



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
*Fellowship*  
OF HUNTINGTON

## ***ANNUAL REPORT***

***CONGREGATION YEAR 2023 - 2024***

***June 18, 2024***

## **President of the Board of Trustees**

As this year's President of our Board of Trustees I would like to thank everyone for their commitment and love of our Fellowship. The contributions and work of our committees are the backbone of our Fellowship. The dedication and dependability of each of our members is heartening and makes the UUFH the special place that it is.

This year, the Fellowship Board of Trustees worked on our new governance system. Committee chairs developed their charters which the Board approved. The charters will allow committees to articulate their responsibilities, who they are responsible to, and what they hope to accomplish in the coming year. In the spring the committees created their budgets for the following year. This model allowed the board to concentrate on learning how to designate authority to the committees for tasks that were previously in the board's purview. The Board can now concentrate on policy formation and governance. This is working well and was evaluated this spring with meetings with committee chairs. The UUFH will vote on the governance model in 2025 . Thank you to all the committees for their cooperation.

We started this Fellowship year with the 75th anniversary gala. Former ministers attended our party and participated in the Sunday Service that weekend. It was a wonderful weekend and kicked off the year in a big way.

In October we had our first Drag Queen Story Hour in conjunction with Family Pride day. Hopefully we can continue this tradition. It was a sweet and lovely family event.

We also installed the Progress Flag at the edge of our Parking Lot by our sign. In spite of it being stolen on two occasions, we continue to fly this banner to acknowledge our commitment to gender equality and rights.

Our Pumpkin Patch did well this year, as well as our Service Auction Fundraiser.

We instituted new safety policies for weapons, pets and bags and our Safety committee continues to provide us with security on Sundays.

We hope to rent our RE wing this year. It has been painted and refloored and looks very clean and ready to lease. The cottage area has a new tenant also this year.

We continue to grow our membership and volunteerism is also increasing.

This year we also created a new website that is easier to navigate and looks updated.

We have created an Accessibility task Force. This task force will investigate ways in which we can make our main hall more accessible to people who now have limited access to the chancel.

We welcomed our new Music Director, Dylan Defeo. He replaces Jie Yi who left us early this year. We thank interim Richard Hyman for leading our music while we searched for and hired Dylan.

Our major task this year was to find a new minister for our congregation. As I write this report the search is ongoing.

We thank Rev. Debra Haffner for her 2 and 1/2 years of dedicated service. Her sermons were inspiring and her commitment and love of our Fellowship was evident in the work she helped us to do. Her guidance helped us prepare for our new minister in ways seen and unseen. Our appreciation is boundless.

I am looking forward to 2024-2025 with optimism for our beloved religious home.

Gerri Farrell- President UUFH Board of Trustees.

# **Rev. Debra's Minister Report**

## **Annual Report Letter June 2024**

My two and a half years with you comes to an end in June 2024.

What wonderful ministry we have done together!

UUFH has re-energized during these past 30 months. Being with you, working with you, getting to know you and your stories, and loving you, has been a wonderful experience. In 2022, the interim search committee asked me “to bring UUFH together in a new revitalized way” and “to hold up a mirror to the congregation so it could collectively make informed decisions about the future.”

We have accomplished so much together! We have installed a new UUFH sign, a new Progressive Flag, and a new statement of our beliefs on a sign outside of the Fellowship. We have a brand-new website, an annual calendar of events, and a newly updated Flash. We applied for and were recertified by the UUA as an LGBTQ+ Welcoming Congregation, more than 20 years after our last designation. We supported two Family Pride picnics and a Drag Queen story hour. We celebrated our 75th anniversary with a glorious weekend, including a well-attended gala and worship service featuring four of our previous ministers. We convened a new Safety and Security Team, with updated policies and a team of nine people to keep us safe each week, and we created a sexual misconduct review team. We instituted a new governance system, shrinking our number of committees from 48 that report directly to the Board to 37 that are organized under 8 key committees. We clarified the roles of the board as primarily strategic and fiduciary, and the role of the minister as overseeing our ministries and our staff. We began planning before we do budgeting. We installed the first windphone on Long Island. We lived our faith aloud through our social justice efforts.

We've added 43 members since I began serving you, and our pledge drive this year once again exceeded its goal, bringing in more than \$337,000 in pledges. Our number of active members –

defined as members who live on Long Island, attend services or other activities, aren't too elderly or sick to come in person or those who live out of state – in other words people that attend services and UUFH activities, increased 39%, from 139 active members to 193 active members at this time.

You will read more about all of this in the reports from key committees, subcommittees, and teams that follow.

