



UUCWC 2024-2025 Annual Report



Join the Journey.
Open to You.

FINAL

Marilyn Gonzalez
Church Administrator

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Board of Trustees Report

This overview will summarize the seasons of the previous fiscal year, starting with last summer.

At our board meeting in July 2024, plans to join the UUA's Climate Justice Revival were set in motion when representatives from Earth and Climate Ministry approached the board to approve moving forward on this important work. The kickoff service was at the end of September with more to come.

At our board retreat, we fleshed out new board Goals and started planning for the congregation to participate in Strategic Visioning for UUCWC into the next 1-3 years. This began with a task force putting out a survey to the congregation, culminating with a workshop in February. Big thanks to Loren McAlister, Jo Wiedmann and Mike Hanson! Next steps will be taken by our strategic Vision Implementation team (Joe Schenk, Rab Bell and Jen Rehbein) to figure out how to make our collective dreams a reality.

In the Fall we reviewed recommendations put forth by the very comprehensive Solar Panel report written by Mark Pokryska with input from Leslie McGeorge. This resulted in action items to be assessed by Farzad, an electrician, the Building and Grounds committee, and the Facilities Manager. I'm saying this to highlight how many people it takes to keep this building humming. And some of you may not even be aware that our roof is sporting 44 solar panels that were installed back in 2008!

Our gorgeous new building was completed and dedicated!

Winter came with our intrepid stewardship team rolling out another gorgeous booklet, holding information sessions, and always the follow-up. We shot for the moon of 500K and though we didn't quite make it to the moon, we did land among the stars.

During the Spring we brought so many more people into the work of the Board-, revisiting Endowment bylaws, a strategic Visioning workshop, ministries working together to create the Climate Dialogues, and, recognizing the need for trans inclusion here at UUCWC, we brought the Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary Conference to our congregation and welcomed community members as well.

Going forward, your board will breathe life into task forces to consider our safety both in the building and online, the aesthetics of the interior of our building, and for considering how to sustainably move forward financially.

Wendy Stasolla
UUCWC Board President
2024-2025

Executive Staff Report

I want to begin by saying something that may be incredibly obvious to many of you, and perhaps an ah-ha for others.

Everything we do in this church is missional. As a staff, and with lay leadership, we are constantly making decisions based on whether or not what we do reflects and furthers our values. Does it create community? To what end? Does it celebrate life? How? Are we changing the world? Whose world and why?

Everything we do is in service to our mission, and everything you will hear today during this meeting will be a celebration of that mission. And everything that we can celebrate and plan to celebrate in the future will be because you - we collectively - funded this mission. By money and time and energy and every other resource that can be gifted, the stories you are about to hear were investments of this community.

It is a radical thing. A joyful thing. May we be grateful and inspired to do more.

So, in that spirit – On behalf of your staff, let me tell you a little bit about who we are as we close out this congregational year.

After a significant cull, the first real hard look at our books since covid, we are a congregation of 259 members and 33 friends, or an adult system of 292.

Since election day, we've had 42 people fill out a connection card. And just since April, we welcomed 12 new members. Next Sunday, after the conclusion of another Pathways series, we very well may be welcoming another 14.

You'll hear me say this next week when we celebrate that newest group, but when I asked them to write a covenant during their first conversation together, they said:

- I need to feel like a person worth knowing
- I want rituals that honor and speak to me; that feel invitational.
- I want to be allowed to grow, to make a mistake, to change my mind
- I want authenticity

Since September's Water Communion through the end of May, we averaged about 176 people on a Sunday morning.

If congregations are bringing in half of their membership on a Sunday morning, they are considered highly successful. We are "worshipping" 69% on a Sunday. Yes, our member numbers are lower than in years past. But our engagement is significantly higher.

Now, listen to this one: our average in person attendance is about 102, and our average online participation is 84. Meaning on any given Sunday, about half the congregation is online.

Is this good or bad? I honestly have no idea. But what I can say is that it is, again, unheard of in our sister congregations and across mainline religion today. And we owe a great deal to our worship tech team for their efforts in keeping us tethered.

Through Rev. Lisa's ministry, we offered 8 evening Vespers services, including the night after the election. We're grateful for Rachel Hansen and Christa Olson and the 9 singers in the pop-up choir who also made this gorgeous ministry possible.

