

UUCWC 2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT

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FINAL

Marilyn Gonzalez
Church Administrator

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Board of Trustees Report

This year, our congregation truly lived our mission: Create Community, Celebrate Life, and Change the World. We saw it in our community potlucks, our social action work, and the way we cared for one another through meals, cards, and simple acts of kindness.

At the start of the year, the Board set clear goals focused on mission, long-term financial health, and strengthening the congregation for the future. Throughout the year, we checked our progress regularly - celebrating wins and adjusting where needed.

Several task forces and new teams helped move this work forward, including Financial Health, Strategic Plan Implementation, and Safety Task Forces, and the Communications and Aesthetics teams. In other words, we tested the limits of how many new committees we could create!

The Financial Health Task Force identified ways to strengthen our long-term sustainability. Some recommendations have already been implemented, and others are reflected in the proposed budget for next year.

It is clear to us that another year of deficit budgeting is not sustainable. The Board and Finance Committee therefore made difficult but necessary choices to move us toward a close-to-balanced budget and stronger financial future.

The proposed budget includes new efforts to increase revenue by expanding rental income opportunities, while also making disciplined spending decisions – such as properly funding our facilities and adopting a contingency approach to just a portion of the UUA Program Fund.

Would we like to do more? Of course. But responsible stewardship requires us to live within our means and prioritize carefully. The proposed budget reflects those priorities and positions us for greater long-term stability.

The Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force recently presented recommendations which will help shape our next few years as a congregation.

The Communications Team is working on improving communications – which we know is an opportunity based on your feedback.

And the Building Safety Task Force is finalizing plans to ensure we have safe spaces and are prepared for contingencies.

This year also brought significant staffing transitions, including Robin Pugh's retirement and the conclusion of Rev. Lisa's tenure. During those changes, the Board

worked closely with Rev. Kim and Marilyn to reassess priorities and ensure we remain focused on what matters most. If you haven't done so recently, please thank Rev. Kim, Erin, Marilyn, Rachel and Roberto for the passionate and tireless work they do on behalf of all of us.

Thanks to generous donations, we completed construction of the new chancel and ramps, helping make our sanctuary more welcoming and accessible.

The Board also managed other on-going facilities topics, such as navigating issues with the water system and choices for how to handle a failing HVAC and solar panel systems.

In summary, the Board worked hard this year to strengthen our congregation, support our mission, and prepare thoughtfully for the future. I'm deeply grateful to my fellow Board members for their time, wisdom and dedication – and to all of you for making UUCWC the caring and welcoming community that it is.

Executive Staff Report

This is my 12th annual report to this congregation, and, for many reasons, this feels like the trickiest one yet. I'll offer a snapshot of what the staff has provided this year, while also acknowledging that three staff members who began this church year with us, are no longer part of our staff team.

It has been hard to remember the depth and breadth of what we made possible together this year. Rev. Lisa's ministry of Justice and Pastoral Care not only included weekly protests and monthly vespers services, the creation of a caregiver's support group and bringing together congregants in their 20s and 30s, who have become friends. They were also an important voice in our worship service; encouraging us to stretch beyond our comforts and rhythms.

Robin Pugh's ministry brought us into this church year but ended just as the winter came. Chalice Circle facilitators have since taken on new and more independent leadership roles. Our Hosts now share so much of the collective responsibility of Sunday mornings. Congregational Engagement took on and made something new of Robin's ministry of welcome and communication and attentiveness, helping folks move from visitor to member to being known.

And tucked into this time, too, Ariel Schwartz, our AV Technician who was the backbone of our worship technology since the pandemic, said it was time for him to give attention to his fulltime job once more - at the same time that our stalwart volunteer, John Harvi, was heading off to Japan for three months. But your worship tech team grew not only in service but in numbers. More people know more things, which is the very best outcome of a transition like this.

We've had three key staff members exit the congregation this year. And it would have been one challenging loss after another if it wasn't for the many hands and creative minds that took on more or something new.

I am deeply grateful. They tell religious professionals, of all positions, that "it's not your office." A reminder that the church is always the peoples. We serve well so that the next person can serve well. This year was a testament to this congregation, its health and its resiliency, that it is in fact yours and there are no better hands for it to be in.

Now, I haven't mentioned a few staff members. Robin and Ariel's absences would have been nearly impossible if it wasn't for Rachel Hansen's willingness and ability to take on more administrative hours. She has revamped your weekly emails, is now preparing and editing the worship videos, and - among many other things - is the first contact with our visitors and friends.

