their very important work is just beginning!

The Board of Trustees was honored to draft a statement of support for the very important ongoing 8th Principal work of the Social Justice Committee. The Social Justice Committee also asked the Board to draft a statement of support for the proposed African American Museum in Huntington. The statement of support was presented at our Annual Congregation Meeting in April and was approved unanimously.

This year our Religious Education classes have begun to grow again after the many challenges of the COVID pandemic. It is a joy to see young families and children in our Fellowship and Religious Education classes each Sunday. Our RE Committee Co-Chairs Cindy Neber and Carolyn D'Orazio, our Director of Religious Education Danielle Burby and our many volunteers have worked tirelessly to maintain and grow the RE program with great results. It is nothing short of miraculous that during these challenging times of the post covid pandemic, our RE Program has managed not just to grow but to thrive. Sadly, we will be saying goodbye to Danielle at the end of June as she moves on to grow her business. While we are sad Danielle leave her position as Director of Religious Education, we wish her only the best.

I need to take a moment and recognize the hard work that our Board and the Stewardship Committee did with this year's Stewardship Drive. The committee had outstanding results with this year's Stewardship drive. The Board set a goal of raising pledges that would hopefully total \$300,00.00. Not only did the committee meet that goal, but they also exceeded it raising a total of \$318, 586.00 in pledges, well over our goal!

When our new Governance Model goes into place in July, we will have many Committee Chairs and Co-Coordinators leaving their posts.

Liza Burby will be rotating off as Communications Chair after 9 years - Thank you for all your hard work! We are so very lucky that Liza has taken on the chair of the newly created 75th Anniversary Committee, AND the Chair of Worship. Thank you, Liza!

Kristina Heinemann is rotating off as Co-Chair of the Fellowship Connections Committee. Kristina has worked incredibly hard and diligently for many years with great results – Thank you! Kristina will be Co-Chairing the newly forming Strategic and Long Range Planning Committee. Thank you, Kristina!

Nikki Willard is stepping down as our Representative on the LI Area Council - thank you for your years of dedication! We are fortunate that Nikki will continue as Chair of the Social Justice Committee.

Helen Boxwill is rotating off as Co-Coordinator of the Social Justice Committee. Helen, thank you for your many years of dedication and hard work!

Susan Peters is rotating off as chair of the Castle Care Committee. Susan has done so much more than her title indicates. Susan has been our on-site emergency person for many years and our liaison for outside contractors. She has even been our point person for our tenants. I am certain there are so many other roles that you have taken on. Susan, the Fellowship owes you huge debt of gratitude for all your many years of service. Thank you so much!

Sue McGovern is rotating off as a Co-Chair of the Fellowship Connections Committee, Co-Chair of the Services Auction Committee, the Coordinator of the Personnel Committee and the Chair

of the Pastoral Care Committee. She has worn so many hats over the years! What can I say, we as a Congregation have been blessed with her tireless dedication and work on these committees and so many more. Thank you so very much!

I cannot say thank you enough to all these chairs, co-chairs and co-coordinators for all the years of hard work and dedication they have done on behalf of the UUFH. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

We are blessed community with many dedicated people keeping the connections and the work of the Fellowship going through our committees and small groups. Despite the many challenges of the past year, our members have contributed to and have stayed connected to our faith community. I am simply amazed to see all that has gone on this year and all the hard work and perseverance that continues to make our congregation, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington the vibrant, growing community that we are!

Respectfully submitted by

Ken Buley-Neumar

UUFH BOT President

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

FROM THE MINISTER

Dear UUFH:

As I complete my first interim year with you, and 17 months as your minister, I am reflecting on what good ministry we have done together. When I joined you as transitions minister in February 2022, UUFH was slowly emerging from the pandemic and leaning heavily on its board leaders for the congregation's operations. Worship attendance was low, and many congregants expressed a mixture of sadness, anger, and confusion about the recent changes in ministry. Although I was enthusiastic about your outstanding interim search committee, I wondered what it would take to help you feel excited about worship, to engage more leaders and volunteers, and to re-energize UUFH.

I hope you agree that we've made an excellent start together during this first year of interim ministry. We've added 35 new members since I became your minister, and those new members are bringing fresh perspectives and enthusiasm. Although we grieved the loss of 10 congregants this year, we also experienced the first net growth in membership in many years, including new families with young children, increased numbers of LGBTQ+ people, and several single young adults. Many of these new UUFHers have stepped up as volunteers and leaders.

We made changes in worship: tightening the liturgy; diversifying the music; assuring that women, LGBTQ+ people, and BIPOC people are represented in poetry, quotations, and prayers at each service; instituting a monthly multigenerational service; reintroducing candle lighting and introducing 'surprise elements' when possible. People are voting with their presence that they appreciate these changes; the average attendance has increased from about 90 when I came to between 115 and 130 each week. Nearly 50% of our members volunteered during this year compared to 30% last.