And, speaking of music, our Choir currently has 22 core members plus another 7 singers who drop in during some of our holiday events. Over the course of the year they sang 23 pieces, after next week it will be 25.

We welcomed 7 guest musicians - which does not include the 13 big band members who will be joining us for next week's flower communion. And 14 musicians from our congregation, reminding us that there is excellence right here.

The LOVE Jazz Orchestra returned (formerly known as the South Philly Big Band), which brought in 107 adults and children from within and outside our church community.

And, in addition to it all, the Wildflower commission allowed the choir to stretch into new musical territories, once again bringing a world premiere into our space, and provided money and opportunity to a young composer, Addison Hill.

That's what's been happening in the sanctuary.

This year in Children's Faith Engagement, we had 33 children registered, raising our total number of people we serve to 325.

Our youngest elementary group learned about the new UU values. Our 7th-9th graders participated in the Our Whole Lives program with youth from neighboring congregations in Princeton and Somerset Hills. Our high school youth group focused on racial justice, learning about UU history and racism, famous Black UUs, and more. The year concluded with an overnight trip to Philadelphia with the UU Cherry Hill youth group to visit the African American Museum of Philadelphia.

We had fun, family-oriented events such as our Homemade Holidays in December and our Easter Scavenger Hunt in the spring. Plus, our annual Christmas Eve and Palm Sunday multigen pageants.

Through our Adult Faith Engagement, we continued to connect people through small groups like chalice circles, Wellspring and Tending the Flame. Lay leaders facilitated 3 impactful racial justice book discussions. Rev. Lisa and I facilitate 6 different offerings including *Getting Good at Getting Older*, *On Tyranny*, 2 sessions of *Pathways*, our weekly *Lectio Divina* and *Gender 101*.

This year we had 220 people register for Adult Faith Engagement classes—

That is some look into what happened here on Sundays. But you know there was more.

Remember that it was this year that Susan Irgang retired but continued on in a consulting role throughout these 10 months. That time now concludes, and so, we begin a new relationship with her in the time to come.

And with Susan's retirement, came Marilyn, as if she had also always been here knowing exactly what to do.

Friends, do you understand? Marilyn has not yet been here for a full year and during her tenure, the staff was not only sharing an office space for 5 months, she and the building committee had to deal with:

Bees, Snakes, Mice, Well-Chlorination; multiple HVAC failures on Saturdays before services; PFAS in the water; and replacing the water heater, freezer and refrigerator. There were - are - ongoing leaks throughout the building (Sanctuary Skylight, Offices, Crossings Room, and Dragon Hallway). And of course, some of that was because of our capital project!

Now, you are going to hear from the Capital Project soon enough, but folks, what this team made possible because of your generosity is astounding. Like I said, at the beginning of this church year your staff was in shared office space in the back classrooms trying to eat carrots and apples quietly, and now we have the gift of our incredible offices, our elevator, the conference room, that lobby!

And let me just say this: we say that Marilyn and I are the only full-time employees but that is wrong. Every single day that I was here, so was Farzad. Every single phone call that Marilyn had to make, Farzad was the call before and after. He worked with the staff, the construction crew, with lawyers, designers and consultants. He stayed past our working hours. He added countless beautiful touches - those chalices in the stairwell and making sure the stained glass was displayed.

To be fair, we can't count him as one of the full-time employees because he wasn't paid for any of it. He saved us a tremendous amount of money along the way. Farzad, when you travel, I miss you. Welcome home. Thank you for the ways you made this home what it is for all of us.

Friends, later when these leaders are recognized, I hope your applause creates a new leak in the roof.

There was a little more -

We launched a strategic plan, and then, after November, had to launch it once more after realizing the world was going to look very different than what we had hoped.

Our justice ministries reminded us that it is important that we do something and do something together. To remind us of only some of what that means: Climate dialogues and revivals bookended our year; we joined with others around the country for a Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary Trans and non-Binary workshop; we hosted the Trans Day of Remembrance and Resilience for the Hopewell Valley Community; we went to rallies and marches and protests and had numerous voices pushing for a reparations task force in Trenton.