To stay on our office staff for a moment, Marilyn Gonzalez has taken on a job that no one anticipated. If you were to look at the job description we used to hire for the church admin position, we imagined a lot of office work, and a few facility's needs. Bob is going to talk more about that in a moment, but what I want you to hear is that Marilyn has done it all. From being the point person for one contractor after another, to helping bring in a new database. Marilyn has spent too many late evenings here parking cars for rentals, learning our tech booth, our well system, the solar panels, the HVAC, and is actively working to help revamp our website - to name only a few. And, a reminder, that this church year was her first church year in the position solo. She has still been learning while leading.

Julie Rigano's ministry was to our 23 registered children and youth, where kids of all ages were together in a one room schoolhouse approach this year. They alternated between two different curricula- a service path and an art path where the children-built bat boxes, learned about artists while pondering big questions like What do we learn from the universe? And of course, our 5th-6th graders spent half the year in OWL, Our Whole Lives, learning about the sacredness of their bodies and the holiness of consent.

Erin Busch's music ministry continues to be one of our most celebrated and outward facing programs of the church. The choir currently has 29 core members, plus another 7 singers who drop in during some of the holiday events. Over the course of the year they sang 21 pieces, including today's Wildflower commission; after next week it will be 23.

We welcomed 4 guest musicians - which does not include the 4 band members who will be joining us for next week's flower communion, nor the big band that joined us this past March for their annual (rescheduled) concert in our sanctuary. And 8 musicians from our congregation, reminding us that there is excellence right here.

Our sexton, Roberto Santiago, continued to be everywhere all at once, doing all the things. From helping move the sanctuary chairs when I decided we needed to sit in a circle for the month of November, and then back again; to his weekly assistance for HomeFront and our Sunday fellowship hour.

And then, last but not least, Lynne Quinto, our controller. Many of you know that Lynne was a member here, a vital leader here, for many years before she and her husband moved to Maryland. It was a gift that we were able to hire her to help do the financial work that no volunteer could or should be expected to do. Friends, this October Lynne will be retiring. It will be a significant loss, but a change we will celebrate for her.

There is so much more to this year. The diverse conversations we had on reparations, including the honor of hosting recently returning citizens. Our new chancel. Another year of hosting the Hopewell Valley Transgender Day of Remembrance. No Kings Days. 30 years of Loaves & Fishes. These upcoming fundraisers. Our Auction. The neighborhood potlucks. The monthly hikes. Our 13 new members.

We are a membership of 264 people and 40 friends, or 304 adults. On Sundays, we gather with nearly 170 people in the sanctuary or online.

This was a big year, and it took so many people to make it possible.

Let me close by asking us to hold a moment of silence, for the 7 lives who shaped this community, for the 7 people whose deaths occurred just this year, changing us all once more.

Kerryn Brandt
Chris Blaydon
Leo Butera
Sue Saddlemire
Karen Streit
Lydia McMorrow
Anthony Stasolla

Auction Committee

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

Others: Penny Rodgers, Lynda Shapiro and Debbie West, *Boutique Coordinators*;
Susan Vigilante, *Food Coordinator*;
Roger Shapiro, *Emcee and Auctioneer*;
Nicole Robinson and Sara del Castillo, "*Vannas"*;
Susan Busch and Karen Scheick, Decor; Bob Busch, Scott Drew, Ron Iannacone, and Bud Johnson, *Bartenders*
MJ Hanson, *Tech Help*,
Lynne Quinto, *Proofing*
Others: Kim Bacso, Elizabeth Berkowitz, Karen Damato, Diane and Jon Downs, Bonnie Gilbert, Joseph Goldfedder, Janet Hubbard, Linda Hahola, Lori Hoppmann, Leslie McGeorge, Sandi McIntyre, Stacey Metzler, Susan Mitchell, Simone Niemczura, Mark Pokyrska, Denny Rodgers, the Romeos! Mike Repak, Steve Saddlemire, Dave Thomas and Mike Toole; Barbara Sandstrom, Mary Ann Sprenkle, Jackie Thomas, Linda Vogt, Michelle Zechner, – A GREAT TEAM!

