

UUCWC ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

HIGHLIGHTS

What a year it has been!



Join the Journey.
Open to You.



Sing into
Spring!



Welcome
to the month of
Nurturing Beauty



Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing
268 Washington Crossing – Pennington Road
Titusville NJ 08560
www.uucwc.org

Board of Trustees

Highlights from Annual Meeting – June 5, 2022

Create Community

- Building relations through meaningful faith engagement programs.
- Welcoming new members from near and far.
- Deepening our efforts to find joy and care for each other through the relentless pandemic.

Celebrate Life

- Embracing multi-platform Sunday services.
- Honoring of Caryl Tipton’s tenure as Director of Music Ministry; welcoming Erin Busch in the new role of Transitional Director of Music Ministry.
- Hiring a half-time Director of Faith Engagement to nurture our children and youth.

Change the World

- Continuing to center the 8th Principle in our work.
- Investing in UUCWC’s future; readying ourselves for growth.
- Embracing and supporting our neighboring communities in need.

Members of the Board of Trustees 2021 - 2022

President: Maria Baratta

Vice President: Jamie Evanini

Treasurer: Joe Schenk

Secretary: Colleen McCourt

Trustees: Heather Edwards, Michael Howe-Smith, Jim Sanders, Wendy Stasolla, Michael Waas

Treasurer’s Report

As of June 30, 2022

- We closed the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year with a \$10k surplus (income exceeding expenses)
- Expenses for the year were below budget, largely attributable to the reduced COVID – related staffing and facilities charges
- Bank Account Balances total \$1.47 million:
 - \$488k Operating balances
 - \$691k Capital Campaign
 - \$293k Endowment

Annual Summary as of 6/30/2022

Income		Expense	
Sunday Plate	28,417	Staff	334,483
Pledge	387,058	Operations	88,374
Year End, Other Gifts	30,001	Program	32,117
Paycheck Protection Forgiveness	30,000	Denomination	25,219
Fund Raising (Auction)	34,254	Debt Service	25,465
All Other (SRECs, ARE Fees, Misc.)	6,140		505,658
	515,870		
Net Income (Loss)	10,212		

UUCWC Service Awards

At the UUCWC Annual Meeting on June 5, 2022, the following Awards were conferred:

Recipients	Award
Auction Team: Past and present leaders: Barbara Drew, Lori O'Neil, Connie Schofer, Lynda Shapiro, Jayme Trott, Marcia Wittmann	Distinguished Service
Food Ministry: Adam Czerwonka, Mike Muccioli, Nancy Neff, Lori Rahn, Bernie Ruekgauer, Bonnie Ruekgauer, Jackie Thomas, Marcia Wittmann	Distinguished Service
Stewardship Team: Ron Iannacone, Joan McCloughan and David Schumann	Distinguished Service
Mary Baltycki and Steve Saddlemire	Distinguished Service
Jen Couchoud and Lauren Shallish	Distinguished Service
Ed and Ronnie Dobrowolski	Distinguished Service
Susan Colket	Distinguished Service
MJ Hansen	Distinguished Service
John Harvi	Distinguished Service
Denny Rodgers	Distinguished Service
Marcia Wittmann	Distinguished Service
Nathalie Edmond	Flaming Chalice

Annual Report for Archives Team

Group Leader: Parker Cohen

Group Members: Currently not active, previous members Parker Cohen, Ronnie Dobrowolski, and Betsy Young

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

We need to find the time to restart the archives. Work commitments of the team chairperson and the pandemic stopped our work.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

We are called on occasionally by the congregation, but I am pleased with the respect offered our space despite the current lack of use.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

Hoping to take some of the learning and experiences to be gained at another archives project over the summer to re-establish interest and work on the UUCWC archives.

Annual Report for Auction Team

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

Group Members: In addition to the Lead CoChair and three Cochairs, the team was assisted by: LeAnn Long, Leslie McGeorge, Lori Rahn and Linda Vogt (outreach), Lynda Shapiro and Connie Schofer, Karen Scheick, Simone Niemczura and Debbie West; others who participated in planning: Bonnie Gilbert, Janet Hubbard, Judith MacLaury and Jackie Thomas.

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

We implemented our third year of an online auction and utilized our experience of the prior two years. We welcomed new/returned cochair Jayme Trott. Our team is very goal-oriented and relies on strong communication and support systems among the cochairs.