Our average attendance at worship has increased 65% since 2022 - to a mean attendance of 132 in the sanctuary and on zoom each week, with several of our services at over 150 people in attendance.

Larger numbers of you are volunteering and taken on leadership positions. When I started with you, just 22 members were involved in leadership or volunteering on at least a biweekly basis – now 88 of you are, a 281% increase. Overall, the number of you volunteering increased to 63% of our active members, a 55% increase in total volunteers. I think we all sense that UUFH feels differently than when I arrived in spring 2022. Part of that was surely coming out of the worst of the COVID pandemic, but it's also because so many of you showed up in new ways – which not only benefitted UUFH but increased your connection and attachment to the congregation and to each other.

I have told you many times that I believe in these words by the 14th century seer and poet Hafiz: “the only prayer we ever need is thank you.” Thank you for this opportunity to serve you, to be part of you, and to love you. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is etched into my heart. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

May our real service begin.

Rev. Debra



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Ministry

## **Membership Committee**

Chair: Michele Lauer-Bader and Judy Greene

Mission: Welcomes, orients and follows up with visitors and new members, and engages congregants in educational, social, and outreach activities.

Members/Volunteers: Michele Lauer-Bader, Judy Green, Judie Gardner

Accomplishments this year: We held 2 newcomer orientations (October and March) and 2 new member recognitions (November and May). 14 people became members since May 7, 2023. We updated the newcomers' packet and the materials for new members and inventoried the UUA brochures that are available to all. We made it through the first year under the new governance!

Next year - Reorganize Membership/Connections committee and hold regular meetings.

## **Membership Committee - Pastoral Care SubCommittee**

Chair: Cindy Vulcan Neber

Mission: The group of Pastoral Care Associates augments the pastoral care of the Minister by providing a caring presence to the Members and Friends who are experiencing a time of challenge and transition.

Members/Volunteers: Sue McGovern, Doreatha Hirsch, Rainy Donlon, Lynda Morella, Mary Bly, Carol Granelli, Martha Ketteridge, Nancy Wilkow

Accomplishments this year: We met monthly to discuss ways to extend caring and loving support to members of our Congregation. We were proactive as the faces of pastoral care through our presence during Moments of the Heart. At least 50 members were checked on throughout the year. Approximately 50 cards were sent and just as many phone calls were made. We remained aware of and in contact with those members that may be lonely and/or unable to leave their home. We assigned a member to be a liaison between our committee and Share/Care to streamline the process when a member is in need of meals, rides, visits or other assistance. We supported our Minister when sensitive issues regarding our Congregation arised by brainstorming and dividing tasks. We were available when she was traveling. We maintained discretion and privacy. We also cared for and supported one another by checking in each month, which also served to strengthen our connection as committee members and as members of the UUFH. We look forward to continuing to serve our Congregation next year.

## **Membership Committee – Greeters SubCommittee**

Chair: Jackie Agdern

Mission: Greeting visitors & members on Sundays and other worship services sponsored by UUFH.

Members/Volunteers: Jackie Agdern, members of the Board of Trustees (on rotation), Nancy Wilkow, Larry Wilkow, Jake Lazarus, Barbara Lazarus, Allyson Barish, Vivian Storm, Jennifer Hildreth, Laura Otton, Connie Sorscher and others.

Accomplishments this year: The first impression received by newcomers attending Sunday Services is from the smiling, welcoming faces our Greeters provide. Typically there are 2-3 greeters at the front door and gallery weekly. This year included in our roster of greeters has been members of the Board of Trustees. Kudos to all Greeters!

## **Membership Committee – Memorials SubCommittee**

Chair: Peggy Koulias and Anne Monnier

Mission: Liaison between Minister and Family to arrange logistics of Memorial Service. Arrange reception after the service (set up and clean up). Coordinate plaques for the Memorial Wall. Logistics for interment of ashes. Arrange named bricks for the garden. Maintain the garden.

Members/Volunteers: Ann Scolnick, Mary Bly, Kim Kayal, Brigitte Zimmer, Jean Marra, Nancy Wilkow, Larry Wilkow, Judy Gardner, Leslie Speed

Accomplishments this year: 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 2023 – 2024 congregational year, we have held 2 memorial services/receptions and have had the ashes of 7 of our members interred in the Memorial Garden.

Our team of “Garden Keepers” continue to work tirelessly to beautify our Memorial Garden throughout the year. It is the final resting place for the remains of over 100 individuals and provides a peaceful space for quiet contemplation. This year, we had a “wind phone” installed in the Fern Point section of the garden. It is connected by love to nowhere and everywhere for those who have an empty place in their heart left by a loved one.