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

- The net proceeds exceeded our financial goal and topped $40,000, which also surpassed the proceeds for recent years!
- We were pleased to have the participation of several new members as donors and volunteers for the Kick-off Party.
- There were approximately 100 attendees for the party, with a preview of 80(!) physical items PLUS 13 items in the Live Auction.
- There was a total of 291 items for fixed price purchase for competitive bidding, plus 3 raffle baskets and door prizes.
- There were many events and offerings that were mission-related and provided opportunities for connection and sharing our joy!
- We gratefully accepted donations from 16 area businesses/organizations!
- We were able to provide childcare for family participation in the auction, thanks to Isaac O'Connell.

What challenges did your group face?

- There were several instances of faulty distribution of the website contribution form - copies were not received by Auction Cochairs for the data entry, however, Marilyn Gonzalez ably stepped in and provided us with a list.
- Last minute additions of donations kept us busy as we raced to meet the deadline for the book publication and online site preparation.
- We smoothly and easily transitioned to contracting with an online site host which had previously been a subcontractor. For the database/online site development and for the registered user, it was consistent with prior years and therefore very successful!

What are your hopes for the year to come?

We hope to:

- continue to draw in families and new members!
- streamline physical item collection and display
- maintain successful outreach to congregants through the weekly emails, the video screen in the lobby and special announcements/slide shows in the service
- continue sponsorships and donations from area businesses.

Children's Faith Engagement

Group leader: Julie Rigano, DFM

Members of your group: N/A

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

We had 23 children and youth registered in CFE this year. After a rocky start to the year this church year, we pivoted the Children's Faith Engagement program from separate, age divided groups to a one room schoolhouse approach. We focused on two paths throughout the year, Art and Service, and alternated between them on Sundays. The children chose the service project topic- caring for animals on our campus. We learned more about animals native to our area and then built bat boxes and erected them on our property to provide shelter for bats. The art path focused more on reflecting on big questions while learning more about artists and recreating their techniques. Some of the big questions include "What am I afraid of?", "What are your greatest gifts?", and "What do we learn from the universe?" We also had an Our Whole Lives course for half the year for our 5th-6th graders. As always, this program would not be successful without the hard work and dedication of our volunteers.

What challenges did your group face?

At the beginning of the year when we were trying to do age divided groups, we usually did not have enough children in each group for the activities planned. This is why we switched to a one room schoolhouse approach in November. We also had some difficulty with our children strengthening their relationships beyond acquaintances and to friendships. To this end, we incorporated more team games and interpersonally sharing so the children could learn more about each other and spend more quality time together.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

I would love to see this program blossom beyond Sunday morning and to see the CFE community- children, youth, and parents- solidify. I am looking forward to doing some strategic planning with Rev. Kim this summer to enhance our CFE program to meet the needs of the community and grow the community.

Community Outreach Fund Ministry (Formerly FEFT)

Group Leader: Holly Bussey

Members: Rab Bell, Elizabeth Berkowitz (welcome!) Bud Johnson, Jane Root, Jim Sanders, Dan Tuft, Kristin Schoenleber (welcome!)

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

It's been an exciting year. Full of twists and turns and excitement. Here are a few key highlights:

We welcomed 2 new ministry folks who bring new perspectives, energy and ideas to our joy of donating money to like-minded organizations outside of UUCWC and helping UUCWC become an even stronger force in "Changing the World".

We changed our name. Based on congregants expressing a desire to NOT use so many acronyms and having names say what a ministry does—we are now known as COMMUNITY OUTREACH FUND MINISTRY. Please don't call us COMCOF or COF. Comm Outreach Fund is as short as we'd like to be known.

Community Outreach Fund continues to be a flexible group responding to needs as they arise while focusing in on key goals to develop stronger relationships to those we support outside UUCWC's walls.

Our responsibility to be good stewards of 50% of the plate funds remains steadfast. Monies go to support congregants to develop and reach into the world to make a difference in justice and equity

These donations (the 50% portion) fund all the Council for Faith in Action efforts including (but not limited to) the Food Ministry, HomeFront, Racial Justice and Earth/Climate Ministries. The funding for these activities alone is in excess of $9,000.

Additionally, by the end of the church year (June 2026), Community Outreach Fund donations from the plate will have contributed over $16,000 to outside organizations including but not limited to(in no particular order), Urban Promise, I Am Trenton, Interfaith Food Alliance, Trenton Microloan Collaborative, New Hope Pride Parade, LGBTQ401 events, Bucks County Housing Group, Mercer Street Friends, Hopewell Food Bank, Chubby's Food; Bucks County Opportunity Council—SNAP CRISIS; TASK, Loaves and Fishes and more!!