Quite often we sought information or assistance from our Congregational Administrator for website assistance, special email announcements, new members, etc.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

No surprises with regard to our team utilizing Zoom and email to coordinate weekly and monthly tasks. We are a very cohesive, committed group.

We had to work a little harder with outreach efforts, knowing congregants are overloaded with Zoom and emails and desiring to tune out.

It was not reflective of our group or how we work, but we found few people attended the preview parties because attendance was very limited for the worship service in person.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

We hope to increase in-person, social aspects to auction planning and events. This year we held kick-off and preview parties on two Sundays, allowing congregants the opportunity to see physical items being offered through the auction. We also gave out door prizes and sold tickets for raffle baskets, to add incentives to the events.

Our goal is to continue to provide the venue for creative, fun and meaningful opportunities for congregants to get to know one another, through offering services or events.

We hope that the targeted budget amount for auction proceeds continues to be set at such a level that:

- 1) surplus funds can be raised in order to turn over 50% of those funds to a social justice organization;
- 2) the annual operating budget becomes less dependent upon the auction proceeds.

Annual Report for Building Committee

Group Leaders: Open Position

Group Members:

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

In the absence of a Building Chair, Susan Irgang, Congregational Administrator, assumed the Building Committee duties, with the help of Roberto Santiago as sexton. These two were stewards of the facilities, maintaining the building during closure for more than half a year then returning to care of the reopened space, taking planning, time and energy.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

There may be opportunities to make the work of Facilities Maintenance more project based, relying less on volunteers for ongoing commitments and offering more “one-off” opportunities.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

We will welcome Justin Roth as incoming Building Chair.

We hope for the start of construction on the expansion, and that it does not produce unexpected complications in using the building.

We hope to balance the needs of the congregation for in-person use, construction limitations, and other factors.

Annual Report for Congregational Engagement

Group Leaders: Nathalie Edmond, Pam Shadzik

Group Members: Holly Bussey, Sandy Muccioli, Denny Rodgers, Jane Root, Bonnie Ruekgauer

This transitional year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

We had a period of discernment/mindshift to help create a sustainable infrastructure that is different than previous versions of the Nominating Committee. We did a trial of Nourishing Circles to bring people together while we were still virtual to learn how they were being nourished. We moved towards a more global look at congregational engagement, how to support leadership development and start thinking about succession planning.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

We explored concepts of engagement and nourishment. We don't have to take on the burden of filling the slate. We took the time to slow down and deal with the ambiguity of the changing nature of the committee as well as the culture of a multi-platform church. We have to look at things holistically and how different parts of the congregation are working, how long members have been involved at UUCWC and how people can feel nourished in their activities. We are changing language from interviews to engaged conversations.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

We hope to:

- hold a summer retreat to clarify goals for the new year;
- hold a gathering (council-like) in September to talk about how Congregational Engagement has evolved, how to create/sustain healthy committees and ministries;
- play a role in leadership development/succession planning;
- continue building process and infrastructure;
- create more accessibility and transparency as well as opportunities for people to engage in ways that are nourishing.

Annual Report for Council for Faith in Action

Group Leaders: submitted by Holly Bussey

Group Members: Racial Justice Ministry (RJM), Faith Action Ministry (FAM), Social Action, Faith Funding and Expression Ministry (FEFT), Food Ministry

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

Partnership with newest member Food Ministry blossomed and partnering between CFA all members flourished along with HomeFront.

Chose a focus for intentional funding to address the pandemic upheaval and a continuation of addressing food insecurity.

Finding new ways to support each other and the work we do in our separate social justice efforts.

The congregation remains committed to social justice efforts as part of our UUCWC mission.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

Began process for CFA to develop a covenant related to its work as a Council (most of the social justice groups that make up CFA have completed or are in the process of completing the initial covenant work).

Talked further about how to work in partnership with Congregational Engagement regarding activating members into social justice initiatives as we emerge from COVID.

Understanding the changing demographics of UUCWC and their impact on how we do social justice work.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

Welcome Earth Ministry as a full participant with CFA and develop partnerships to work more integrated among other justice ministries.

CFA works to engage the whole church in one or more social justice activities, using multiple avenues and ministries within UUCWC.

