

UUCSF 2023 Annual Meeting Reports

Board of Trustees President's Report

Minister's Report

Committee Reports:

- **Art and Aesthetics**
- **Buildings and Grounds**
- **Care and Connection**
- **Committee on Shared Ministry**
- **Finance and Stewardship**
- **Garden**
- **HICO**
- **Little Food Pantry**
- **Religious Exploration**
- **Worship**

Board of Trustees President's Report by Martha Potter

The new board convened in July 2022. Our first item of business was to learn about each other and set our goals for this year. We decided to give Board updates during the worship announcements on the first Sunday of each month to keep the congregation informed of the Board's activities. It was also decided to reach out to the whole congregation to "Join the Effort" and volunteer for different areas of congregational life.

The board approve a proposal to host Maureen's Haven if Christ Church cannot offer accommodations. Vaccine requirements were suspended in August. Masks were still recommended.

Rev. Kimberly started an RE program entitled "Building Bridges" after service. It was therefore decided to implement a childcare program during services. Kimberly Villa was hired to begin the program. The program was predominantly funded by generous contribution from Ken Ettlenger's yard sale.

It was agreed that a new banner stating "Open Minds, Loving Hearts, Helping Hands" would be installed at the entrance to the Meetinghouse.

The Board members participated in Collaborative Conversations hosted by the finance committee to help develop a more proactive financial plan. The board also asked the finance committee to present the budget to the Board in April to have time to ask questions prior to the budget hearing and finalization of the budget.

The Board agreed to meet with a social media consultant to better understand how we can improve our social media presence. Sara agreed to spearhead this and our grant-seeking efforts. Due to Sara's efforts, a NYSUU State Grant of \$11,000.00 was awarded to fund the Our Whole Lives program for 2023/24 fiscal year. New funding opportunities will be considered in the fall of 2023.

A Leadership Council was held on January 14, 2023. 14 leaders of the congregation attended. The Council focused on what is going well and how we can improve. Suggestions for the future of our congregation were the focus of the final discussion. As a result of this discussion, a communication committee was formed, a sign-up genius was instituted to help solicit volunteers for Sunday, a building cleanup was started, more frequent emails are being sent out and the board is planning a congregational conversation about John Andrews membership proposal.

A bathroom proposal and changes in the art in the sanctuary were presented to the board and have been deferred for consideration at the Annual Meeting.

It has been a pleasure working with this board and we are looking forward to continuing our work next year.

MINISTER'S REPORT
Annual Meeting 2023
Rev. Kimberly Q Johnson

At our congregational retreat in the fall, we identified a few goals for the year: including rebuilding our congregational community by strengthening relationships among friends and members and raising our profile in the east-end community. These goals have informed our activities this year.

In the first half of the year, a number of outings organized by our Care and Connection team created opportunities for members and friends to gather together away from the meetinghouse while learning more about our local community. We visited the Longhouse Reserve in East Hampton and Ma's House & BIPOC Art Studio in Southampton. In addition, I have hosted a monthly Elevenses gathering for informal conversation and connection. In January, we looked inward with our 7-week-happiness challenge, which encouraged members and friends to strengthen our social muscles with a series of relationship-building challenges.

We started the year with a strong showing in adult programming with our Prophetic Voices film series, offered both in-person and online. The program inspired the First Universalist Church of Southold, who purchased the video from us in order to show in their own community. In the second half of the year, we began our Open Mic series, hosted by Lora Tucker. We also offered some on-off programs: Advance Care Planning, facilitated by death doula Susan Stout and Lauralee Kelly; Zenergy Healing Circle facilitated by Karen Meyer, and Love Languages facilitated by Rev. Kimberly – all open to the congregation and the larger community.

This year, we once again participated in the interfaith community Thanksgiving service, hosted by the Old Whaler's Church. We hosted a first annual MLK Interfaith worship service. For a first, I also participated in the Good Friday Seven Last Words service at First Baptist Church of Bridgehampton. And we participated in the Sunrise Easter service at Ocean Road Beach in Bridgehampton.

We have seen much more robust use of our meetinghouse for community engagement. We hosted, with Paper Fig Foundation, a fundraiser for Afghan women; and a fundraiser concert for Hope and Resistance Long Island, (HARLI). We also once again opened our doors during the month of Ramadan for daily worship and to host a community Iftar gathering.

This year, we welcomed three new members: Amy Dmuchovsky, Karen Meyer and Rachel Zioulas. We dedicated six children: Zianya and Maya Kane. Isla and Nina McLean, and Anjali and Dev Legare-Kwatra.