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 continues to be a challenge. Linking plate giving to what we are doing in the outside world and inviting participation in that process. Coordinating with other UUCWC groups when having a fund-raiser, to consider working with us to enable giving more significant gifts to an organization. Increasing awareness.

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 grows, we begin to consider new ways of leadership, including share roles, lessening the burden of monthly meetings, sharing administrative work. Community Outreach Fund continues to work collaboratively with other CFA members and UUCWC at large to share in developing opportunities, coordinate gift giving to keep money that we give outside of our walls to be as substantial as possible and to help those smaller organizations that may be more grass roots have a bigger impact. We create yearly budgets and a giving strategy towards specific giving. vs. donating on the fly. Transparency and accountability remain our goal. More congregation participation in this joyous ministry would be most welcome. Time involvement is limited, reward HIGH!

Congregational Engagement

Group Leader: Pam Shadzik and Martha Bell

Members: Holly Bussey, Jane Root, Judy Kleen, Loren McAlister

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

We continued to develop a number of programs that supported the integration of visitors and newer members, particularly considering helping to fill the gap made by Robin Pugh's retirement. We changed the lanyards on nametags so that people who have been members for less than a year have a different color and are easier to identify, thus encouraging other members to reach out to them. We also developed a more consistent system of creating yellow nametags for people who have visited consistently, thus helping them feel more a part of the community.

We further developed the Connectors program; wherein long-term members of the community are paired with new members to get to know them and provide information and support during their initial months. We now present an overview of this program and the steps to deeper connection at each Pathways class so that new members have a clearer sense of how to engage at UUCWC.

We continued to experiment with a Buddy Program, wherein new members are paired with long term members to help them feel more comfortable and learn the ropes as they participate in specific volunteer events or broader committee work. We have done this with both Food Ministry and the Loaves and Fishes event, with positive results and expect to continue to expand the program this year.

We continued to develop & spotlight articles that highlighted each ministry committee in the monthly CrossCurrents newsletter. Those are now posted online and can be accessed by anyone interested in learning a bit more about various opportunities.

We initiated small coffee hours for visitors and new members so that they have a quieter space to connect. These coffee hours are facilitated by volunteers from Congregational Engagement or Connectors. These have been wonderful spaces to build relationships with new people and answer questions they might have.
We reworked the main bulletin board in the lobby so that weekly events and ongoing opportunities are clearly visible to all members and those who visit.

What challenges did your group face?

Losing Robin Pugh, who was the face of the congregation to visitors and new members, left us challenged to fill her shoes with volunteer help. Although we have continued to build processes that support integration, it is much more challenging without dedicated paid staff.

We continue to be challenged, as do other committees and ministries, by how to best to communicate to both lay members and leaders at a time when so many are overwhelmed by too much information. The website is challenging to navigate and so, despite inordinate efforts put into updating information, it is unclear how many people ever access it.

We participated in the initial planning for the Realm project. The rollout was focused on Stewardship, so the incredible value of the database for both communication and engagement are not understood by the congregation, nor is it currently being used to anything near its potential.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

We will continue to assess and solidify the programs that we implemented over the last year as well as identifying new ways to support member engagement.

We continue to work with the Communications Task Force to identify and develop communications vehicles so that people can engage in ways that are meaningful to them.

We are proposing that some Congregational engagement members participate in a Realm task force to maximize people's understanding of the value of the database, and its adoption for a variety of purposes.

Denominational Affairs

Group Leader: Holly Bussey, liaison

Members: n/a

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

While we did not attend General Assembly as it was held virtually this year, we communicated with the congregation the many opportunities of getting involved, training, marches, initiatives offered through FB social action page.

What challenges did your group face?

This isn't a committee but a liaison position of one. A challenge is coordinating UUA activities with staff to ensure no duplication and more open communication and coordination.

Rev Lisa Schilansky is a wonderful addition to coordinate justice efforts as they relate to UUA initiatives. We will miss her. Her ability to keep us informed with activities, marches, contact names, etc. was invaluable.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

In September, we hope to host an event that will feature the 2026 WARE LECTURE speaker BISHOP MARIANN EDGAR BUDDE to the public and request free-will offering that would go to the UUA.

GA 2027 will be in person on the west coast in San Jose California. It is hoped that we will be able to bring awareness and enthusiasm to attend in person.

UU the VOTE and mid-term involvement will only grow and keeping aware of opportunities will be a focus.

Continue to try to keep UUA activities in the minds of our congregants. WE ARE NOT ALONE!!