People are also voting their enthusiasm with their pocketbooks. The Board set what it thought was an audacious pledge drive goal of \$300,000, a \$40,000 increase over the previous year. Instead, the congregation responded to new methods of email outreach with 136 households pledging \$318,500, a 22.5% increase in one year and a remarkable 65 households increasing their pledges for the coming year.

The Board and I worked closely together on creating a new governance structure for UUFH which will better serve you as a growing midsize congregation. Despite hovering around 200 members, UUFH had continued to be governed as a family size congregation with a highly centralized board handling most operational decisions, supervising the staff, and overriding

committee decisions. This board-centered model leaves the minister with little authority, burns out leaders, and results in few people knowing how decisions are actually made. In a sermon in the fall, I shared how we were governed like a mom-and-pop store, with a few people doing everything – and that it was time to move to a governance structure that reflected your size and vision. The Board and I worked hard to create a new governance structure that will decentralize decision making, clarify accountability and authority at all levels, and we hope to engage more volunteers in the important ministries and governance programs of UUFH.

We have re-engaged our commitment to the LGBTQ+ community and to the 8th Principle. We devoted several worship services to these issues; changed the signage for bathrooms so they are more inclusive and welcoming as well as designating single stall bathrooms as 'all gender'; obtained the most recent inclusive Progress flag for the entryway; added pronouns to zoom and name tags; helped rescind an antiquated abortion law in Huntington; a member chaired the Anti-Bias Task Force; we had a booth and marched at Long Island Pride, and we became leading proponents for a new African American museum in Huntington. Our 8th Principle Task Force is revitalized after training with Paula Cole Jones.

As your interim, I also worked closely with the board and other volunteers on infrastructure issues. Job descriptions were updated for the 3 key staff for the first time since 2018. Personnel files were created and annual evaluations re-instituted. Staff created and signed a staff covenant which they review periodically. An ad hoc personnel committee has brought the personnel policies up-to-date, in compliance with New York State law, and with more generous leave policies for ongoing staff.

I worked closely with the nominating committee and the Board on the selection of the Ministerial Search Committee. The process worked beautifully, with more than 90% of active members providing input. The new MSC is a wonderful group of diverse people and I look forward to being of assistance to them in the next year.

There is still more work to do.

Once we go through the governance transition, it's time to look at creating a strategic plan, including reviewing the mission and vision and setting some realistic goals for a 3- and 5-year future. The congregation has some hard questions to answer before you can create a search packet: what kind of minister does the congregation want? Will the congregation support a minister having authority and accountability? Does the new minister have to live within a half hour of the church? Does the congregation want to grow and what does its commitment to the 8th principle mean?

I am really enjoying my time working with the leadership of UUFH, the staff, and individual congregants. I know that UUFH can be an even better, thriving, and growing congregation in its future if the congregation chooses to share authority with the minister, commits to growth, lets go of “we’ve always done it this way”, and creates a culture of trust, shared ministry, and abundance. I’m looking forward to year two. Thank you to you all for this opportunity to be of service.

DRE Report 2023

Danielle Burby

The 2022-2023 RE year was a return to normalcy after our virtual 2020-21 and our semi-virtual and semi-in person 2021-2022. Having a full year of in person RE in the classrooms was a welcome development for our children and youth. We have a growing, thriving, and passionate cohort of RE families and the program continues to be strong and full of deep conversations, critical thinking, social connection, and fun.

Our Summer '22 program revolved around the Grow to Give Garden and involved lessons about weekly themes such as belonging, ethics, and community. These were paired with crafts like letter writing, making pet treats, and meditation followed by volunteer time in the garden planting and harvesting. In addition, we had an elementary book club (held virtually) and a middle school book club (also held virtually). We also ran both elementary and middle school Dungeons & Dragons groups virtually. These allowed for social connection and community building and, again, fun!

Classes this RE year were: Pre-K with Jana Cruz and Jackie Hawkins teaching; K-3 with Carol Granelli, Kristina Heinemann, and Jerilyn Fortsch teaching, 4-5 with Bob Bader, Lisa Juretschko, and Alana Kurfist teaching, and middle school with Michael Goldsmith, Alexandra Goldsmith, Amanda Cooper, and Liza Burby teaching. We saw steady attendance throughout the year with growth and several newcomers in the pre-k and the middle school classes, in particular.

We had several different teacher trainings and meetings throughout the RE year, most revolving around safety policies and general procedures. Several teachers attended a CPR certification class.

For the second year, we used the Soul Matters curriculum, exploring monthly themes in our RE classes, the parent small group, and the new Creativity Matters small group, which allowed for multiple avenues for children, youth, and adults to dive into concepts of Belonging, Resistance, Delight, etc. Our participants were engaged and enjoyed the lessons, as did the teachers.