Complete covenanting process and work to engage more members in appropriate activities of meaning on the justice front to enhance “Change the World.”

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Annual Report for Denominational Affairs - Liaison

Group Leader: Holly Bussey

Group Members: None, as this is a liaison position.

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

As a liaison position, adjusting was not difficult. We embraced communications from the UUA and other UU groups beyond our walls and tried our best to get the word out. We utilized the FaceBook community and social action pages most. We realize some members do not utilize social media and so we also, from time to time, addressed items of interest to the congregation by utilizing *CrossCurrent* articles along with weekly announcements. Also sent personalized emails to people based on known interests..

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

The transition to social media was a smooth one.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

General Assembly is in Pittsburgh in 2023. It would be wonderful to have a huge delegation in person attend this event! It's doable and hoping to fund scholarships. Also encourage MANY more to use virtual attendance AND become delegates to represent the UUCWC voice at the national level. We have an excellent reputation and it would be wonderful to have a large presence. At the regional level, would like to see folks get more involved with UU social justice groups in NJ and PA. We also hope to work more with CFA.

Annual Report for Earth Ministry

Group Leaders: Al Johnson and Barbara Drew, CoChairs

Group Members: Al Johnson and Barbara Drew, Cochairs. Bunny Aicher, Laura and Kerry Brandt, Geri Koblis, Janet Hubbard, Leslie McGeorge, Christine Piatek, Penny Rodgers, Wendy Stasolla, and we were delighted to welcome new members Peter Boughton and Ellen Cottone. We appreciated the assistance of Mark Pokryska with the evaluation of the solar panels.

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

While unable to conduct the used book sales and coffee sales, nevertheless, we did offer to fund 50% of the 2022-2023 coffee based on prior sales. We appreciated the assistance of our Steward/Sexton with indoor plant watering and resumed the responsibilities of the plants which enhance our Sanctuary, Lobby and Crossings Room, all part of our “Green Sanctuary” commitment. We worked on stewarding new shrubs and trees planted on Earth Day 2021 and protecting all new native plantings with cage fencing, with the help of Grounds Cochairs. Bodo Baltycki and Denny Rodgers. Extensive, repetitive weeding was required on the berm area to eradicate the invasive Mugwort (brought in with transplanting of Iris from front/Minister’s garden). We received grant funding again from Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve (BHWP) for fifteen new shrubs. We also received a discount from BHWP for Earth Day plant giveaways.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

We met the challenge of coordinating busy schedules for Zoom meetings and working on projects remotely. Although not as bountiful as 2020, this year we were able to harvest and deliver to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen: 70 pounds of carrots, 50 pounds of sweet potatoes, 20 pounds of butternut squash, an example of addressing our 8th principle. We continue to appreciate those members who have been dropping off compostables which becomes fertilizer for our garden. We dissected and summarized Bill Gates’ book “How to Avoid a Climate Disaster”; in response, to increase our ability to avoid climate issues, we offered a plant giveaway, emphasizing the need to give back to our environment and plant natives! We assisted with the church grounds cleanup and promoted participation in the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space community cleanup. We investigated solar panel energy credit status and evaluated the condition of the panels.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

We hope to work on projects that will further engage the congregation and inspire activities that increase an eco-friendly lifestyle and understanding of actions to take to address the climate crisis and improve climate justice: we see this is a meaningful, active implementation of the 7th principal and 8th principal since the climate crisis impacts all sectors of our lives, economy, health, and our collective future.

Annual Report for Faith Expression and Funding Team (FEFT) Ministry of the Council for Faith in Action (CFA)

Group Leader: Holly Bussey

Group Members: Bud Johnson, Steve Saddlemire, Jim Sanders, Dan Tuft

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

- Continued to find a deep connection in having conversations and reaching out to local organizations that need support in these historic times.
- Created stronger links with justice activities within UUCWC and having these groups become part of the CFA effort.
- Communication with others created more opportunities for connections and new avenues of support. We acted quickly when an issue arose, and our responsiveness made all the difference.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