Art and Aesthetics Committee
Submitted by Anastasia Gochnour

While I do not have a great deal to report about the activities of the newly formed Arts and Aesthetics Committee – so far, I am the only member – I will list the activities accomplished to date.

1. Visioning: Stephanie Joyce (artist and UU congregant) and local art curator, Heidi Lee Komaromi, and I spent time together in the Meetinghouse to envision possibilities for enhancing the space. Heidi generously documented our conversation (notes are attached) and she and Stephanie have both agreed to continue to play an advisory role to the committee.
2. Budget Proposal: I prepared a request for funding to support some of the ideas we generated and presented this to the Finance Committee. The process was explained more fully to me, following this meeting, and John Andrews, Reverend Kimberly, and I met an additional time to discuss the need for congregational support before making any significant changes.
3. Clearing: My current emphasis is on clearing the space of outdated materials so that we may eventually add elements that enhance and reflect freshness. I am looking forward to engaging in a conversation about the possibility of relocating some art pieces and understand that this will be an agenda item for the Annual Meeting. I would like to rehang/reorder some of the current displays in the entryway and parlor area and am unsure about the process of approval for these types of changes. I have begun the process of cleaning out and organizing the closets in the sanctuary and look forward to giving this type of attention to all the areas of the church.
4. Process: I quite like thinking about space and am comfortable leading this project. However, I am unclear about the process for making changes and want to be respectful of the procedures already in place. I recognize that the current environment represents a great deal of time and effort on the part of many members of the congregation that were involved long before me. I appreciate the emotional charge that can accompany changes and want to make space for feelings while still forging ahead. In particular, I think the UU community might benefit from a broader conversation about how we honor congregants who have passed and the gifts they have left us.

Buildings and Grounds Report for FY 07/2021-06/2023

by Gerald Boyer

Below are the Buildings and Grounds issues addressed this fiscal year. Of course, there were many smaller issues that constantly arose that were taken care of throughout the year (with a little help from my friends):

- 1) Reverberation Problem Solved – Designed, procured, cut, fitted and installed 2” fabric-covered foam acoustic panels on all sheetrocked areas of the west and east walls of the sanctuary to height of the window tops. Also add panels on the south walls behind the speakers. Note that if the large wood mural (which also acts as an acoustic damper) is removed, we may have to install panels on the remainder of the south wall.

Feedback from congregants that had difficulty hearing the services report acoustics much improved, including wife Patience who no longer needs the ear phones to hear well.

- 2) Garbage Can Overflow / Raccoon Problem Solved – Garbage cans were often overflowing with trash/recycling volume, spilling onto asphalt, as well being opened and attacked by raccoons. Interviewed several refuse contractors and selected Maggio Environmental. They are providing a 1 ½ yard dumpster with a closeable lid to replace the pair of ½ yard cans from the previous contractor. The increased volume insures there is no overflow and the lid keeps the raccoons out – all this for \$30 less per month!
- 3) Inside and Outside Cleanups – Helped orchestrate all-hands cleanup. Last fall cleared fallen branches from woods north of parking lot and woods west of sanctuary. Also cut lower branches from west woods and cleared many smaller bushes and saplings to open this area up, so sanctuary more visible from Sag Turnpike.

This spring ordered a ten-yard dumpster and helped orchestrate two all-hands interior cleanups (with Pam Wittenberg). Cleared unused items/trash from south end of grounds, stairwells, upper floor, and utility room. In particular, removed old paint cans and heavy hurricane window/door coverings from utility room to provide more space to deal with building support equipment. Stacked hurricane covers in newly cleared area south of sanctuary.

Care & Connection

Submitted by Carol Mason, John Andrews, and Pam Wittenberg

The C&C agenda each month is THIS congregation and all the things we do to build a welcoming community and keep us connected. Primarily, Care & Connection is the committee that brings this community together. C&C is leaderless and plans events six- to seven-weeks in advance.

In 2022-23 John's painstaking management of greeter and hospitality each Sunday gave way to allowing our tech gurus to hook us up with "Sign-up Genius" to ensure that anyone could more easily sign up through the ICYMI (In Case You Missed It!) email sent every Monday. Each Sunday announcements are made to "please sign up." Of course very few, if any, sign up. It is the opinion of C&C that this is a "so be it" situation.

C&C worked to bring opportunities to grow both personally and in community. We had a NY Times modified "7-Week Happiness Challenge." with handouts of a Happiness Quiz and questions each week to ponder.