Regarding Creativity Matters, this is a new intergenerational program I brought to the congregation in October. We meet once a month to share our creativity with one another and explore the monthly themes while doing a craft together. We consistently have at least a dozen people, including many newcomers and people who haven't been at the Fellowship for a number of years but felt it was a good way to get involved again.

In coordination with the RE Committee, chaired by Carolyn D'Orazio, we held our annual Halloween party, Family Fun Night Christmas caroling, the Christmas Pageant, and the Easter Egg Hunt, as well as a successful Fellowship Fun Hocus Pocus and dessert night. In February, the RE participants led an entire service from start to finish, which they and their teachers worked incredibly hard to make happen, and I so enjoyed coordinating. Every single age group participated from Pre-k through high school.

Mystery Pals made a triumphant return this year for the first time since the pandemic. It was a wonderful opportunity for people to bond across generations and for the younger children to practice their writing skills. It remains a very popular program and, because of the excitement around exchanging letters, encourages steady and consistent attendance from families in March and April, which is a time that might otherwise experience a bit of a slowdown because of school activities and other commitments.

Our RE students had an all-ages meeting (pre-k through middle school) in the fall to plan their second annual bake sale (helmed by the middle schoolers) to discuss and coordinate about how to run the bake sale, what was needed, and what causes they wanted to donate to. They raised \$811, sending \$405.50 to OXFAM International and the same amount to the International Rescue Committee, which matched every dollar, doubling the money donated to Ukraine. This helped to purchase 22 comfort kits with blankets for Ukraine as well as 670 bars of soap, 20 water containers, and 10 blankets for Syrian refugees.

The middle schoolers enthusiastically requested to be involved in the running of the congregation at the Board level, and, after much discussion, it has been agreed we'll have a middle schooler serve as a youth representative on the RE Committee next year, which will allow for a deeper level of involvement and agency for the participants of the RE program.

We hosted a second all-ages RE meeting to discuss plans for the 75th Anniversary celebration coming up in September. After great brainstorming, the RE participants agreed they wanted to film interviews with members of the congregation as well as each other to document what the community loves about UUFH. This project will begin over the summer. The RE participants also suggested playing games at the potluck that were played 75 years ago. In addition, they intend to be involved with decorating. There was a lot of enthusiasm!

As we wind down the RE year, we, as always, focus on community building and connection. We will end this year with a roller-skating party on Saturday, June 24th. RE will pick back up for the summer session beginning on July 16th and will run until regular RE begins again in September. We're well positioned to continue the growth we've experienced in the program this year.

Annual Report 2022-23

This year the choir did a great job, they worked hard and performed well at the services. June 11 was the Music Sunday “I’ll Be There For You”, the theme was about Friends and Friendship. Choir presented songs, including “Count On Me”, Lean On Me with We Shall Over Come, and “I’ll Be There For You.” Looking forward to the future, the size of the choir needs to be increased, and we need strong soprano voices. Our accompanist Isabella constantly gives high-quality performances at the services.

We had four guest musicians: Nathan McKinstry (Trumpet, Christmas Eve), Isacc Ketter (Saxphone, Easter), Justin Freenberg (Cello, 9/25/22), and the former music director, Richard Hyman (Conductor, 5/13/23). Nathan, Isacc and Richard brought wonderful performances to our services. On May 13, the first UUFH Talent Show was hosted by Scott Segal, we had more than 17 acts, and the event was very successful.

In sum, this year is a wonderful year with many beautiful musical moments. There are some challenges that are mainly caused by the pandemic, and we will continue to work hard in the next year.

ANNUAL REPORT, JUNE 2023 - FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee's functions include preparation and presentation of the annual operations budget, oversight of fund-raisers, receiving and recording of contributions to the Fellowship. Our bookkeeper handles many of the financial chores using Quick Books to prepare payments and track our Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss statements.

Also, part of our responsibilities includes having a group of people that serve the function of "counters". These are the people that take the envelopes and money collected during the service, as well as the checks that arrive in the mail, and process it. This includes tabulating the amounts, making copies of the checks, doing the data entry to credit accordingly, and making sure the deposit gets to the bank.

It is a job that often is not noticed but is one of those things that is essential. Our counting team this year (and basically all have done this for a number of years) includes Jan Brenner, Peggy Koulias, Jean Marra, Anne Monnier, Susan Peters, Ann Scolnick. And the person who is behind the curtain (at least on the tech side), and who makes sure everything runs smoothly, is Shel Lipsky. **THANK YOU ALL!!!**

If you would like to assist, we would love to have the help. It basically consists of helping one or two Sundays a month after service (as available), for about 15-20 minutes. If interested in joining or hearing more about it, please reach out to one of us to let us know.