## **Membership Committee – Book Group Team**

Chair: Allyson Barish

Mission: Hold a monthly book discussion

Members/Volunteers: Allyson Barish, Jan Brenner, Carolyn D’Orazio, Gerri Farrell, Leslie Flynn, Mari Hahn, Gwen Ingrid, Laura Liepa, Sue McGovern, Susan Peters, Joanne Polichetti, Ann Scolnick

Accomplishments this year: The group met in a hybrid fashion again this year, meeting in person for the more temperate months, and 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 put our 8th Principle into practice this year by reading a wide array of books by varying authors, and addressing various themes, including women’s issues, rural poverty, racism, and LGBTQ+ issues. We included a “banned” book in our rotation for the first time this year.

## **Membership Committee – Care/Share Team**

Chair: Judie Gardner

Mission: Augments the pastoral care of the Minister by providing a caring presence to Members and Friends who are experiencing a time of challenge and transition through phone calls, cards, visits, rides, and meals.

Members/Volunteers: Care/Share helpers

Accomplishments this year: We operated well this past year in response to the ever-changing needs of our membership. Meals were prepared and delivered, rides were given, and visits and phone calls were made.

We are hoping to gather information for a new, updated care/share list in the near future, as congregants’ abilities to offer help change and new members join our community.

Everyone can do something to help!

## **Membership Committee – Small Group Ministries Teams**

Chair: Michele Lauer-Bader

Mission: To provide small group ministry opportunities.

Members/Volunteers: Facilitators – Jackie Agdern, Brian Cohen, Debbie Cohen, Peggy Koulias, Milt Masur, Larry Wilkow, Joanne Polichetti

Accomplishments this year: Wellspring did not happen this year for 2 major reasons, lack of facilitators and not enough interested people. We are reevaluating if we should continue.

- Touchstones – We currently have 5 separate groups, all with facilitators and some in need of members. The subscription as we know it will be changing at the end of this year. Everyone wants to continue and Rev. Kirk who produces the materials has offered some alternative ideas. Shelley has shared them with the facilitators and after we receive feedback we will make a decision.
- Here are comments from 2 of our facilitators and a few members.
- Our Touchstones group meets once/month.... The discussions are interesting, intimate, and helpful in advancing humanistic attitudes among participants, and tend to foster group cohesion.
- Our core group is finishing our 7th year together, and it has been, and remains absolutely terrific! Our group is composed of 19 of us, and 12-16 show up monthly. What is it all about?

“Thought provoking discussions allowing a deepening of bonds and new ones forming, as well as the sharing of life challenges in such meaningful and fun ways that I so wish we had joined years ago!”

“Much better than group therapy!”

“As new UU members, Touchstones sets the table for discussions of substance as we share sensitive, humorous, and interesting past and current life stories related to the topic. In a year’s time, we have quickly bonded with the Touchstone members in ways not possible through other means. We have made wonderful friends who feel like family”.

“The Touchstones/Journey Group meets once a month for an evening of food, friends and fellowship- a perfect combination in regard to sharing ideas on faith and growth as Unitarian Universalists”.

“Touchstones has been a place where earnestly intended kinship come together for supportive reminders of how to raise up the vibration of all living beings”.

## **Membership Committee – Seder Team**

Chair: TBD

Mission: To provide a family seder during Passover.

Members/Volunteers: Nancy Wilkow, Larry Wilkow, Jennifer Hildreth, Judy Cartwright, Susan Peters, Milt Masur, Ann Skolnick, Dali Boczek, Valerie Scopaz, Harriet McKenna

Accomplishments this year: After a lot of emails and a short time frame, Shelley decided to not move forward with a UUFH Family Seder this year. We will convene a committee in September for 2025. In the past, we have had about 100 people attend so lots of planning and logistics need to be worked out. But we have a core group core who have agreed to be part of next year’s planning.

## **Membership Committee - LIAC Team**

Chair: Nikki Willard and Terry Donaldson

Mission: To represent UUFH at the Long Island Area Council of Unitarian Universalist Congregations (LIAC)

Members/Volunteers: Nikki Willard and Terry Donaldson

Accomplishments this year: This has been a year of exciting changes for LIAC:

- With the leadership of Rev. Kimberly Quinn Johnson, minister of the Bridgehampton Congregation, we have:
- Moved to quarterly in-person meetings which are longer than the regular monthly meetings were but are much more engaging
- Packets are sent out to LIAC Reps in advance of the quarterly meetings so that reps can know before the meetings what's been done, so that we can mostly move forward in the meetings instead of looking solely at past actions
- We have hired an Executive Director, Laurice Grae, for 10 hours a week who supervises our new Administrator Amber Wilson-Daeschlein. Both have been terrific additions and have taken a great burden off those volunteers serving on the Executive Team.