On Sunday, March 19, noon, we hosted families and friends to a New & Old & Potential Member and Friend luncheon here.

On Sun., April 9, our hospitality designated foods for both Passover as well as Easter to honor these important holidays.

On two Sundays, April 23 and May 7, C&C worked in conjunction with Buildings & Grounds to manage "The Great East End UU Garden Kick-off and Grounds Clean-up" with lunch provided. Many hands came to help, and the dumpster that Gerry rented was full to the brim.

On Sunday, May 28, C&C will be cleaning and organizing the kitchen in order to make it easier for hospitality volunteers to find the coffee, tea, sugar, etc.

Then, of course, we have a summer potluck picnic to plan.

Right now Carol Mason is gathering physical photos of Jeanne Wisner, who is one of the founding members of this congregation going back almost 40 years. C&C is interested in working with Mark Potter on a UUCSF Past to Present Day utilizing some video tapes discovered in the attic during the clean up.

Committee on Shared Ministry Report for Annual Meeting 2022 Congregational Survey Results

The Committee on Shared Ministry conducted a congregational survey in late 2022. The Committee has produced a lengthy, detailed report of the survey results that is available to all.

The survey results hovered between 'good' and 'just ok,' with Sunday worship and the Minister's work in social justice ranking the highest, both as solid 'good.' Congregational leadership was ranked the lowest at 2.9, or 'just ok.'

We are all aware that this survey was taken just as the congregation, and the nation, was emerging from the COVID pandemic and so we believe that this represented a trough in congregational, and national, sentiment. Moreover, the congregational leadership has changed significantly since the time of the survey so perspectives on leadership are also likely to shift. Nonetheless, a reading of the detailed survey and the supporting comments is useful for a pulse of the congregation in late 2022.

Below are the key results. Detailed results can be found in the full report, which will be shared upon request.

1= Excellent, Keep as is

2= Good

3= OK; Meets my needs

4= Needs some improvement

5= Poor, Deficiencies need to be addressed

Question	Average Score
How engaged our minister is in social justice or public witness	1.6
Overall experience of our Sunday worship	2.3
Minister provides opportunities for personal spiritual development	2.6
How well the congregation facilitates opportunities to connect with congregants	2.7
How well our congregation makes the connection of faith and social action	2.8
Congregation provides opportunities for personal spiritual development	2.8
Who well the congregation supports each other	2.8
How effective congregational leadership is in moving the congregation forward	2.9

Finance Stewardship Committee

Fiscal 2022-23 Annual Report

Under our bylaws, our Finance Stewardship Committee combines two responsibilities:

- Finance: Monitoring the financial condition of the congregation, preparing an annual budget for consideration by the Board and the congregation, and long-term financial planning.
- Stewardship: Raising funds for the operation of the congregation through pledging, rentals of our building, and other forms of fund-raising.

The bylaws specify two co-chairs of the committee, one for Finance and the other for Stewardship. The Board Treasurer is a member of the committee ex officio, as is our minister. Others who wish to serve may contact either of the co-chairs.

Current members on the committee are:

John Andrews, Finance co-chair
Mark Potter, Stewardship co-chair
Ingrid Krinke, Treasurer
Rev. Kimberly Quinn Johnson, Minister
Tip Brolin
Mark Ewald
Pam Wittenberg

Finance

The committee has an annual cycle for developing the budget. This runs as follows:

- July through November: Long-term planning; preparation for budget cycle.
- December: Call for spending requests from committee chairs and estimates of income for the coming year.
- January: Initial budget layout; plan pledge campaign.
- February and March: continue budget planning; initiate pledge campaign; celebration Sunday (service on pledging).
- April: annual budget hearing; continue pledge campaign; finalize budget recommendation.
- May: Board votes on budget to present to the congregation.
- June: Annual Meeting of the congregation with budget vote.

Last summer, our committee conducted discussions on how to manage our continuing deficits. We developed the first part of a plan, which consisted of “collaborative conversations” on each of the income and expense areas within our budget. Each of these conversations involved members of our committee, a member of the Board, and at least one representative of the income or expense area that was the subject of that conversation. A final report was prepared and is available on request. A quote from that report is as follows:

“Collaborative Conversations” was a fact-finding activity. On the income side, the goal was to see if there were opportunities to increase our revenues from pledging, rentals, and other forms of fund raising. On the cost side, we were to determine whether we were getting full value for the money we spend, to find any areas where cost savings might be realized, and to see if there are any opportunities to increase value even if some increase in spending would be required.