Now, onto the numbers:

For FY 2022/2023 we projected a deficit of \$39,071.

Excluding the windows, we are currently \$20,000 under budget. However, It's hard to make any projection at this time because as we have a lot of seasonal expenses coming up, so that figure will not stay the same, but we are putting it in this report to give a directional idea.

For FY 2023/2024 we are presenting a balanced budget.

UUHF FINANCIAL INFORMATION 5/29/2023

Ameriprise Investment Accounts (total) \$704,000

Chase, main operating account

\$129,000

Fidelity (used for securities transferred in, buying short-term bonds, and available as needed to replenish Chase operating account) \$248,000

Regards,
Brian Cohen, Finance Chair

Gerard Neber, Treasurer

2022-23 Annual Report
Sunday Program Committee

The Sunday Program Committee offered a total of 19 services from July 1 through May 31, 2023.

During the Summer, SPC provided all eight services in July and August
Four featured outside speakers, and one of them (Dali Boczek) has since become a member!

Four were developed by UUFH members. Special thanks to Bill Hawkins, Renee Velkoff, Nikki Willard, and Valerie Scopaz.

For the “church” year, SPC offered a total of 11 services, with four outside speakers and seven services led by members.

At the suggestion of Social Justice, Barry Lites introduced us to the Huntington African American Museum, which the UUFH has now publicly supported.

Special thanks to Milt Masur, Laura and Graham Otton, David Cohen, Nancy and Larry Wilkow, Bryce and Ann Klatsky, Joanne Polichetti, and Terry Donaldson.

The average attendance (including Zoom) was 102 for the 11 services.

Worship Associates were a critical part of each service. Special thanks to Jenna Kern-Rugile, Liza Burby, Karen Mazzotta, Terry Donaldson, and Lee Kurfist, as well as our accompanist for all but one service, Isabella Johnson.

Finally, the behind-the-scenes tech team: Dave Yens on sound; Jim Ammerman on camera; and the amazing Debbie Hocevar on all things Zoom.

I would also like to acknowledge our Administrator, Sandra Yens, who created the slides for the services while I was away in October and November.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Monnier

WELLSPRING & TOUCHSTONES SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

TOUCHSTONES

There are currently four Touchstones groups. Groups meet monthly (virtually and in-person) and average 7 – 8 attendance. Each group leader receives the Touchstones Journal and the Discussion Guide. Discussion topics this past year have included Awakening, Awe, Remembrance, Joy, Wintering, Resilience, Trust, Grief, Reconciliation, Ritual, Play and Activism.

At least one group will continue to meet over the summer and all 4 groups will start up again in September. There is also the possibility of a fifth group forming.

WELLSPRING

There are currently 2 Wellspring groups. Three years ago, when the congregation first began to use the Wellspring curriculum, there were 4 groups.

Groups meet virtually twice a month with ‘homework’ in between. Each member receives a list of readings, videos, poems, etc. intended for self-reflection. Each member keeps a journal in response to the readings.

Curricula for this year’s groups have been Deep Questions and Sacred Arts. Attendance at one group is small and the second group is young adults with attendance averaging 8-9 (?).

RECRUITMENT and ADVERTISEMENT

Announcements have been put in the UUFH Flash to inform members and friends about the 2 ministries. Flyers for each program have been designed and displayed at the Membership Table after service and on the table in the main entrance. Flyers for both programs were emailed to new members early in 2023.

A special Sunday program, developed by Terry Donaldson and Jim Monnier was held in December 2022. After the program several people expressed interest but when contacted they were unable to make a commitment. This program is worth repeating.

There has been some recent interest in both programs from the flyers displayed after Sunday services.

FUTURE PLANS

Announcements in the Flash will be done again over the summer. An email will be sent out to all those people who have expressed interest in the past.

A suggestion was made to use a bulletin board to publicize the programs, possibly with testimonials.

In order to give enough time for the , new fall programs may not start until late September or early October.

Building Use Committee Annual Report, June 2, 2023

Since the reopening of the building, renters have continued to take advantage of our space.

We've welcomed back several repeat outdoor festivals, (Beltaine and SCA), and have had many "one of" rentals as well. During the month of May, 2023, there was a rental every weekend, and on several week nights as well. The month of June is equally busy. We've continued to make the space available to non-profit organizations. Non-profits receive a discounted rental price which allows them to take advantage of our space. We get the advantage of bringing people into the door and the potential of more rentals in the future. For example, we've hosted a planning retreat for H4LI (Housing for all Long Island), and a summit with over 200 attendees for the Long Island Grass Roots Organization.