Nikki was a facilitator of the Article 2 Wellspring 4-week discussion group for members of LI congregations.

# **Religious Education Committee**

Chair: Carolyn D'Orazio and Connie Sorscher - co chairs

Mission: The RE Committee supports the UUFH religious education program, and is responsible for additional programming throughout the year including all ages activity 1 Sunday a month. The Committee also oversees the summer programming and special events throughout the year including the children's service and the Christmas pageant.

Members/Volunteers: Carolyn D'Orazio, Connie Sorscher, Jen Hildreth, Andrea Gonnella, Rima Muth, Lila Jean, Sandra Yens, Ben Moskowitz

Accomplishments this year:

- Spearheaded all RE events - LGBTQ+ Bingo, Halloween Party, Recycling Initiative, successfully made and sent 21 Care packages to young adults formerly part of the UUFH RE program, Easter Egg hunt, etc. (March All RE under design)
- Organized a photo booth for the 75th Celebration & Created a scavenger hunt (to be rescheduled due to weather conditions)
- Organized Star Child and collected 4 contractor bags full of donations for this non for profit
- Led the Christmas pageant (handled by the DRE the past few years, returned to Committee led this year.)
- Created and directed the Children's service (handled by the DRE last year)
- Organized meal prep for the homeless by the RE children after service on a few Sundays and dropped off at HIHI in Huntington.
- Art Gallery Exhibit by the RE Program - organized in conjunction with Bill Hawkins the art activity of creating art out of squares and displaying them in the art gallery

- Animal Rescue Event - a May event to support a local non for profit animal rescue that will, in exchange for donations collected for the organization, will come and display and teach our children about wildlife.
- Organized and oversaw Mystery Pals, the cross generational pen pal program to help the children build relationships with adult congregants.
- Prepare a program for summer RE and recruit volunteers to lead the program. This year, the theme is multigenerational whereby talented members volunteer to lead and teach on a specific activity - for ex - Terry may be leading one on gardening, the EWEUUs will be leading one on knitting, etc.
- Organized a table at the Services Auction for the youth to make buttons.

# **Religious Education – Sunday School**

Chair: Sandra Yens

Mission: To provide Unitarian Universalist Religious Education to the children and youth of UUFH on most Sunday's.

Members/Volunteers: Jana Cruz, Jackie Hawkins, Kristina Heinemann, Carol Granelli, Jerilyn Fortsch, Lisa Juretschko, Alana Kurfist, Prue Emery, Bob Bader, Ellen Keller, Lee Kurfist, Jon Nielsen, Michael Goldsmith, Joanne Polichetti, Rima Muth, Tim Thieke, Bryce Klatsky, Lela Weber, Anne Klatsky

Accomplishments this year:

Sunday school had the following:

1. 5 different grade level classes.
2. 17 teachers (including 1 substitute teacher)
3. 2 parent volunteers (when needed at pre-k class)
4. 38: children and youth registered for 2023-2024
5. 18.88: children and youth average weekly attendance

Highlighting the following from 2023-2024:

1. The overall addition of 4 new families enrolling in RE classes since the program started mid-August
2. The addition of 3 new families that started attending RE classes for 2023-2024 attend RE Sunday services and classes regularly
  - a. 1 of the families has become a UUFH member
  - b. 1 of the families is starting to donate to UUFH and is interested in UUFH membership
  - c. The third family found out about UUFH from Sophia Fahs camp in the summer, 2023.

3. All the Sunday School teachers attended a teachers training session at the beginning of the year.
4. Sunday School teachers attended the safety training meeting for the LockDown drill.
5. Middle School class held a bake sale in December, 2023. The youth decided on the non-profit organization to support, the World Wildlife Fund, and which animals to support. They raised enough money to support 6 animals, with some money left over, \$420.

## **Social Justice Committee**

Chair: Nikki Willard

Mission: To provide awareness of Social Justice issues within the congregation, encourage members to get involved in their social justice passions and to help the UUFH in living into the 8th Principle.

The Social Justice Committee also does much reaching out into the community around us, especially marginalized people to let them know who we are and find out how we can help them.

Members/Volunteers: Please see the Subcommittee and Team Reports

Accomplishments this year: We were VERY successful with our Subcommittee and Teams this year under the new governance system. Having different Justice Teams allowed many of our UUFH members to join in in “helping to heal the world” (at least our little piece of it). The reports of our Teams and Subcommittee reflect how we have getting our members involved and how we have reached out to our local communities.