Earth & Climate Ministry

Group Leader: Geri Koblis, Leslie McGeorge

Members: Barbara Drew, Beth Brasor, Elissa Cullen, Jeanne Demoss, Janet Hubbard, Al Johnson, Karen Kent, Sylvia Light, Stacey Metzler, Mark Pokryska, Penny Rodgers, Steve Saddlemire, Wendy Stasolla, Sandee Steinberg, Brian Tucker, John Unger, Heidi Wachtin, Michael Wilson, Bina Shaikh

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

Earth and Climate Ministry conducted many activities designed to advance progress in the 5 goal areas in the Ministry's Covenant and Action Plan, designed to put the UU values into practice of honoring the interdependent web of life, and pursuing climate justice.

Goal 1 -Stewardship of Building & Grounds

- Allie's Garden – congregants and church youth conducted composting, planting, watering, weeding and harvesting of our organic produce garden. Grew 100 pounds of carrots and 42 pounds of sweet potatoes for donation to Rolling Harvest Food Rescue as part of this Climate Justice project.
- Clean-ups & Plantings -Co-sponsored fall and spring cleanups & planting projects, focused on native plant-pollinator and Memorial gardens, sought and received approval for white-blooming theme for Memorial Garden; made vast improvements to the variety and health of plantings; conducted poison ivy natural treatments on mediation trail
- Procured 37 donated shrub/ tree saplings and sought concurrence from Facilities for Grounds planting locations
- Facilities coordination - Advocated and attended Facilities "council" meeting of various teams to facilitate communication and understanding of roles and joint areas of concern, and long-range grounds stewardship
- River Friendly Status - Worked with Watershed Institute and other church committees and ministries to walk the grounds and review and update our church's River Friendly designation and commitments
- Non-traditional recycling – Continued to offer congregants the opportunity for non-traditional recycling through Terracycle, including coffee pods and dental products
- Compost and recycling bins – continued on-site composting of church plant-based waste, started sign-up system for increased volunteer monitoring of kitchen compost bucket and special recycling bins, and received Endowment Grant for relocating recycling collection containers to outdoors.

- Installed Bird and Bat Houses –see Education Goal below

Goal 2 -Education

- Stream education - Organized a hands-on stream water quality assessment of Jacob's Creek with Watershed Institute/River Friendly with youth classes and congregants participating. Water quality was good.
- Youth education - Held numerous educational programs in coordination with Family Ministry Director: painted birdhouses and installed on church grounds, harvested Allie's Garden, constructed and installed bat houses on grounds- all with children.
- UU Green Sanctuary 2030 - Introduced Family Ministry Director to national UUA Green Sanctuary (GS) 2030 monthly audience, and attended monthly GS 2030 forums to learn from other churches
- Earth Day Tabling - Conducted environmental tabling after the Earth Day service – tree planting, recycling, River Friendly and native plant information
- Green Tips - Prepared articles "Good Green News" to highlight positive legislation, policies and actions in the local area, state and nation
- Justice Library Initiated - Working with Racial Justice and CFA, advocated for an intersectional Justice library (building on the RJM library). Provided climate justice and environmental books for lending
- Native Plant tabling – outdoor tabling to educate and provide information on importance of Native Plants and highlighting the UUCWC National Wildlife Federation property certification.

Goal 3 -Advocacy

- Advocacy actions - Offered opportunities to participate in electronic/other advocacy on environmental/climate issues – including UUA campaign against federal repeal of basis for regulating climate pollution ("Endangerment Finding")
- UUJusticePA & UUFaithActionNJ - Participated in UUJusticePA 's and UUFaithActionNJ's Environmental Justice Teams to identify state action issues
- **Goal 4 - Savoring Nature**
- Outdoor Adventures –with Chris Piatek, organized 12 monthly nature hikes and bike rides in both PA & NJ open to the entire congregation. Venues included parks, a wildflower preserve, canals and rails to trails paths, and a visit to a refillery store for low waste living
- Meditation walks – several walks on the Grounds were given