We've improved our tech capabilities by adding an HDMI cable connection to the screen in the Main Hall. This allows renters to use their personal laptops for presentations rather than using our equipment. This makes it much easier on the renters and eases the wear and tear in our sound room.

Thanks to Liza and the Communications Committee, our brochure has been updated to show off the available spaces and tech/AV capabilities that we can offer.

Sandra is the very capable point person for our renters. She writes up the contracts, explains the insurance requirements, and arranges for a UUFH site supervisor to be present at every event.

Thank you, Sandra!

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Monnier

Memorial Committee Annual Report
2022 – 2023

The Memorial Committee continues to provide many different services to the families of our members and friends as they cope with the loss of a loved one. During the 2022 – 2023 congregational year, we have held 9 memorial services/receptions and have had the ashes of 9 of our members interred in the Memorial Garden.

This year, due to the talent and hard work of Bill Hawkins, our Memorial Wall was extended to accommodate more of our members' names.

Our team of "Garden Keepers" continue to work tirelessly to beautify our Memorial Garden throughout the year. This beautiful area is the final resting place for the cremains of over 100 individuals and provides a peaceful space for quiet contemplation.

Respectfully submitted by Anne Monnier, Leslie Speed & Peggy Koulias

Nominating Committee Annual Report, June 2, 2023

The nominating committee had 2 major tasks this year – filling the Board positions and the Search Committee to find our new minister.

For the Board, we needed to find a Vice President, Treasurer, 3 Trustee positions, and 2 nominating committee positions. Happily, this was not difficult. People were willing to step up – a great sign for the future of the Fellowship.

We completed the Board/Nominating task before we began the process of finding the Search Committee.

The UUA recommends that the process to find a Search Committee begin with canvassing individual members to determine their thoughts about the fellowship, and to nominate their choices for a search committee. The Nominating Committee members and Board members divided up the congregation and made phone calls to have those discussions and solicit choices. 91% of the members contacted responded with their input. A list was generated, whittled down, and the nominating committee made the asks. 7 people agreed to devote their time and energy to this very important job.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Monnier, Ann Scolnick, Suzanne MacDevitt, Brian Cohen, Dave Schulman, Jennifer Thieke

ART GALLERY

I took over the Gallery at the end of 2022 and I have been busy finding artists to fill the gallery. I also moved some things around to open up the space. I have had photographers and painters in shows along with working with the RE youth to have a nice show in February. We had a lively opening last month with an art group that I belong to. I am trying to reach out to different groups outside the Fellowship to bring in new people. There is also a presentation in the works for our 75th anniversary as well.

HUNGRY BASKET

I started the Hungary Basket In September of 2022 and delivered food every Wednesday to the Huntington Food Council. The donations have been steady along with larger amounts coming from appeals during Thanksgiving, the Holidays and RE events. The Food Council is run by a nice group of volunteers who really appreciate our donations large or small. They feed over 100 families each week. There is a plan to do a presentation about the Hungary Basket to the RE youth over the summer.

Yours in fellowship

Bill Hawkins

The RE Committee had a great year this year. We have been growing our program and the kids are having an amazing time in their classes with deep discussions. We put on the revamped Christmas Eve pageant and an activity- filled Halloween party, complete with costumes and Tie-dye. Our Easter Egg Hunt this year focused on the many ways our UUFH members give back to our community. We brought back Mystery Pals with an Earth Day reveal and assembled meals for HIHI. We made a new sign and Mason Bee houses for the G2GG. However, I think one of our biggest successes was starting a new tradition at UUFH, a Children's service completely run by the kids! They did a fantastic job. Next up is an end of the year roller skating party on June 24th!

~Carolyn

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

We don't really have an organized Office Volunteer Committee anymore. Since we do not have to prepare, collate and run off Sunday Orders of Service, (8 hours a week) we just operate on a 'come as needed' basis. Sandra Calls or emails me when she needs help on a specific task, and I go to help her or/and recruit others as needed.

Anne Monnier functions separately with Sandra, on rentals. That could probably go under Building in the new Committee set up.

Ann S

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care has been meeting monthly. We keep track of and care for the needs of our Congregation. If there is illness or other issues that are happening in our Fellowship we have members who call and try to help in any way we can. We coordinate with Care Share to provide meals or transportation . We have access to local organizations to help in times of need. We try to stay in touch with the homebound or those in assisted living facilities. Let us know if you are interested in joining us.

Gerri Farrell

CARE SHARE

The Care/Share volunteers have served many people this year, giving rides, making and delivering food, talking on the phone, picking up groceries, etc.. Our members have been so very helpful! As with most things, many hands make light work, but we can always use more volunteers in every capacity!