For 27 years UUCWC has offered a hot nutritious meal and tutoring to 27 children with housing insecurity from HomeFront. This year, Robin brought her energy to the program and doubled the number of volunteers for this outreach this year.

Our Auction gave us joy and connection and raised enough money to support our budget and also justice efforts outside our own.

We cheered Lisa on as she moved from her internship, through the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, and into the position of our Minister for Justice and Pastoral Care.

And friends, guess what, this year, it is 10 years of Roberto Santiago's employment and friendship with us.

This was a big year. Let me close by asking us to hold a moment of silence, for the five inimitable women, whose lives shaped this community, and whose deaths occurred just this year, changing us all once more.

Mary Kay Mitchell

Susan Colket

Diane Knights

Carole Erb

Kevyn Malloy

Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Senior Minister

UUCWC

Auction Committee

Group Leader: Barbara Drew, Jayme Trott, Lori O'Neil and Marcia Wittmann, Cochairs

Sub-team leaders: Boutique: Lynda Shapiro
Food: Susan Vigilante
Live Auction Emcee: Roger Shapiro
Others: Bonnie Gilbert, Janet Hubbard, Leslie McGeorge, Sandi McIntyre, Patty Mikes, Lori Rahn, Linda Vogt, Debbie West

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

- Recruited and incorporated many new-to-UUCWC and new-to-auction team members:
- (Kim Bacso, Leon Brooks, Ashley Clayborn, Ellen Cottone, Karen Damato, Stacey Metzler, Susan Mitchell, Barbara Sandstrom, and David Thomas) many of whom were introduced to us through Congregational Engagement pilot for “buddy system.”
- Received 18 donations from businesses (many more than prior year) and 34 special items from the Kevyn Malloy-Tony Panzetta estate.
- Held a successful kick-off party with entertainment and mini-live auction; new this year: a photo booth offered by Nicole Robinson. Conducted a smooth transition for food coordination: after many wonderful years of food prep led by Mike Muccioli, we welcomed new Coordinator Susan Vigilante and several new food prep helpers in addition to loyal helpers.
- Included childcare coverage for a young family, thanks to Colleen McCourt and Elliot Giacourt.
- Exceeded our target budget amount of \$31,050 with net proceeds of approximately \$40K, allowing for a significant contribution of 50% of that surplus to a social justice organization: UUA Disaster Relief Fund.

What challenges did your group face?

- With so many activities occurring through the spring in our congregation, promoting the many components of the auction is challenging: First the deadline for contributions, then the ticket sales for the kick-off party and finally participation in the online auction.
- Technology presents a challenge to many seniors: we updated the how-to demos and offered individualized in-house tech help.

- Sustaining the level of net proceeds each year is challenging as many key donors are less likely to sponsor a dinner or other event. It is always challenging to attract young families to participate as donors or bidders.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

- Continue to offer the auction as a vehicle to foster community building experiences while raising funds.
- Each year we encourage less dependence on the auction for annual operating budgetary needs.
- Continue to recruit and train new team members to help with the many aspects of the auction.

Capital Campaign/Project Team

Group Leader: Capital Campaign/Project Team

Members: George Faulkner, Treasurer
Farzad Shadzik, Project Manager
Jayme Trott, Co-Chair
Susan Vigilante, Co-Chair

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

- Construction completed
- Achieved goal under budget
- With congregational agreement, avoided borrowing from the bank and instead borrowed from UUCWC reserve funds to cover costs until pledges are paid.

What challenges did your group face?

- Identified additional needs, particularly aesthetic improvements, for which Farzad masterfully negotiated solutions while remaining under the original budget.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

- Hoping that all pledges are honored and that congregants, friends, staff and visitors appreciate the beauty, functionality and accessibility of our improved church building and grounds.

Congregational Engagement

Group Leader: Pam Shadzik

Members: Martha Bell, Holly Bussey, Loren McAlister, Sandy Muccioli, Jane Root

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

We initiated a number of new programs to support our members in finding their way in the UUCWC community, at whatever level they choose to participate. These include:

- Connectors program where we stay in touch with newer members, answer their questions, and support them in connecting as they wish
- Buddies program, where new members joining a committee/ministry or one-time effort have someone within that team who will support them and show them the ropes
- "Spotlight" in the monthly CrossCurrents newsletter that describes each committee or ministry to help members understand and navigate the possibilities for engagement
- Leadership Resource Guide that provides a broad range of information for committee/ministry leaders
- A new webpage that helps guide members to engagement opportunities

What challenges did your group face?