Goal 5 - Climate Justice

- Allie's Garden – see this climate justice project above (Stewardship of Grounds)
- Climate Justice Dialogues - conducted follow-up church-wide
- Climate Justice discussion with 20 congregants to determine the issues /actions important to the congregation, and continued intersectional justice discussions with other Council for Faith in Action teams
- Climate Justice communications - Prepared CrossCurrents article on Climate Justice Dialogues to inform congregants of outcomes
- Disaster Preparedness - Established initial parameters for a Community Resilience-Disaster Preparedness & Response program. Climate resilience is an essential element of GS2030
- Climate Justice Vision – Congregants created and framed artwork for the church reflecting the congregation's composite vision from the Dialogues of a community thriving and practicing climate justice; artwork was hung on church wall
- Tree Planting – Conveyed opportunities for and participated in urban tree planting in Trenton (NJ Tree Foundation)
- Urban Hike - As suggested in Climate Justice dialogues, conducted an urban hike in Trenton's Cadwalader Park, visited the Trenton City Museum at Ellarslie, and learned about Trenton Walks! Program
- Used Clothing Drive -Also suggested during Climate Justice dialogues, a church clothing drive which receiving hundreds of items, was held for patients of the Carrier Clinic

What challenges did your group face?

- Leadership transition from long-term, experienced leaders, and one newer leader's several month absences due to health issues
- Finding opportunities for meaningful coordination with other committees and ministries, including collaboration on climate justice intersectionality, and coordination on building or grounds stewardship issues
- Overcoming numerous obstacles associated with calculating the church's carbon footprint, portion of energy provided over the years by solar, and implementing an endowment grant section associated with a potential real time solar performance monitor (may seek to repurpose this to assist with solar system replacement evaluation)

What are your hopes for the year to come?

- With other ministries/committees, cultivating more intersectional climate justice actions, church building and grounds coordinated actions, and environmental/climate advocacy actions
- Seeking and implementing community-facing justice actions, including in vulnerable communities such as Trenton -Finalizing church Green Sanctuary 2030 application for UUA recognition
- Developing a periodic environmental/climate justice Congregational Educational program
- Including some common book reads, and recycling education. Determine best time for such educational programs to encourage participation.
- Collaborating on a Task Force to comprehensively review the energy and climate justice benefits, costs and incentives for a future replacement of the church's solar energy system, including a broad vision of options for today's more efficient solar panels. UUCWC's solar panel system has been a cornerstone of its Green Sanctuary designation and is a key aspect of climate justice. Consider including a look at church energy use, efficiencies, and opportunities.

Endowment

Group Leader: David Schumann

Members: David Schumann, Chair Janet Hubbard, Treasurer Sandy Muccioli, Secretary Mike Hanson, former Co-Chair Bonnie Gilbert, former Co-Chair Wendy Stasolla, Board Liaison & member Susan Busch, member

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

The market value of the portfolio as of March 22, 2026 was $489,648.78. Of that amount, 5% ($24,483) is available for $10,000 in Endowment grants plus $14,483 for church use. Last year the portfolio was approximately $450,000. Under the previous method of determining funding for grants the amount used totaled $14,882. The portfolio increased by almost $40,000. It has surely reduced since then due to market conditions. The biggest highlight was that the Endowment Task Force was able to open up money for the church's operations as well as grant money to special projects around the church. This year's grants were: $478 for bound copies of original music by the Music Ministry (Erin Busch) $400 for motion lights to cover outside area near the Memorial Garden and by the Building Safety Team (Steve Saddlemire) $200 for a camera by the outside door in room 103 by the Building Safety Team (Steve Saddlemire) $140 for a folding table cart by Church Administrator (Marilyn Gonzalez) $1600 for directional signage by Aesthetics (Susan Vigilante) $368 for 3 Metro shelving units by Kitchen Group (Susan Vigilante) $2000 for safety blackout shades/curtains for classrooms and nursery by the Building Safety Team (David Thomas) $896 for 3 new chairs in room 202, replacing the unsightly love seat by Aesthetics (Sandy Muccioli) $800 for outdoor recycling containers by the Earth and Climate Ministry (Barbara Drew) $2850 towards the water filtration project by Facilities (Justin Roth) The remaining $14,483 of the $24,483 of available funds after the initial $10,000 awarded in grants will go to the church to use as needed.

What challenges did your group face?

The challenge for the Endowment Committee this year was to adapt changes brought by the 2025 Endowment Task Force. There was a lot. Also, for David who was in his first year on the Endowment Committee and became the chair. He couldn't have done it without a committee who was willing to help guide him and support him through this process.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

Our hope is to grow the endowment. It is almost a half million right now, but we would like to see it eventually at two to three million, a figure more in keeping for a congregation of our size. We need to educate the congregation on how regular gifts to the endowment help the long-term financial health of the church. Also to guide members to endow the church in their estate planning.