Although the motivation in setting these conversations was about finances and budgeting, they took on a life of their own and became about much more than money. In the end, one might say that what we learned about money wasn’t surprising, but what we learned about ourselves shed much light on our congregation. To sum that up, we might say that if we don’t live our values, fiscal solvency is moot.

The committee prepared a budget, which it discussed with interested members and friends at our budget hearing held on April 30. The committee then passed its recommended budget on to the Board. The Board approved the recommendation for submission to congregational vote at the Annual Meeting on June 11.

Our investment in the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund was begun in 2019 by putting in \$600,000 from the Paul Berman bequest. Counting both the value of money withdrawn quarterly and the value of the funds remaining in this investment, its total value during the current year has held with not much variation at around \$700,000. We continue to believe that this is the best way to invest our legacy, as it participates in the long-term appreciation potential of investment in equities, balanced by a portion of the investment in interest-paying bonds. Key to this investment from a social justice standpoint is the UUA’s policy of targeting investments in way consistent with our values.

Stewardship

Mark Potter works as steward of the congregation with help and advice from the entire Finance Committee. Sue Penny and Kent Martin acted as advisors to the pledge campaign.

This year I include information on all sources of income other than the Paul Berman fund, which John has reported above. Here I cover pledges, contributions, fund raisers, grants and rentals.

For the fiscal year 2022-2023 you pledged \$80,000. As of April 28, you actually contributed \$91,504. By the end of the fiscal year we can expect somewhat more. We all should congratulate ourselves. For next year we are budgeting \$90,000. This may seem a little conservative, but it is considerably more than we have ever dared to budget for pledges. Our median pledge for next year is \$2,000, which is \$500 more than any previous year.

For those of you who pledge less than \$2,000, please remember that you represent more than half of the congregation, a very important half.

Sunday collections are also over budget, this year \$6,360 against a \$5,000 budget.

The hangover from Covid has limited our large event fundraisers. For now we will direct fundraising to specific causes. With that in mind we have been able to support the Food Pantry with special contributions, more good news.

Thanks to Ingrid Krinke's energetic commitment our space rentals are approaching the pace we reached prior to the Covid shutdown. We are budgeting \$46,600 for rentals.

This year we have added a new line to our income, this is an \$11,000 grant which Sara Gordon won for our OWL program. Thank you, Sara.

A personal achievement of Mark's is the lovingly handmade plaque with the inlay of geese, honoring those who have left legacies in their wills to the congregation. Mark has passed the responsibility of adding new names to the plaque to the capable younger hands of Carl Wittenberg.

Garden Report

Submitted by Pam Wittenberg & Ken Ettlinger

The UUCSF Garden is not an official committee nor is it a line item on the budget. If the garden falls anywhere, it is ad hoc under Care & Connection.

The first ground breaking for the garden was in March of 2021, and we received a lot of help from Buildings & Grounds to build the inner and outer fences. We are entering our third year of working in this garden. Gardeners this year are Katie Legare, Sue Penny, Pam Wittenberg, and when possible Ken Ettlinger and Martha Potter. With help from Buildings & Grounds Committee, we hosted a joint congregation-wide 2023 kick-off for planting the garden on April 22. Cool-weather loving peas, mixed lettuce, radishes, and flower seeds were planted so far. In mid- to late-May the garden will be ready for tomatoes and squashes.

The produce from the UUCSF garden is for the Little Free Food Pantry as well as for our congregation. We invite children from The Shine to come into the garden as well. We have also invited high school students from Southampton's Key Club to join in.

High Impact Community Outreach 2022-2023 Activities

Submitted by David Holstein

The High Impact Community Outreach Program (HICO) continues to expand its reach across our communities. Our 3rd cycle reached out to marginalized populations of the East End as well as empowering those groups. Specifically, grants targeted single and young adults, LGBTQ and people of color. Emphasis was placed on mental health care, environmental justice, advocacy, and equal access to opportunities. There was a strong response as we received 13 quality applications requesting \$139,300. The Proposal Assessment Committee (PAC) awarded 7 organizations grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$8,100 for a total of \$44,000. Our partners were the Sound Justice Initiative, NY LGBT Initiative, Sepa Mujer, The Butterfly Effect Project, Inspirational Triathlon Racing (i-tri), Community Action Southold (CAST) and Children's Museum of the East End (CMEE).