Judie

SAFETY COMMITTEE

In July 2022, our Safe Congregation Policy was examined in earnest and a new Safety Committee was formed. The committee established a list of priorities to be worked on this year including appointing a new Fire Marshall to lead fire drills, establishing a Sexual Misconduct and Review Team, training our staff, leadership, and Safety Team members in CPR-AED procedures, and forming a Security Team for Sunday mornings and special Fellowship

events. Here is what we have accomplished this year:

In August we reviewed our safety procedures and equipment currently in place, including our ring cameras which are mounted outside our exits and inside our building, our walkie talkies for our RE teachers, and our current procedures for keeping our members safe.

In September a Safety Team Member attended a virtual Active Shooter Preparedness Webinar for houses of worship given by our Federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). Information was shared with our Board of Trustees, minister, and Safety Committee.

In October, we began recruiting volunteers for our Sunday Security Team, now known as The Safety Team. Our members include our chair, Michael Goldsmith, Steve Burby, Terry Donaldson, Jason D'Orazio, Graham Otton, Bryce Klatsky, Lee Kurfist, Dave Schulman, and Jon Sorscher. At each Sunday service, there will be three Team members on duty. One member stationed in the Main Hall, another assigned to roam the interior of the building, and the third member roaming the outside perimeter. Team members will be identifiable with blue name tags. We will also have Safety Team members present at special Fellowship events.

In November 2022, our new Fire Marshall, Graham Otton, successfully led an announced fire drill for the first time since we have been back from COVID. We learned much and have updated our plans for a subsequent unannounced drill during the summer.

In December Rev. Debra presented an overview of the Misconduct Review and Response Team's responsibilities and received confirmation of the members she has gathered to be active participants of this important team.

Also in December, American Red Cross Emergency Response Instructor /Police Detective/ EMT, Steve Grella held a 3 hour CPR-AED training in our Main Hall for 18 people including our Board members, staff, Safety Team and interested community members.

In January we began the process of consulting with a local Huntington Fire Department to order a Knox Box as per their request. Keys to all of our external and internal doors will be kept there so that when our alarms are sounded, they can easily and quickly access all that they need to enter the building and do a sweep for fire or other dangers. We will discuss with them the best placement for it, and it will be installed outside of the building.

In February a Safety Team member met with a local group, Mothers Demand Action

(MDA). We plan to invite this group to meet with interested members about gun safety in our homes, including how to ask about storage of firearms in homes our children visit. In March Rev. Debra led a training session with our RE teachers, RE Committee and staff on sexual abuse prevention.

On May 7 during our Sunday service, Rev. Debra conducted a commissioning of the Safety Team in which we, the Safety Team, agreed to learn and train as needed to create procedures to keep the congregation safe, to the best of our abilities, and the congregation agreed to recognize and follow the directions of the Safety Team members in times of emergency.

Also in May, our Safety Team met with Suffolk County Police Department Homeland Security Police Officer Moira Larmour for a meeting to assist us in creating an Emergency Plan for the Fellowship. It was very informative and will guide the team in enhancing our procedures for safety within our congregation.

As you can see, it has been a busy year for our Safety Team. Along with our minister, Rev. Debra and our Board of Trustees, we have moved forward in many areas in our efforts to keep up with the changing times and keep safety high on our priority list.

Respectfully submitted by
Terry Donaldson
Safety Committee Chair

COVID Task Force Annual Report

June 2023

The Congregational Year began still in the throes of the ongoing COVID Pandemic. Suffolk County and surrounding areas lingered in a high-risk rate of transmission. We had a mask mandate in place for Sunday services, RE classes and meetings held at the Fellowship.

The COVID Task Force met regularly to examine the data put out weekly by COVID Act Now and the CDC. While there were some expressed views that we should eliminate the mandate over the ensuing months, the Task Force set the goal of Suffolk County stabilizing in the low-risk rate of transmission with our minds toward keeping our most vulnerable members safe.

In March 2023, the COVID data in Suffolk and neighboring counties moved into low-risk rate of transmission, prompting our COVID Task Force to remove the mask mandate for our services, meetings, and RE classes. Our new policy states that masks are optional for all events at the Fellowship. We have asked that our members continue to show care and respect for those who feel masking is the best choice for their health and safety.

While the risk has diminished, we are aware that COVID has not gone away. As such, the COVID Task Force continues to keep an eye on the COVID Act Now website, which continues to monitor hospitalizations and numbers of people with COVID currently hospitalized.

Respectfully submitted by
Terry Donaldson
COVID Task Force Chair

Blood Drive Annual Report June 2023

Our annual blood drive came back this year on March 26, 2023. It was a big success! We collected 30 pints of whole blood for those who will benefit from it. And there was an air of joy and laughter in the Social Hall all day long! Many thanks to those of you who generously shared your life-supporting blood and brought your cheerful selves to the event. Special thanks to our helpers Jan Brenner, Will Thieke, and Thomas Thieke... they helped to keep everything running safely and smoothly! It was a day to be proud of!