Our biggest challenge was how to share information on the website and link to other resources to ensure that materials are up to date.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

We hope to continue to create processes and structures that are clear and replicable, so that the work that we do can continue. We also hope to expand the programs that we have piloted, including building a cadre of "Connectors" for new members.

CFA-Faith Expression and Funding Ministry/Team

Group Leader: Holly Bussey

Members: Rab Bell, Bud Johnson, Jane Root, Jim Sanders, Dan Tuft

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

Thrilled to have one new member who brings new perspectives and energy to the exciting work of donating money to like-minded organizations outside of UUCWC and helping FEFT become an even stronger force in “Changing the World”.

FEFT continues to pivot while trying to remain true to its goals for this year regarding money and expressing our faith. 50% of the plate funds all Council for Faith in Action work that enables both congregants and congregation to go out into the world and make a difference for justice and equity.

We’ve worked with other CFA members to help better organize giving and influencing worthy causes outside of our walls. Food Ministry, HomeFront, Racial Justice and Earth/Climate Ministries are supported by FEFT and their missions. Additionally, funds to causes outside our walls whose missions align with our UU principles received target substantial donations.

By the end of the church year (June 2025), FEFT will have contributed over \$14,000 to outside organizations including but not limited to(in no particular order): Isles, Urban Promise, I Am Trenton, Snipes Farm and Education Center, Interfaith Food Alliance, Trenton Microloan Collaborative, New Hope Pride Parade, LGBTQ401 event, Pink Haven, UU Disaster Relief, Lenape Nation, TASK and Loaves and Fishes

UUCWC is an incredibly generous congregation via plate donations. We are grateful for this kindness.

What challenges did your group face?

The needs of the world are changing at a rapid pace. Our strategies for a year need to be flexible and shift with the growing needs.

Communication is probably our next big challenge. Linking plate giving to what we are doing in the outside world and inviting participation in that process.

Identifying more people to be part of the process. We are responsible for working with a substantial amount of funds, having input and clarity among the congregation would greatly improve our effectiveness.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

As our group matures, we hope to create a succession plan for leadership within the next 18 months. FEFT will continue to create yearly budgets and a giving strategy towards specific giving. vs. donating on the fly. Transparency and accountability remain our goals. Also, FEFT wants to look more into the rotating facilitation model that some other groups are using (RJM example) More congregation participation in this joyous ministry would be most welcome. Time involvement is limited, reward HIGH!

Earth & Climate Ministry

Group Leader: Barbara Drew, Al Johnson, and Leslie McGeorge

Members: *Jeanne DeMoss, Janet Hubbard, Karen Kent, Geri Koblis, Stacey Metzler, Mark Pokyrska, Steve Saddlemire, Wendy Stasolla, Sandee Steinberg, John Unger.

We also welcomed new members: Beth Brasor, Elissa Cullen, Shotais, Heidi Wachtin, and others

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

- Transitioned to organizationally and structurally being part of the Council for Faith in Action
- ECM presented info to the Board of Trustees in July on newer UU Green Sanctuary 2030 recognition process and the related Climate Justice Revival and received OK to proceed with both. With Leslie McGeorge and Sandee Steinberg coordinating closely with Rev. Kim, we organized the Climate Justice Revival (UUA program) **in 3 parts:**
 - **Fall Worship Service** - in September, with a sermon by Rev. Kim followed by advocacy hour for Environmental Voter Project coordinated by Leslie McGeorge, walk of grounds led by Barbara Drew with Lenape Chief Blue Jay, and an environmental program for Children's Faith Engagement with Julie Rigano and Geri Koblis.
 - **Climate Justice Congregational Dialogues** - Met with teams and/or representatives of other justice teams: Faith Expression Funding Team, Food Ministry and Racial Justice in preparation for the March Climate Justice Congregational Dialogues. Dialogues were spearheaded by ECM, hosted by Council for Faith in Action, with Sandee Steinberg and Leslie McGeorge as overall coordinators with a cross-justice team planning group.
 - **Dialogues (program by UUA)** were facilitated by Marianne Alt with Regina Zilinski helping with advance facilitation and event planning along with others. 42 congregants participated, in-person and remotely, on this 1/2 day Sat. event We envisioned the world we would like to see, considered some of the climate justice challenges our community faces (including Trenton and Morrisville), and explored some possible community care projects we could consider.
- In advance of the Dialogues, ECM prepared many materials, including our Congregational Profile, which will serve as a key component for our church UUA Green Sanctuary 2030 application; Al Johnson provided a comprehensive history of the origins and evolution of ECM, and Steve Saddlemire prepared a summary of Climate Disruption Impacts and Disaster Preparation in our Community. ECM