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 provides a monthly venue for church's finance leaders to meet and communicate about the various sources of incoming and outgoing money, as well as to discuss finance related issues. Members of the group drafted the annual budget, reaching out to various committee chairs and staff members, as well as the Personnel committee, presented the budget to the board, and worked with the board to incorporate their recommendations. In addition, the whole group reviewed the church's financial reports each month, discussed various fundraising ideas and proposals and how to improve communications around giving.

The Finance Committee commissioned a UUCWC internal audit. This should be done every 5 years, and it was last conducted in 2021. The audit team, Martha Bell, John Unger, Ron Iannacone and Jayme Trott have completed the audit and submitted their findings to the Finance Committee. I'd like to thank them for their hard work. These findings will be presented to the board in the Fall.

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. This is an ongoing challenge between short-term goals and long-term financial stability.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

The Finance team will review the internal audit findings and recommendations. We will prioritize and implement these changes as needed. We will continue to monitor the church's finances and work with the board to develop long-term financial strategies.

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 about 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 the four food drives that benefited both New Jersey and Pennsylvania organizations.

Administrating 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.

HomeFront: Monday Night Tutoring

Group Leader: Robin Pugh and Amy Toole

Members: Maria Baratta, Kim Ward Basco, Rachel Boylan, Janelle Golder, Sue Kelly, Michelle LaRue, Matt McClean, Susan Mitchell, Bernard Ruekgauer, Margret West, plus about 22 members of the Food Ministry

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

One of the highlights of our ministry year was our continued partnership with HomeFront NJ's Joy, Hopes and Dreams program. Twelve tutors from UUCWC, along with volunteers from Rider University, HomeFront, and the local community, provided academic support, mentoring, and homework help on Monday evenings from September through June, to about 25 children experiencing housing instability. As part of the evening, approximately 22 members of the UUCWC Food Committee prepared and served healthy hot dinners before tutoring each week.

We celebrated together with a Christmas party featuring our own UUCWC Santa, and thanks to generous donations to the Mitten Tree, every child received hats and mittens. We also celebrated Mother's Day, facilitated by UUCWC Auction volunteers who offered free jewelry and other small gifts, plus wrapping, to children who wanted to give to their moms or mother figures in their lives.

Another joyful highlight was our six-week summer "Wacky Wednesdays" program, where UUCWC volunteers facilitated fun weekly activities including circus arts, a traveling zoo, an evening at Gravity Hill Farm, movie night at Marcia Whitman's home, and improv games led by Julie Rigano.

What challenges did your group face?

The more volunteers we have to help weekly on Monday nights, the more kids can participate, because a one-to-one ratio is a key element of the tutoring.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

We hope to improve our communication with the congregation regarding this program. We also want to facilitate greater exchange of ideas between tutors.

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.

Racial Justice Ministry

Group Leader: Shared leadership model

Members of your group: Dan Tuft, Daniel Craig, Marcia Wittman, Denny Rodgers, Maria Baratta, Regina Zilinski

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

Building Awareness - RJM sponsored several speakers at Sunday services to reflect on the many facets and impact of our work on reparations - truth telling as a form of reparations. These included the topics of reintegration of those who were in prison (Ritual for Return), the social isolation of those living with disabilities, recognizing our tie to the land and original inhabitants and becoming helpful allies for youth.

Racial Justice Library - we continued offering new materials in the library and have revamped the lending/tracking system to better serve the congregation going forward. The library has been available the third Sunday of the month after services

Accountability & Engagement - RJM has sustained and expanded its relationship with the Trenton Microloan Collaborative, I Am Trenton and Urban Promise. RJM members are trained grant readers for I Am Trenton and have attended the check distribution ceremonies to meet the grantees they recommended.

Working with Member Engagement and the Earth & Climate Ministry we helped facilitate books discussion on Climate Justice and the recently released NJ Reparations Council Report

Action/Advocacy - RJM is a long-time members of the NJ Faith Allies for Reparations Task Force and is working with them and the NJ Institute for Social Justice to implement the Reparations Council Report recommendations.

What challenges did your group face?

Recruiting, engaging and sustaining membership is a continuous challenge. Long time members need a break, but it is difficult to do so without engaging more members for a continuous commitment. We have added new members but life circumstances limit members ability to stay engaged.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

We have started a monthly advocacy opportunity in NJ (and eventually PA) for members of the congregation to communicate with legislators on our support for reparative legislation. We encourage members of the congregation to join this effort - it's easy and it gets the attention of state legislators!