Respectfully submitted by

Terry Donaldson

Annual Blood Drive Chair

UUFH Annual Plant Sale Report 2023

Co-Chairs: Debbie Cohen and Cindy Neber

- Over 30 congregants participated in the annual plant sale.
- White Post Farms was our new plant supplier this year. They have a long history and a great reputation for providing quality plants.
- We modified how people ordered and streamlined the process of paying on-line.
- One area we would like to improve upon is how we can efficiently place information on the web site. Additionally, perhaps we could email all UUFH members directly with the plant sale information?
- UUFH profit was \$1,277.00. Many contributed to the Memorial Garden and the Grow to Give Garden.

Total Profit: \$ 1,277.00

Memorial Garden: - \$ 153.00

Grow to Give Garden - \$ 188.00

General Profit: \$ 936.00

We enjoyed working together and look forward to continuing this tradition next spring.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT FOR CASTLE CARE

Castle Care has been working very quietly behind the scenes, as usual, taking care of general repairs that can be handled by volunteers.

The main project this year was the replacement of the main hall clerestory windows, which were leaking, after being subjected to the weather for over 40 years.

The classrooms, empty now due to Little Learners leaving, have been cleaned and spackled.

The washer/dryer in the cottage was replaced.

Plans have been approved to soft wash the building, add gutters along the front of the building and install screening on the gutters, including the cottage. Also a roofer will be repairing the sliding shingles on the cottage roof.

We have a new sprinkler company and many repairs were done to the piping and the electrical component of the system. A new WiFi controlled clock will be installed.

Annual Report – Auction Gala

The 45th Annual UUFH Auction Gala was held on April 29, and was a resounding success. After several years of disruption of the event by Covid concerns, the Auction Gala is strongly back as one of the prime UUFH social events of the year. We had an in-person attendance of 97 people, including members, friends, and an encouraging amount of new members and families. Although a Zoom option was offered as in the Covid years, it was minimally used. Admission to the event included hot and cold appetizers and soft drinks. Desserts and wine/beer were available at an additional cost. In addition to the live auction, the event included a premier raffle, a number of basket raffles, viewing of artwork for auction, and select items for sale. Once again, we were grateful for the savvy auctioneer skills of Jim Monier, who served as master of ceremonies and presided over the live auction component of the evening.

As was the case in the previous 2 years, the auction was run with the use of Auctria software, a powerful tool that allows us to manage the plethora of donated items for auction, handle credit card transactions, and keep track of our expenses and cash receipts, and well as allowing direct online bidding by members. The online bidding was open for a week before the live event, and for the most part, the auction ended the day after the live event. This year, a decision was made to showcase selected artwork at the event, and end the bidding process for those items at the conclusion of the live event, allowing winners to leave with their items. The ability to see the artwork in person increased the artwork sales.

UUFH committees were again very generous in contributing baskets for raffle and auction. We are grateful for this participation. We also thank and acknowledge the many volunteers who helped to make the auction a success. Special mention this year goes to the Religious Education kids and youth, who offered custom-designed name tags at the auction event, and raised \$82!

The final profit of the event, after accounting for expenses and credit card fees, was \$25,402, which is a significant increase over the previous year's profit, and exceeds our budget of \$22,000. Only \$4115 is yet to be collected, and the committee is busy following up.

Respectfully submitted,

2023 Auction Gala Committee:

Allyson Barish
Andrea Costa
Jennifer Edwards
Kata Karejwa
Sue McGovern

UUFH First Book Group
Annual Report, April 2023

The first UU Reading group was started in March 1998. Allyson Barish and Laura Liepa are the facilitators of this group. The group normally alternates discussion leaders and meeting homes and meets in the evening on the last Tuesday of the month, except for December and the summer months.

The group met in a hybrid fashion this year, which was a welcome update after meeting exclusively on Zoom for the prior two years. At the beginning of the season, we decided to meet in person for the more temperate months, and meet remotely via Zoom during the winter months. As is our tradition, members served as discussion leaders and hosts for our in-person meetings. We chose our books by a nomination/voting process over the summer.

We currently have 14 active members, and are hopeful that 2 newcomers to UUFH, who have expressed interest, will join us in the future.

We will make a group decision over the summer regarding our in-person versus remote schedule for next year.

Communications Committee Annual Report 2023

The Communications Committee, in combination with Office Administrator Sandra Yens, has successfully continued to keep the congregation informed through Facebook, the weekly Flash, special eblasts for Board and major events, and Thoughts & Prayers. During this year, Liza trained Sandra to send out all the eblasts. All the eblasts now come from the office rather than the committee.