I’d like to emphasize one event that was noteworthy:

Our 1/21/24 Service with Laura Harding, Esq., President of ERASE Racism as our guest speaker. Her sermon was so moving about our 8th Principle as she encouraged us that we are on the right track that she received a standing ovation.

## **Social Justice Subcommittee - Split the Plate**

Chair: Jim Ammerman

Mission: To support primarily local charities through the monthly UUFH Split Plate Offerings.

Members/Volunteers: Mary Bly, Kara Gallagher, Tanya Thurman

Accomplishments this year: Charities Supported this Past Fellowship Year (July 2023-June 2024)

(Nov. 2023-June 2024 contribution totals will be provided when I get the information)

July and August 2023: Huntington Township Housing Coalition (HTHC), \$2972

September 2023: The Maui Strong Fund of the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF), \$1686.50

October 2023: Make the Road New York, \$1727.50

November 2023: International Rescue Committee

December 2023: Huntington Interfaith Homeless Initiative (HiHi)/Family Service League

January 2024: New Hour for Women and Children

February 2024: NAACP Huntington Branch Scholarship Fund

March 2024: The Long Island Doula Association (LIDA) Community Support Fund

April: Book Fairies

May: Wildlife Center of Long Island

June: Pride for Youth

## **Social Justice - Environmental Justice Team**

Chair: Frances Whittelsey

Mission: The Climate/Environmental Justice Team, in communication with the Social Justice Committee, is empowered to take action, sponsor activities, sign public documents, meet with policymakers, or co-host events with other organizations when the UUFH and/or the UUA has a specific written policy or position on the issue.

Members/Volunteers: Jan Brenner, Lynda Morell, Marina Obermaier, Amy Olander, Dawn-Marie Schmitz

Accomplishments this year: We staged a successful Earth Day Fair that included letter-writing in support of a ban on gas-powered leaf blowers that are dangerous to the health of the workers, in this case often migrants, as well as being highly polluting. Helping Jan Brenner in that effort was Dr. Bonnie Sager, founder of Huntington CALM. Jan conveyed more than 30 postcards to the Huntington Town Clerk who will make sure they are distributed to Town Board members.

In addition, children and adults were shown how to make their own non-toxic household cleaners. We also had Beth Fiteni of Green Inside and Out.

## **Social Justice - Free and Fair Elections Team**

Chair: Nikki Willard, Team Leader: Richard Pitra

Mission: Provide voter information for upcoming elections to registered voters, to encourage them to vote.

Members/Volunteers: Debra Hocevar, Joanne Polchetti, Anne Monnier, Mary Bly, Jan Brenner, Liza Burby, Maria Butera, Judy Cartwright, Prudence Emery, Leslie Flynn, Kata Karejwa, Bryce Klatsky, Shelly Laura-Bader, Milt Masur, Joe Obermaier, Marina Obermaier, Amy Olander, Linda Pitra, Ann Scolnick, Margaret Thompson, Ed Vigneau, Cindy Vulcan

Accomplishments this year: Prepared and mailed more than 800 Reclaim Our Vote postcards with voter information to young voters, infrequent voters and people of color, to encourage them to vote in the Georgia and Virginia primaries.

Prepared several hundred letters for the Vote Forward letter writing campaigns. The letters will be mailed to voters in historically underrepresented communities in an effort to increase voter participation in those communities in October for the General Elections.

So far we have donated about \$650 dollars to purchase supplies for this effort.

## **Social Justice - LGBTQ+ Team**

Chair: Eric Rubin-Perez

Mission: The role of the LGBTQ team is to educate and engage the community and congregation through raising awareness and by sponsoring activities. We will make sure LGBTQ+ celebrations/commemorations are observed, such as LGBTQ+ history month, Transgender Day of Remembrance, etc. The group will also work to inform the congregation and Huntington Community of various legislation, e.g., the NYS Equal Rights Amendment, which will be on our ballots in 2024.

Members/Volunteers: Jim Rubin-Perez, Mary Sussman, Carol Dewey, Juli Grey-Owens, Trudy Delaney, Anne Klatsky, Andrea Gonnella

Accomplishments this year: The UUFH became recertified as a Welcoming Congregation. This is a designation established by the UUA that our congregation has met the criteria to be deemed a welcoming and safe congregation for the LGBTQ+ community. Our congregation had not been recertified since 1993. We also hosted our first drag queen story hour. This event had a food truck, and was attended by our congregation members and some community members. We have also registered to participate in LI Pride in Huntington and Northport Pride in Northport. The LGBTQ+ group will have a table at each event.