funded lunch for participants, w/ local businesses providing food, including a minority, woman-owned business.

- Spring Worship Service – At end of March (leading into April Earth Month), a second climate justice/environmental worship service was conducted by Rev. Kim, again with a Children's Faith Engagement environmental program.
- ECM members participated in RJM's common book read, *Climate Change is Racist: Race, Privilege and the Struggle for Climate Justice*, by Jeremy Williams. Regina Zilinsky provided a very useful composite definition of Climate Justice, and she and Marianne Alt also provided a summary of the main learnings from the book read for the Climate Justice Dialogues (above).
- Green Sanctuary 2030 – Prepared some of needed materials for UUCWC's GS2030 application, such as Congregational Profile, conducted climate justice learning and dialogues, and attended monthly UU national GS 2030 community remote meetings.
- ECM continued with maintaining Allie's Garden though Al Johnson's leadership through soil prep, sowing (with children), watering/weeding throughout the summer and harvesting (with children); provided harvest of 30 pounds of sweet potatoes, 30 pounds of butternut squash and 60 pounds of carrots to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen.
- Promoted children and youth engagement with Allie's Garden led by Al Johnson, and encouraged other outdoor activities, including bird house construction and placement outdoors in conjunction with Julie Rigano, Family Ministry Director.
- Continued implementing the church's River-Friendly tasks and tasks in our Action plan, many relating to the application for UUA Green Sanctuary recognition, including an assessment of stormwater and a portion of the tributary to Jacob's Creek, coordinated by Steve Saddlemire
- Made substantial progress on expanding native plants – enhanced pollinator display garden thanks to donation of plant material and labor by Stacey Metzler, with assistance by Barbara Drew
- Held Green Info Table for Earth Day including a vermiculture display by Heidi Wachtin, and compost info by Al Johnson, and provided an Earth Day native plant give-away thru partial donation by Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve
- Held a presentation on Backyard Wildlife Habitat program to promote native plantings, by Jeanne DeMoss, as rep for Hopewell Valley Gardens for Wildlife
- Continued with others: monthly Outdoor Adventure Hikes, (Steve Saddlemire, Chris Piatek and Geri Koblis) and Indoor Plant Care (Barbara Drew, Karen Kent, Linda Hahola, Donna Miller, and Penny Rodgers)
- Continued promoting reuse through Used Book Sales on first Sundays of the month, after the re-opening of the Crossings Room.

- Began holding Seasonal and Celestial Celebratory Gatherings, beginning with a Full Moon Walk in November, continuing with Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox: helped establish a planning group led by Mark Pokyrska to sponsor spiritual celestial celebrations seasonally, for all ages.
- Held grounds Spring Clean-up in conjunction with Facilities Team, thanks to Denny Rodgers
- Continued to offer congregants non-traditional recycling, such as coffee pods & dental products
- Working with UUJusticePA, assisted the congregation in advocacy writing 57 postcards in March to Gov. Shapiro and state reps to oppose the repeal of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in PA
- Made initial steps towards implementing Endowment Fund grant relating to the solar panel system

What challenges did your group face?

- Holding our general monthly regular meetings, using multi-platform format. Need more training for some on OWL.
- Making progress on some projects, like Endowment Grant for related to solar system monitor, while also spending much time organizing, attending UU trainings, and conducting multiple church-wide Climate Justice Revival and Dialogues. For endowment grant, need to seek input from others in church that may have skills (engineers?)/ knowledge on monitoring solar power output and contributing to carbon footprint analyses.
- More training needed on Google docs

What are your hopes for the year to come?