When the congregation was re-opened to on-site events, website administrator Bridgette Nicolini activated the Events sign-up page <https://uufh.org/events/community/add/> so that our online calendar can now be updated with events taking place both inside and outside of the congregation, though it also allows for Zoom events. With BOT members, we updated the two pages on our site that explain all our publications, how to post <https://www.uufh.org/posting-guidelines> and all the Frequently Asked Questions <https://www.uufh.org/new-guidelines-for-uufh-publications>. Now you can post events that take place off site as long as it's open to UUFH members. Please read all the information there as it will answer the majority of your communications questions. Committees are encouraged to review these and request updates so that all our pages on the site are fresh for members and newcomers. Our website, uufh.org, is the main way we are found by people searching for Unitarian Universalism in Huntington, so we urge all committees to keep their pages updated.

Bridgette continues to handle all website updates, including Events and News & Announcements, as well as site maintenance. She has also been maintaining our YouTube channel, uploading our weekly services, once Paul Mazzotta edits them. We also ask that everyone subscribe to our YouTube channel and share the link as well to increase our traffic--and reach-at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGwgI9A6AJklldz6otVEhbg>. Communicating who we are and what we do is an essential way to continue to build our community, and the Communications team is always making updates and adapting. --Liza Burby

Landscape & Grounds Annual Report 2023

This was yet another year of tree work as numerous trees needed to be pruned and removed to prevent hazards. We also had three trees infected with borers that had to be removed by the memorial garden and old stumps were ground down. We've continued our contract with Matt Boyd who responds relatively quickly to the many unexpected landscaping issues, from downed branches and trees to knotweed growing out of control in the G2GG. The knotweed removal last year was contained to grounds to the northeast of the G2GG. Continuing breaks in the irrigation system's underground line has been an ongoing issue and other options are being explored.

Another issue that is a work in progress is that the locust trees in the center island of the North parking lot have been struggling. The town insisted they be part of the parking lot landscape plan to provide shade for parked cars, but now four different arborists have said that it's not an ideal environment for them. At the recommendation of Ecology Trees, we paid for nutrient treatments in the fall, then had to cover the trunks due to the deer rubbing against them, adding to their problems. Beth Feldman has researched other options for feeding the trees going forward.

Otherwise, all the parking lot beds continue to add beauty to our grounds! --Liza Burby

Pumpkin Committee

End of Year Report 2023

Pumpkin Patch

This year, our fifth, ran incredibly smoothly. We had one entire truck of pumpkins delivered the Saturday of Columbus Day weekend. With the help of workers from the Rural Migrant Ministry, and many volunteers, we unloaded the truck in record time. The cost of the workers was \$375, but we feel that we couldn't do it without them. Thanks to Jim Monnier for making the arrangements.

Once again, the community was glad to see us. We have established ourselves as the community place to go for pumpkins. We were fortunate to have so many members helping this year that staffing was not as big an issue as in the past. The patch is a fun unifying event for members of all ages, and we are grateful for everyone's help. Mother nature helped us out this season also, with perfect weather on the weekends and no storms blowing the tent over. Peggy Koulias, Debbie Cohen and I look forward to another season as pumpkin organizers.

We made a record high profit of **\$9, 284**

In faith,
Amy Olander
Pumpkin patch Committee

Grow to Give Committee Report 2022 – 2023

This past year consisted of continued upgrades of the infrastructure, particularly the raising of an additional bed, and a celebration of the G2GG's 10th Anniversary in October of 2022. We expanded and upgraded the irrigation system within the garden proper, facilitated the installation of two honey bee hives (by a local beekeeper) at the far northwest corner of the UUFH property, along with the installation of protective fencing, and added more than thirty native and pollinator species of plants in close proximity to both the hives and the garden. Throughout the year, knotweed was hand removed, by volunteers, as it appeared, as part of our general weeding program.

Other activities by the G2GG included a presentation by the beekeeper about the care of honey bees, and assistance in the preparation of a service this past April, by Jim Monnier, about the democratic nature of honey bee hive organization. G2GG also was an active participant in the Huntington Interfaith Collaborative for the Environment, which led to its participation in this April's Earth Day Festival. Our volunteers also created a bulletin board for the Social Hall, first to publicize the 10th Anniversary, and subsequently to advertise our ongoing efforts to grow food for the local pantry while also promoting ecological sustainability.

This spring, G2GG volunteers continued the upgrade of the garden's ageing infrastructure by removing a leaking shed and constructing a new shed to house supplies, seeds and tools. Throughout the year, donations were accepted of labor, hanging baskets, chairs, tools, a patio table and an umbrella in order to create a space for UUFH members to enjoy the garden as well as work in it. Last, but not least, two UUFH members successfully petitioned to have the G2GG recognized as a valid recipient of required community service hours by Suffolk County Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener program for the forthcoming year.

Prepared by Valerie Scopaz, Chair 2022-23