## **Social Justice - Grow to Give Garden Team**

Chair: Valerie Scopaz Co-Chair: Beth Feldman

Mission: 1. Grow organic produce for donation to Long Island Cares Food Pantry.

2. Provide UUFH congregants with hands-on, educational opportunities to grow food for people in the wider community that are in need of fresh, healthy produce.

Members/Volunteers: Communication with the interested congregants is via email updates. The current distribution list contains more than 45 volunteers, not all of whom are congregants; e.g. they live in the neighborhood. Some members are unable to physically help in the garden, but they support the G2GG in other ways; e.g. maintaining the Social Hall bulletin board, making donations of supplies, equipment and plants, growing seedlings, and so on.

Accomplishments this year: This past year was especially busy as we worked to conclude a much needed capital infrastructure improvement program. The G2GG celebrated its tenth year of existence in 2022. During 2022-23, we installed new raised planting beds, a new three-bin composting station and a double-bin revolving compost drum. We also created a Native Garden and adopted two honey bee hives.

This past year (2023-24) we continued to add native plantings area alongside the honey bee hives. The old plastic shed was dismantled and a new shed was built. It was designed by Emmett Hughes and built by existing and former congregation members. Construction started in May and continued throughout the summer through early fall. Numerous modifications were made to the garden to facilitate ease of access and working by volunteers of all ages.

By the end of the 2023 growing season, more than 277 pounds of produce, including herbs, had been grown and donated. More than 77 jars of honey were harvested from the bee hives. The G2GG covered the cost of labels and bottles. The bee keeper donated her time, money and expertise. Proceeds from the sale of the honey, \$1,046, was donated to the Harry Chapin Food Bank. A third hive was added this spring by the beekeeper.

## **Social Justice - HIHI Team**

Chair: Jennifer Hildreth, Melissa Dinsman, Joanne Polichetti

Mission: Supporting the Huntington Interfaith Homeless Initiative

Members/Volunteers: Jennifer Hildreth, Melissa Dinsman, Joanne Polichetti, Sharon Garfinkel, Laura Granelli Gerde, Cindy Vulcan-Neber, Amy Olander, Jenna Rugile, Martha Ketteridge, Nancy Wilkow

Accomplishments this year: This year the HIHI committee provided meals for the men on ten Sundays and collected donations of clothes, food and toiletries for the men.

## **Office Administration - Office Volunteers**

Chair: Ann Scolnick

Mission: To assist office administrator, in this case, Sandra Yens

Members/Volunteers: Ann Scolnick, Anne Monnier, Jean Marra, Carol Towne

Accomplishments this year: We have updated the building manual, cleaned out all file drawers, staff the office on Sunday mornings, decorate for the holidays, and help with special events.



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## Governance

# **Stewardship Committee**

Subcommittees:

Pledge Drive: Chairs: Jan Brenner & Sue McGovern. Members: Judy Cartwright, Jean Marra

Auction Gala: Chairs: Jen Edwards & Sue McGovern. Members: Andrea Costa, Kara Gallagher, Carol Holmes, Kata Karejwa

Pumpkin Patch: Chairs: Debbie Cohen, Peggy Koulias, Amy Olander

Plant Sale: Debbie Cohen, Cindy Neber

UUFH Legacy Circle: Chair: Sue McGovern. Members: Liza Burby, Brian Cohen, Kim Schultze

Accomplishments: The Mission of the Pledge Drive, Auction Gala, Pumpkin Patch, and Plant Sale is to plan and carry out their fundraising activity to meet the budgeted goal for this year. You can see their success below.

The UUFH Legacy Circle is working on creating a process to identify and recognize individuals who have made planned giving commitments to UUFH, ensuring the vitality and permanence of the Fellowship. The team is reaching out to UUFH members. Presently, 15 members have become Founding Members of the UUFH Legacy Circle.

Pledge Drive: \$335,000 goal, \$337,474 raised

Auction Gala: \$25,000 goal, \$29,000 raised

Pumpkin Patch: \$9,000 goal, \$10,043.85 raised

Plant Sale: \$2,000 goal, \$866.35 raised

# **Finance Committee**

Chair: Allyson Barish, Treasurer

Mission: To create an annual budget that represents the congregation's needs, obligations, and vision, and assure that the congregation operates in compliance with its budget.