- Synthesize responses from the Climate Justice Dialogues participants and continue constructive coordinating meetings with relevant justice teams and others, in order to propose several congregational actions to address climate justice in our community, with some focus on the Trenton/Morrisville area. May include disaster response/community resilience assistance. Have more climate justice church-wide learning opportunities. Take steps to become more engaged in local community climate/environmental justice.
- Working with Minsters and others, develop and finalize remaining materials and actions to apply for first annual UU Green Sanctuary 2030 recognition.
- Implement the Endowment Grant per our Solar System Report by Mark Pokyrska to address mechanical room optimum conditions for the solar system and install a solar panel energy production monitor with display

- Continue active ministry, and update our Action Plan as needed in its 5 goal areas: Sustainable grounds and building, Education, Advocacy, Contact with Nature, and Climate Justice

Endowment

Group Leader: Bonnie Gilbert & Mike Hanson

Members: Janet Hubbard, Sandy Muccioli, David Schumann,
Susan Busch

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

- At the beginning of the year, we welcomed two new members, David Schumann and Susan Busch.
- During the course of the year, the fund increased to \$461,641, thanks to legacy gifts from members and growth in the Endowment Fund portfolio, as managed by the UU's Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF).
- As is customarily the case when growth in the Endowment Fund allows, we invited grant requests for church-related projects. By our formula, we had nearly \$15,000 available for grants. We reviewed the grants that were submitted and made the following awards:
 1. Wheeled book cart to support Social Justice by Racial Justice Ministry for \$500. (Denny Rodgers)
 2. OWL 3 camera for the smaller conference to encourage connection on multi-platform meetings for \$1,050. (Marilyn Gonzalez)
 3. Melamine place-settings and plastic tumblers for more environmentally friendly meals and snacks for \$2,900. Several food-related committees and ECM support this. (Susan Vigilante)
 4. Paint supplies for RE classrooms to enhance the environment for our children for \$1,000. (Justin Roth)
 5. Freezer to replace broken one for Food Ministry in support of Homefront, TASK, and social events). \$5,522. (Mike Muccioli)
 6. Water heater to replace the dead one for Food Ministry's dishwasher for \$3,450. (Denny Rodgers and Marilyn Gonzalez).
 7. Table cart to better store tables used in Homefront and Fellowship for \$300. (Marilyn Gonzalez)

In recognition of future financial pressures, the Church Board requested a meeting with the Endowment Committee (EC) and other interested individuals to explore ways in which the Endowment Fund might expand its role in supporting the church's financial security. As a result of the meeting, an Endowment Committee Task Force was established. Bonnie Gilbert and David Schumann represented the EC. Other members included: Denny Rogers, Sandee Steinberg, and Lynne Molnar.

The Task Force developed the following recommendations and strategies:

- Amend the EC mission statement to say: The UUCWC Endowment Fund is for the long-term health, security and success of the church and to fund specific / special projects that broadens its mission."
- Make minor updating amendments to the EC portion of the church's by-laws.
- Continue management of the Endowment funds by UUCEF. UUCWC's Endowment Fund, which is unrestricted, should continue to have its use determined by the EC, with approval of the Board
- Modify the formula and strategy for grants: The EC shall determine the principal value of the Endowment Fund on December 31st and calculate 5% of that as the amount that is available for distribution in the following year. The first \$10,000 of the distribution is to be distributed through the submission and review of grant requests by the committee. After the initial grant distributions are made, the rest of the money available for distribution shall go to the board to determine its use.
- The EC sets the specifics regarding the distribution fund grants. (once per year, time period for submission, selection and announcement)
- Recommend the Board to consider 1) developing a coherent funding strategy for all sources of revenue and income for the church, and 2) developing an education program about donating and bequeathing to UUCWC.

What challenges did your group face?