The PAC, with Reverend Kimberly assistance, led our October 30, 2022 worship service. Celia provided thoughts on engagement across our borders focusing on her experiences in Latin America and Spanish speakers. Lora provided a perspective on what HICO could be in the future. David looked backward highlighting HICO's history and how it continues to evolve and make a difference. The PAC sponsored a lunch featuring locally prepared Jamaican food and held its third "Meet & Greet." Grantees focused on creating equal opportunities ranging from CAST's culinary training program to Sound Justice's classes in the Riverhead jail. The advocacy efforts were concentrated in High Schools. The Butterfly Effect Project and NY LGBT are empowering young people to drive diversity and understanding. Finally, children's mental health and their ability to catch-up continues to be challenging. Trauma training for counselors at i-tri and CMEE's expanding programs and resources were important actions.

Our 2023 award cycle is underway. The PAC recognized that basic human needs -- food and shelter -- would be a pressure point with many COVID-related programs sunsetting (e.g., lower SNAP benefit and child tax credit) and prices for food and housing rising sharply. Further, we broadened the outreach to include animals helping people and programs fostering diversity in our community. HICO continues to expand its reach and the UUCSF has become a vital resource. Currently, the PAC is in the process of reviewing 13 applications from East End non-profits. Over four years, HICO will have made grants to roughly 25 East End non-profit organizations.

We continue to use a focus on populations and their needs to diversify giving and manage the number of applications. Thus far, it has been a successful approach. Further, we continue to look for grassroot organizations or projects where our grants can make a real difference.

The PAC asked Jeanne Hoenig to rejoin the committee as Ken Ettliger was unable to participate in the current cycle. A big thank you to Jeanne as well as all the PAC members -- David Holstein, Celia Josephson and Lora Tucker -- for all their efforts and dedication. The PAC term is an annual commitment which is renewed in January.

Little Free Food Pantry
Submitted by Pam Wittenberg

The UUCSF Little Free Food Pantry is not an official committee and has no line item on the budget. Like the garden, it is volunteer only. No one in particular manages the food pantry.

We have been the stewards of Our Little Free Food Pantry since Thanksgiving of 2019 as well as our garden that provides some fresh produce to the food pantry. On Saturday, November 5, 2022, we hosted a fundraiser that brought in about \$1,500. That money has been used by Ingrid Krinke to shop at Costco for food items. Pam plans on organizing annual fall fundraisers such as the one on November 5.

The food pantry is the recipient of the East Hampton Shop & Stop Community Bag Program for the month of May. Fliers are available and handed out to make others aware to buy a bag or two to benefit our food pantry.

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

Rev. Kimberly Q Johnson

This year, we have invested more attention and focus in our children's program. In consultation with the families, last winter we identified a three-year cycle for religious exploration: year one: Building Bridges – world religions; year two: OWL – sexuality education; year three: Coming of Age. This year, I have been leading our Building Bridges World Religions class on Sunday afternoons, with a group of eight youth from five families. We have also committed to providing childcare during our Sunday worship service. I am hearing from parents of young children what a difference it makes to them that they are able to entrust their children to childcare so that they can be more present during worship. As further investment in our youth program, Sara Gordon secured a grant for our OWL program next year. With the grant, we will be able to hire facilitators and open this transformative program to the larger community.

Katie Legare, Parent

Sharing the values of Unitarian Universalism with my children is important to me in this stage of life as a parent of young children. Being a part of the renewed Religious Exploration program in the 2022-2023 year has been a joyful experience for my daughter and I. She has benefited greatly from the Building Bridges curriculum, which exposes her to many of the major religions and spiritual traditions, and asks questions essential to faith formation. The wisdom of our Reverend and the adult community members who help guide the youth during the session has helped to nourish her spirit and sense of belonging. Over this past year, she has deepened her ties with the other children in the program and looks forward to continuing in the OWL program next year.

WORSHIP

Rev. Kimberly Q Johnson

Worship Committee Members: Ken Ettliger, Tuna Flores, Anastasia Gochnour, Kent Martin, Sue Penny, Mark Potter, Lora Tucker, Pam Wittenberg, Monika Zasada

This year we have been refining our online zoom worship—improving our sound, adding sound panels in the sanctuary, and adding a second microphone. Zoom allows us to offer a participatory worship experience to those who are not able to join us in the meetinghouse. We typically have 5-10 zoom worshippers each week. We typically have 20-30 worshippers in the meetinghouse each week. Our worship committee continues to work to invite thought-provoking speakers and share evocative rituals in order to create worship that offers an opportunity for inspiration and reflection. We have been experimenting with supplementing the Sunday morning worship experience with a follow-up email offering resources for further exploration.