- The response to the Ukraine War was a separate, concentrated support program for two months (outside of the 50% of the plate); the amazing generous support the entire congregation above and beyond and immediate was humbling and inspiring.
- HomeFront became part of the CFA umbrella as a normal line item vs their own individual fund-raising arm; this provided hope and energy to the CFA process. CFA was able to increase their funding without holding separate appeals that drain the congregation.
- We moved to full partnering with Food Ministry and were able to extend financial support greatly by matching contribution funds of Food Ministry. We sent one check on behalf of UUCWC vs. multiple checks to one organization that dilutes our impact and effectiveness.
- FEFT is a main “spoke” in the CFA “wheel” and the relationship with others ministries can be utilized to create stronger bonds with local community groups needing our support/outreach.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

- We hope Earth Ministry will partner with CFA and develop more robust efforts to aid the congregation in connecting with Earth Justice initiatives. Utilizing CFA and its resources as a true collaborator in their efforts to help could create a more impactful presence withing the congregation and beyond.
- UUCWC will begin expanded involvement with identified organizations we have supported financially in the past which expressed a desire to develop partnerships with us, including “feet on the ground” and more hands volunteering with the organizations.
- We hope to work with Congregational Engagement to create a smooth way for members to identify justice activities for involvement and match them to appropriate resources.
- We hope to continue to respond quickly to crisis within the world and collaborate with others for the most effective utilization of our resources both financially and otherwise.

Annual Report for Finance Committee

Group Leader: Steve Saddlemire

Group Members: Joe Schenk, Mary Baltycki, Holly Bussy, Klaus Zechner, Barbara Drew, Ron Iannacone, George Faulkner, John Unger, Wendy Stasolla

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

Finance continued to meet virtually on a monthly basis over the past year. All of the participants were well versed at communicating via Zoom so there were few issues with the method but we all truly missed being in person. Several things that helped us get through the year were having a monthly meeting agenda that provided context of what we were going to discuss, giving everyone a “project assignment” so they felt like they were addressing an important issue, allowing everyone to participate as they felt inclined, keeping the atmosphere light and friendly, and identifying the key financial issues facing the church and ensuring they didn't get forgotten.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

Overall the group worked very well together, attended the meetings, reported on their area of focus and laughed at the chairperson's jokes.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

- Church leaders will interact more consistently with the Finance Committee, requesting financial data and brainstorming about how to address our mounting deficit.
- We will complete some of the special projects (audit issues, tax issues) that were initiated this year.
- A process will be established to pass the Finance Committee Chairperson torch onto the next person. There needs to be a method of finding a willing volunteer and having them intern prior to the switch in personnel.

Annual Report for Food Ministry (FM)

Group Leaders: Michael Muccioli, Rollie Rahn (co-chair in perpetuity)

Group Members:

- **Food Ministry Administrative Team:** Adam Czerwonka, Michael Muccioli, Nancy Neff, Lori Rahn, Bonnie Ruekgauer, Bernie Ruekgauer, David Schumann, Jackie Thomas, and Marcia Wittmann
- Plus, the many members who help with food and financial donations, cooks, kitchen helpers, and delivery personnel.

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

The current pandemic and the planned church renovation posed serious challenges for the Food Ministry (FM). Until we are able to again prepare and deliver cooked meals from our licensed kitchen, we have researched and supported local non-profit organizations that address food insecurity with financial support and food donations. We continue to work with and listen to our partners at HomeFront and Luther Arms to meet the needs of their clients.

We have coordinated with FEFT.

Finally, the FM continued to administer the Rollie Rahn Memorial Scholarship Fund and made its first student award to a student from Trenton Central High School who will be attending Mercer Community College's culinary program.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

The FM Committee continues to wrestle with the challenge of addressing community and member food needs within the constraints of Covid-19 and renovation.

The entire team has expressed their longing for actual food preparation and the satisfaction and pride it brings to deliver delicious and nutritious meals to those in need.

The preparation of the FM's covenant also has reminded us of the spiritual nature the work we do as a team.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

With the pandemic likely to continue through this coming year, the Food Ministry team will continue to provide financial support to a variety of non-profits serving the food needs of our area and will continue to work with FEFT.

The Team hopes to safely return to meal preparation in the UUCWC kitchen. We hope that the congregation will continue to support the food needs of the community with donations of food and money in collection drives sponsored by the Food Ministry.

Additionally, we hope to identify another student qualified to receive an award under the Rollie Rahn Scholarship Fund.