The purpose of a church endowment fund is to assure the long-term viability of the church. That means encouraging legacy gifts, managing fund growth and protecting the fund from being drawn down by everyday—as opposed to life-threatening—crises. Church ECs tend to be wary of the fund being the simple solution for plugging up operational budget shortfalls, which could undermine the ability of the fund to meet its long-term purpose. It was thus a challenge to the EC's norms and practices to find a workable and amenable solution to the Board's financial challenges. We are pleased that through the hard work of the Task Force, acceptable solutions were developed.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

That we will be able to get back to the majority of the original goals from this past year that were put on hold while the Endowment Fund Task Force did its work. - Revise the UUCWC Endowment Fund brochure - Work to grow the Endowment Fund with campaign efforts - Complete our regular function of calculating the amount that is available for distribution and determining which grant requests to fund

Food Ministry

Group Leader: Jackie Thomas & Mike Muccioli

Members: Kelly Benson, Margaret DeAngelis, Adam Czerwonka, Christine Piatek, Judith MacLaury, Lori Rahn, Bernie Ruekgauer, Bonnie Ruekgauer, David Schumann, and Marcia Wittmann

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

The Food Ministry is happy for the completion of the kitchen, and we have returned to cooking meals to donate to community non-profits that address food insecurity. The Food Ministry was elated by the UUCWC congregation's generous response to the four food drives that benefited both New Jersey and Pennsylvania organizations.

Administering the Rolland Rahn Memorial Fund, we donated 9 sets of knives to graduates of TASK's culinary training program, Emilio's Kitchen.

What challenges did your group face?

The kitchen renovation made the Food Ministry rethink our processes. We have used the time out of the kitchen to establish a selection criterion for projects that aid community groups, developed a spreadsheet that tracks the projects, including type of aid and cost, and all members have been ServSafe recertified.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

The Food Ministry hopes to expand our reach in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania by monitoring the needs of communities and responding. The food Ministry also hopes to present our congregation with more opportunities to be involved in our endeavors.

Facilities Committee

Group Leader: Justin Roth & Denny Rodgers, Co-Chairs

Members: Marilyn Gonzalez, Church Admin; Mike Toole, Member

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

The Facilities Committee (a new committee formed by combining the Grounds and Building Committees) had an exciting and adventurous year with a similar outlook into next year! Starting with the grand opening of the new addition to our amazing facility - a big thanks to the donors, the campaign committee, the contractors, and countless others that helped this wish come to fruition. A special thank you goes out to Farzad S. for being onsite nearly every day during construction and to Marilyn, our Church Administrator, for jumping right in to help the facilities team! With the proper planning, we were able to maintain Sunday Service in the sanctuary for anyone attending in person. Additionally, the new sidewalks and new lift/elevator have significantly increased the building's accessibility.

In addition to the land acknowledgement at the opening of each Sunday Service, we now have a wooden monument installed by a congregant for their Eagle Scout project.

Some recurring business persisted as well - like our Spring grounds clean up over two weekends in partnership with the Earth and Climate Ministry; organizing our limited storage especially in the former Pre-K classroom and room 111 - a big thanks to Denny R. who has tackled most of the "spring cleaning/clear out" to make our storage areas more useful!

What challenges did your group face?

A few other areas of the building were upgraded this year as well - some equipment was replaced due to anticipated depreciation while others were required due to breakage or building code mandates. This list includes: filter upgrades for the well water system, a new fridge and freezer for the remodeled kitchen, upgrades to the fire suppression system, closed loop security cameras were installed, foundation waterproofing, Memorial Garden fencing, a new water heater, several HVAC repairs, roof leaks, a bee infestation, a snake that took up residence in our walls, eradicating the mice, and the list goes on... The running joke is that the older parts of the building are jealous of the new.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

As for the future, here are some of the adventures we are beginning to plan for and navigate: continuing to work on completing the "punch list" of items from the new

construction; classroom painting by the ROMEOS; aging and failing HVAC systems; several roof leaks; replacing the Skylight that is well past it's expected lifespan; bathroom remodeling near the Crossings Room; just like we said before - and the list goes on...

Finance Committee

Group Leader: Sandee Steinberg

Members: Bonnie Gilbert and Mike Hanson, *Endowment*;
Denny Rodgers, *Treasurer*; George Faulkner, *Capital Project Treasurer*;
Barbara Drew, *Auction*; Jane Root, *Stewardship*;
Donna Miller, *Fundraising*

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

The group continued to build as a cohesive team to help each other and to bounce ideas off of each other related to finances. We continue to use a team calendar, as established by last year's chair, to track finance related events during the year. This helps us to plan for upcoming events, and to provide support to specific teams at different times of the year. Lynne Quinto, our controller, performs the day-to-day bookkeeping, so the Finance Committee is able to focus more on policy and overall church finances.