Members/Volunteers: Gerard Neber, Susan Peters, Jean Marra, Shel Lipsky, Ann Scolnick, Anne Monnier, Jan Brenner, Peggy Koulias, Carol Towne

Accomplishments this year:

1. Prepared a balanced budget for the fiscal year 2024-25.
2. Revamped the expense approval system to reflect the governance structure, and improve financial detail and record keeping. Trained committee and sub-committee chairs.
3. Revamped the annual budget process to reflect the governance structure, and include committee-level planning for the upcoming fiscal year. Trained committee chairs.

## **Finance - Investment Sub-Committee**

Chair: Gerard Neber reporting to Allyson Barish

Mission: The Investment Sub-Committee acts as the steward of the UUFH's Endowment Fund and savings to provide a stable and growing stream of income to support the fellowship's current needs and future goals for current and future members.

Members/Volunteers: Allyson Barish, Brian Cohen, Gerard Neber

Accomplishments this year:

- The trailing one-year performance of the Endowment and Investment portfolio as of 05/09/2024 was 14.15%, in line with other 60/40 index funds and benchmarks. This was supplemented by higher interest earned on cash savings, as rates hovered around 5% for most of the year, approximately 2% higher than the previous calendar year.
- We began self-managing the portfolios, which currently saves the fellowship \$7-\$8k per year.

# **Buildings and Grounds**

## **Building and Grounds – Building Use and Rentals Subcommittee**

Chair: Anne Monnier

Mission: To oversee one-time and repeating rentals.

Members/Volunteers: Sandra Yens, Kim Kayal, Daniel Klein, Jean Marra

Accomplishments this year: UUFH continues to be available for parties, celebrations, memorial services and other events. Over the past year we've hosted several yearly large outdoor festivals, (SCA and Beltaine). Several groups use the building on a weekly basis – AA, Gurdjieff Group and the Pride Chorus. The Bee Keepers hosted 2 workshops during the winter. The wedding of Dr. Jie and Scott Segal was the highlight of the summer.

Renters are required to provide their own insurance coverage for each event. The Board adopted a policy this year to allow the Building Use Committee to waive the insurance requirement for special circumstance renters. Our insurance carrier has provisions to allow what they consider to be normal church community service activities to be covered under our policy. These groups would include Girl Scouts, AA, etc. Prior to this policy, any special circumstances had to be approved by the Board, sometimes resulting in long delays, and disappointed renters.

We require that a site supervisor be on hand to facilitate the event. Our tables and chairs are available to renters, but not the equipment in the pantry. Site supervisors direct the set up and clean up to ensure the building is returned to its original state before the renters leave. The site supervisors are paid \$25/hour directly by the renters. We have a small group of people available to cover the rentals, but would always welcome more. If anyone is interested in being a site supervisor, please let me know.

Sandra continues to be the point person for all rentals. All requests go through her office. She then clears the calendar space, writes up the contracts, explains the insurance requirements and arranges the site supervisors. Thank you Sandra!

## **Buildings and Grounds - Castle Care SubCommittee**

Chair: Jason D'Orazio

Mission: Maintain and improve the UUFH Castle and Cottage

Members/Volunteers: Alex Alvarado, Dali Boczek, Liza Burby, Steve Burby, Harry Burger, Judy Cartwright, Debbie Cohen, Daniel Curiale, Laura Curiale, Carol Dewey, Melissa Dinsman, Terry Donaldson, Beth Feldman, Sharon Garfinkel, Bill Hawkins, Jenn Hildreth, Carol Holmes, Bill Houck, Kata Karelwa, Barbara Kasa, Martha Ketteridge, Tim Kidder, Peggy Koulias, Barbara Lazarus, Jake Lazarus, Lisa LoPiano, Jean Marra, Anne Monnier, Ben Moskowitz, Gerard Neber, Jon Nielsen, Amy Olander, Laura Otton, Susan Peters, Joanne Polichetti, Valerie Scopaz, Jon Sorscher, Leslie Speed, Cindy Vulcan-Neber, Diana Weaving, Kristin Weissleder, Larry Wilkow, Nancy Wilkow, Nikki Willard, Scott Yanuck

Accomplishments this year:

- Increased membership and active participation, including >40% increase in attendance at 2nd Annual Spring Cleaning Party.
- Refurbished long-term commercial rental spaces in RE wing and Cottage, including replacing/refinishing floors, spackling/painting all rooms/hallways/doors, and replacing Cottage bathroom vanity/sink and accessories.
- Began multi-year effort to reduce water/moisture in our 3 basements, including use of sump pumps, dehumidifiers and temporary gutter downspout extensions to get water away from the buildings.
- Main Hall upholstered chairs professionally cleaned (possibly for the first time since they were purchased). Long overdue.
- Fixed exterior wall/roof/chimney damage/leaks in Cottage, RE4, and 2nd floor round room.
- Fixed leaking hot water pipe in Cottage apartment ceiling and resulting damage to ceiling.
- Repairs to exterior wall stucco on Castle and Cottage.