Annual Report for Grounds

Group Leader: Bodo Baltycki, Denny Rodgers

Group Members: Bodo Baltycki, Denny Rodgers

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

Effective communication and teamwork resulted in limited adjustment being required. Where needed we also communicated, partnered with other committees / staff members to address issues. Among the tasks successfully completed this past year were: construct GAGA Pit and picnic benches, removal of unsafe trees, mulching leaves for use in Allie's garden, maintaining berms, repair swings, Church Clean-Up Day and participation in Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Spaces (FoHVOS) Clean Communities Day.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

We believe as a team/committee we work very effectively and cooperatively together. What was most unexpected was the limited involvement / interest outside of our committee even when we suggested ways that others could be involved / helpful.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

We are very appreciative of those Members who have volunteered their assistance. Going forward we would hope for greater participation, involvement from Members and Staff. This is important as we believe the Church should be viewed as the Spiritual home to all. As such at times it takes a larger group to complete tasks to properly maintain the premises for all to enjoy.

Annual Report for Pastoral Care Ministry

Group Leaders: Denny Rodgers, Linda Vogt (new leader mid year)

Group Members: Ronnie Dobrowolski, Bonnie Kubicka, Dave Thelen, Michael Howe-Smith, Penny Rodgers, Sparky Morrison, Connie Schofer, Lori Rahn, Ivan Winegar

This transitional year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

We actually had fewer meetings, but great communications between members enabled us to respond in a timely manner to the care needs of church membership. We actually increased membership, enabling us to have Linda Vogt share Chair responsibilities.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

We learned that monthly meetings were not necessary to fulfill our mission and that shared responsibility in all task assignments keeps us responsive.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

I cannot imagine that this Ministry or UUCWC membership could be any more responsive. We would like all of our new members to be aware of the work we do.

Annual Report for Right Relations Committee

Group Leaders: Michelle Hunt, Dan Tuft, co-chairs

Group Members: Loren McAlister, Pete Rafle, Eileen Spedding, Dave Thomas, Dan Tuft, and Michelle Hunt

This transitional pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

Even though three of the six members were new, the group quickly coalesced into a focused group that enjoyed working together and fulfilling our responsibilities.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

We learned that modifying the process for creating covenants had the potential to strengthen our congregation. Aspirational statements about relating to each other and working together reflect the importance of relationships in our community. Each of these statements has “by” phrases that explain how we plan to achieve our intentions. Another specific that we are including is a description of how the group's work supports our church's mission. The work is more than just tasks.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

We will continue to work with the various small groups to complete the creation of their specific covenants.

We will identify and schedule experts in conflict resolution in cooperation with Racial Justice.

Annual Report for Stewardship Committee

Group Leaders: Shared leadership model; Joan McCloughan submitted report

Group Members: Ron Iannacone, Joan McCloughan, David Schumann

This transitional pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

This year was challenging because we lost two top members of our group. We adjusted by each of us taking on additional tasks and supporting each other as much as possible. Also, Susan Irgang by default became a silent and super super helpful member of our group, and Mary Baltycki was also a silent partner. Without Susan and Mary we would not have been able to work as we did.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

There was nothing unexpected.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

My hope is for our congregation to become educated about finances all year long. No need to wait for the Stewardship Drive! Get the message out early - what the hopes and dreams are and how much money is needed to accomplish that. Regarding recruitment, it seems that being personally by Reverend Kim to become a member of team can be successful; the Stewardship Committee needs more than three people.

Annual Report for Worship Associates (WAs)

Group Leaders: Jen Couchoud, Lauren Shallish

Group Members: Anne Godlasky, Daniel Lownie, Gina Turner, Greg Pontier, Mike Gianella, Nicole Robinson, Noelle Kahney

This pandemic year, we asked all of our ministries, committees, and teams these questions:

1. How did your group adjust this year, and what helped your ministry survive?

The majority of our work continues to take place remotely/on Zoom. We adjusted our meeting schedules recently (we meet once every two months) and developed a new online scheduling system to support participation services. The option for remote participation has been extraordinarily beneficial to our group and helped us widen our circle of potential and future WAs.

2. Were there unexpected learnings about the purpose of your group or how you work?

We continue to grow and learn as a group, especially in our work on the 8th principle as WAs.

3. What are your hopes for the year to come?

To continue to build a representative group of worship associates and the inclusion of more/varied voices throughout services.