We are using Google docs to share our minutes, agendas and other documents. We can easily meet once a month using zoom so that all members can attend and share documents as needed.

This year we were able to allocate enough available cash to bring on an assistant minister. We presented this proposal to the congregation in January, and we voted to use the money to hire a 1/2 time assistant minister. Because of the work of previous finance teams, and the generosity of the congregation, this long-time goal has come to fruition.

What challenges did your group face?

We continue to balance requests for money for programs and church building maintenance and repair, while being conscious of the available projected income for the year and our church savings.

We did not have any members-at-large this year. We hope to attract additional team members so that we have more representatives from the congregation who aren't representing a sub-team.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

We are scheduled to conduct an internal audit next year. We should have an audit every 5 years, and the last one was in 2021.

We will work with the board to develop longer term financial strategies.

Stewardship

Group Leader: Jane Root

Members: Anne Godlasky, Robert Bell, Denny Rodgers, Klaus Zechner, Ron Iannaccone, David Schumann, and Scott Blaydon

Group Leader: Jane Root

Members of your group: Anne Godlasky, Robert Bell, Denny Rodgers, Klaus Zechner, Ron Iannaccone, David Schumann, Scott Blaydon

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

The generous gifts of the Stewardship Committee members, who share their knowledge, skills and commitment. During the pledge drive 171 pledges were received. The end-of-year giving opportunity goal was met. Many members increased their pledges.

What challenges did your group face?

Concern about national economic and political stability beginning in 2025 may have had an impact on pledging. A significant increase in the church's budget over the previous year presented a challenge. An ambitious pledge drive goal.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

Continued development of new approaches and best practices in stewardship. New church management technology will give us useful information not currently available. Increase the availability of online pledging options. Increase the use of online pledging options by UUCWC members & friends. Continue to 'grow' our understanding of the relationship of mission, ministry and giving by weaving stewardship into the spiritual & communal life of the church, seeing our commitments as expressions of shared values and aspirations.

Personnel Committee

Group Leader: Lynne Molnar

Members: Andi Ferrenz, Justin Roth, Brian Tucker, Sue Saddlemire;
Board Rep – Maria Baratta; Finance Rep – Sandee Steinberg;
Staff – Rev. Kim Wildszewski

What were the highlights of this year for your committee/ministry?

Preparing the personnel budget is a critical task for this committee, as salaries and benefits for staff are about 75% of the church's annual budget. We also support Rev. Kim with the interviewing and hiring of staff and adhering to the Employee Handbook.

What challenges did your group face?

The current annual budget does not support the staffing needs of the church. The Committee could consider how we can support the church's funding goals.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

Support the transition following Robin Pugh's retirement and the subsequent staffing requirements after January. This includes figuring out the role currently held by Lisa Schilansky.

Addendum

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing Budget vs. Actuals: FY 2024-2025 - FY25 P&L

July 2024 - June 2025

		Total		
Revenue				
Total A1. Plate Collections	43,703.16	32,810.00	10,893.16	133.20%
Total A2. Operating Pledges	415,308.89	430,840.00	(15,531.11)	96.40%
Total A3. Other Misc Gifts/Contribs	38,403.27	30,653.54	7,749.73	125.28%
Total B. Fund-Raising	43,216.50	34,050.00	9,166.50	126.92%
Total E. Other Income	32,737.93	32,580.00	157.93	100.48%
Total Revenue	573,369.75	560,933.54	12,436.21	102.22%
Expenditures				
Total A. STAFF	399,766.66	394,481.18	5,285.48	101.34%
Total B. OPERATIONS	107,473.58	101,222.00	6,251.58	106.18%
Total C. PROGRAM	45,068.77	42,860.48	2,208.29	105.15%
Total D. DENOMIN	25,036.00	25,036.00	-	100.00%
Total E. DEBT SERVICE	25,464.96	34,540.96	(9,076.00)	73.72%
Total Expenditures	602,809.97	598,140.62	4,669.35	100.78%
Net Revenue	(29,440.22)	(37,207.08)		