- Replaced Main Hall HVAC blower motor to return system to operation and full air flow.
- Fixed issues with Social Hall and Foyer/Gallery HVAC units.
- Replaced shed between kitchen door and dumpster.
- Removed “rat’s nest” of abandoned phone/cable wires in Cottage basement, outside cottage and on utility poles on property, eliminating many of the low-hanging wires over the lawn and parking lot. PSEG, Optimum, and Verizon raised the remaining low wires over the parking lot after PSEG replaced a pole by the street damaged by a car accident.
- Cleaned out Maintenance Room near kitchen, including relocating unused HIHI cots and pillows to under-utilized closet across from Foyer bathroom.
- Added 10 high-top folding tables to inventory for the 75th Anniversary Party and other internal and external rental events.
- Made several building safety improvements as recommended by the Safety Team.
- Dozens of small repairs/improvements.

## **Building and Grounds - Landscaping and Grounds Subcommittee**

Chair: Valerie Scopaz Co Chair: Beth Feldman

Mission: To oversee the maintenance of and improvements to the 6 acre campus of UUFH

Members/Volunteers: There is no set group of volunteers on this Committee, although members of the G2GG and the Buildings and Grounds’ Castle Care committees have provided labor, plants and expertise.

Accomplishments this year: The Budget was revamped to conform to new Governance procedures. Extensive coordination and field visits were conducted with Jason (as Chair of the Buildings Committee) and the landscaper so as to determine best practices to enhance ecological as well as fiscal sustainability. A series of Zoom meetings were held with other committee personnel (in the areas of Rental, Memorial Garden, Parking Lot Maintenance, Security, and

Building Maintenance to name just a couple) in order to ascertain site issues and identify future improvements. This coordination effort will continue through the next calendar year.

The coordination meetings revealed the necessity of prioritizing the resolution of chronic site drainage problems that have caused flooding within the basements of the main building and the cottage. They also highlighted the need for a longer term strategy for parking lot maintenance and other capital improvements related to the rear gravel connection between the north and south parking lots.

Resolution of the Inner Courtyard's drainage problem will be started, and hopefully completed, this spring during the 2023-24 calendar year. This will be followed by a revamped landscaping of the courtyard to facilitate both drainage and the courtyard's usage by the Congregation; also during the 2023-24 calendar year.

Estimates are being obtained for the longer term improvement of the rear connection drive between the north and south parking lots. Estimates also are being obtained to update and improve the plantings around the main building.

## **Building and Grounds - Safety and Security Subcommittee**

Chair: Bryce Klatsky

Mission: The Safety Committee is committed to ensuring the safety of UUFH congregants, staff, and guests by implementing preventative safety measures and emergency response plans.

Members/Volunteers: Graham Otton, Jason D'Orazio, Jon Sorscher, David Schulman, Bryce Klatsky, Terry Donaldson, Michael Goldsmith, Lee Kurfist, Steve Burby

Accomplishments this year: The Safety Committee spent a great deal of time creating, adjusting, and implementing plans to actively surveil the campus during services. Our team also created several policies to keep the congregation safe including policies for weapons, large bags, and animals, and lockdowns. We coordinated with key stakeholders throughout the congregation (i.e. greeters and RE teachers) to ensure they understood their roles in emergency situations. We put our plans to the test through lockdown drills that allowed us to improve and revise our emergency response plans. Our team engaged in de-escalation training in the event of an unruly member visiting our sanctuary.

To further our preventative safety plans, we reviewed our Ring camera coverage to determine opportunities for additional sight lines. We also coordinated with Suffolk County Police to conduct a vulnerability assessment and are meeting with a representative from FEMA in May to engage in exercises to test our emergency preparedness. We built a strong relationship with the second precinct resulting in their active presence at our drag queen story hour. While we have already installed and tested several more locks on our interior doors, we are eager to complete a grant application to further upgrade our campus' safety.

We attended to the first aid needs of our Fellowship by bringing Narcan into the building (near the AED machine) and ensuring our AED and fire extinguishers were up to date. We facilitated CPR and First Aid training for congregants as well. We purchased emergency ladders for upstairs RE rooms in the event of a fire and conducted our routine fire drills.

We placed notes on cars that routinely use our parking lot to encourage a safer relationship with our neighbors. (This effort was well received and even resulted in some donations). Lastly, we continue to gauge the progress of Covid and other communicable diseases and monitor our policies for masking.

In short, we have been a busy team!