We are also working with other ministries to formalize plans for a Social Justice Library system that both represents the intersectionality of injustice while keeping the focus on the unique ways injustice shows up for different groups of people.

Stewardship

Group Leader: Jane Root and Rab Bell

Members: Ron Iannacone, Denny Rodgers, Klaus Zechner
Marilyn Gonzalez (Church Administrator), Lynne Quinto (Controller)

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

- The gift of the commitment, knowledge, skills and abilities of the members of the UUCWC Stewardship Committee.
- Many members increased their pledges; 163 pledges received.
- Two anonymous challenge matching gifts were donated, totaling $10,000.
- The annual pledge drive exceeded its $450,000 goal with pledges that totaled $462,000.
- The annual year-end giving exceeded its $25,000 goal with donations that totaled $26,378.

What challenges did your group face?

- Concern about national and political stability and its impact on the people and finances for UUCWC.
- Introduction and implementation of Realm as an option for giving and managing pledging information took place during the annual pledge drive.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

- Continued development of new approaches and best practices in stewardship.
- Increase in the use of Realm for data management and communication.
- Increase the availability and use of online pledging options.
- Continue to 'grow' our understanding of the relationship of mission, ministry and giving by weaving stewardship into the spiritual and communal life of the church, so that we are inspired to participate more fully, seeing our commitments as expressions of shared values and aspirations.

Worship Tech Ministry

Group Leader: John Harvi

Members: Atlas Campbell, Colin Campbell, Karen Coleman, Mike Gianella, Michelle LaRue, Simone Niemczura, Barbara Sandstrom

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

It's probably safe to say that every Sunday service is a highlight for our ministry, as well as the Vespers services. There's nothing more satisfying than to be able to provide both an in-person sanctuary experience as well as a virtual one, with good sound, visuals and for our remote congregants, live camera views of the services. And after each Sunday service, an edited video of the service available online. Additionally, the Worship Tech Team is glad to be able to provide A/V support for church meetings, events and memorials, as well as income generating rental events.

What challenges did your group face?

The biggest challenge the Worship Tech Ministry faced over the past year, which continues to exist, is having enough members to comfortably support the requirements of our multi-platform Sunday services. It's important to understand that our Ministry is perhaps one of the more technically oriented Ministries to participate in. We are, after all, the audio-visual Ministry for UUCWC. As such, we are responsible for the sanctuary sound system, the remote-controlled cameras, the computer-generated graphics/projection media needed, and the computers required to support all of that, including the personal computers used at home by the person(s) managing the remote part of Sunday services on Zoom.

What are your hopes for the year to come?

To continue serving the UUCWC community with the kind of A/V support we've been able to provide over the past number of years. To do this, the Worship Tech Ministry continues to seek interested UUCWC members who would like to join our Ministry, either with pre-existing A/V knowledge and skills, or those who would like to learn. Also, to function well, our Ministry must have funding to support a paid, part-time A/V technician. Plus, the funding to support the maintenance, purchase and replacement of A/V equipment and supplies.

ADDENDUM

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing

Summary: FY26 Actual vs FY26 Budget

July 2025 - June 2026

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Revenue				
A1. Plate Collections	42,439.83	34,450.00	7,989.83	123.19 %
A2. Operating Pledges	479,062.54	439,951.00	39,111.54	108.89 %
A3. Other Misc Gifts/Contribs	66,146.97	26,000.00	40,146.97	254.41 %
B. Fund-Raising	46,912.10	35,500.00	11,412.10	132.15 %
E. Other Income	27,074.01	28,300.00	-1,225.99	95.67 %
Total Revenue	$661,635.45	$564,201.00	$97,434.45	117.27 %
GROSS PROFIT	$661,635.45	$564,201.00	$97,434.45	117.27 %
Expenditures				
A. STAFF	446,639.47	462,619.00	-15,979.53	96.55 %
B. OPERATIONS	149,584.42	113,429.00	36,155.42	131.87 %
C. PROGRAM	35,312.92	34,070.00	1,242.92	103.65 %
D. DENOMIN	27,540.00	27,540.00	0.00	100.00 %
E. DEBT SERVICE	27,319.56	25,464.96	1,854.60	107.28 %
Total Expenditures	$686,396.37	$663,122.96	$23,273.41	103.51 %
NET OPERATING REVENUE	$ -24,760.92	$ -98,921.96	$74,161.04	25.03 %
NET REVENUE	$ -24,760.92	$ -98,921.96	$74,161.04	25.03 %