

Unitarian Church of Montpelier (UCM)

Annual Reports 2023-2024 (FY2024)

To prepare for

ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 19, 2024

At 11:30 a.m. in Sanctuary and on Zoom



Photo of UCM taken by Emily Seifert on Valentine's Day, 2024.

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WARNING with AGENDA

For the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier
([click here to read the full 2024 Annual Report:](#))

Annual Meeting to be held on Sunday May 19, 2024 starting at 11:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary and via live video or phone through Zoom, as follows

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99935058857?pwd=UEhTMWM5M3pLalc0MkRTT1NqMEwvUT09>

Meeting ID: 999 3505 8857

Passcode: 548763

One tap mobile

+13052241968,,99935058857#,,,,*548763# US

Dial by your location

• +1 305 224 1968 US

All are encouraged to attend to discuss and have Active Members vote on the following business:

1. Welcome
 - a. Review protocols for hybrid in-person/virtual meeting.
 - b. Confirm Quorum
 - c. Election of meeting moderator
 - d. Approve Agenda
2. Chalice Lighting, In Memoriam, Overview of Church year
3. Approval of Minutes from Annual Meeting May 21, 2023
4. Approval of Minutes from Special Meeting, August 20, 2023
5. Update from the UCM Governing Board
 - a. Elevator
 - b. Kitchen
 - c. UCM Climate Resilience
6. Update from the Executive Team (ET)
7. Approval of the General Fund Budget for the FY 2025 church year
8. Approval of the Capital Fund Budget for the FY 2025 church year
9. Election of nominees to serve on the UCM Board
 - a. Steve Grunewald (for a one-year term)
 - b. Emily Seiffert (for a two-year term)
 - c. Jen Matthews (for a two-year term, following her appointment last summer)
 - d. Jeremy Beaudry (for a two-year term)

10. Election of Officers to the UCM Board

- a. President -
- b. Vice-President - Ansel Ploog
- c. Secretary -
- d. Financial Officer –

11. Affirmation of 5 UCM Delegates to the June 20-24, 2024, UUA General Assembly -
Elaine Ball, Judith Hinds, Jen Matthews, Jim Phinney, Ginny Sassaman.

12. Recognition of Staff and Volunteers

13. Conduct any other new business.

14. Adjourn

Minutes of Annual Meeting May 21, 2023

at UCM and on Zoom

Notes by Ansel Ploog, UCM Board Secretary

Welcome, Hybrid Meeting Protocols and Confirming Quorum - Meredith Warner, Governing Board President welcomed everyone and reviewed hybrid meeting protocols.

Quorum confirmed: 67 members present: 57 in the Sanctuary and 10 on Zoom.

Election of Moderator – Steve Gold moved to elect Ryan Kane as the meeting moderator, seconded by Steve Finner. Motion passed without discussion.

Approve Agenda - Dawn Evans moved to approve the meeting agenda, seconded by Scott Hess. Motion passed without discussion.

Chalice Lighting, In Memoriam, and Overview of Church Year - Reverend Joan Javier-Duval led the congregation in a recitation of the congregational covenant and shared the names of UCM members who passed during the church year: Amy Wales, Elaine Fitch, Dick Jenney, and Art Stukey.

Approval of the Minutes from Special Meeting, June 6, 2021 - Unknown moved to approve minutes, Sandal Cate seconded. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes from Special Meeting February 13, 2022 - Pam Walker moved to approve minutes, Liz Benjamin seconded. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes from Annual Meeting May 22, 2022 - Steve Finner moved to approve, Scott Hess seconded. Motion passed with edits: correct spelling of Kenric Kite and Paul Hartmann's names. Secretary's Note: Corrections made to the minutes in the digital Annual Report.

Update from the UCM Governing Board – Meredith Warner, Board President gave an update from the Board and invited Kris Hammer to give an update on the Air Quality Project. Ryan Kane invited discussion in which there was one comment that there needed to be more guidance for people running meetings at the church on how to use the system to turn up the heat and what buttons they should not touch. Rev. Joan Javier-Duval answered that the Executive Team would work on this.

Update from the Executive Team - Dawn Evans and Leslie Parr, members of the Executive Team shared:

- UCM started the year with open positions: Sexton, DLSE, and Congregational Administrator
- Budget work involving new compensation standards from UUA
- Return of the Clarke Lecture
- Return of rentals
- Appreciation for Claudia Clark and her work on ET

Ryan Kane invited discussion on the ET update in which one person asked if Claudia's position had been filled yet. Rev. Joan Javier-Duval said it had not.

Overview of the General Fund Budget – Scott Hess, Chair of the Finance Committee, gave an overview of the General Fund Budget, including:

- UCM needs a Treasurer – this critical position is unfilled.

- An explanation of the budgeting process: the Finance Committee establishes budget and goes back and forth with ET, at the end the preliminary budget is approved by the Governing Board.

Paul Ohlson moved to approve the General Fund budget, Steve Gold seconded.

Discussion: Several people expressed gratitude toward the people who work on the budget and recognition for the amount of work that goes into it.

One person asked if Verdis's ordination, found later in the agenda, would require a financial commitment from UCM. Rev. Joan Javier-Duval answered that the ordination would not, aside from the costs that individuals would have to attend the ceremony in Rochester.

Several people expressed hope that UCM could resume our fair share contribution to the UUA in future budgets.

There was a concern that the fundraising goals in the budget would require a lot of work and may not be possible if more people did not volunteer to help.

Paul Ohlson called the question, Nancy Reed seconded. Calling the question passed.

Motion to approve the General Fund Budget for the FY 2024 church year passed.

Overview of the Capital Fund budget – Scott Hess gave an overview of the Capital Fund budget.

Steve Gold moved to approve the Capital Fund budget; Steve Finner seconded.

Discussion: Kris Hammer answered a few questions about insulation and whether humidity handling is part of the Air Quality Project.

Two people commented on long-term planning at UCM. Prior to COVID-19, UCM was planning for expansion and growth and now the long-term plans should be revisited.

Additionally, UCM was planning to make the building fully accessible pre-COVID and this goal should not be forgotten.

Motion to approve the Capital Fund budget for FY24 passed.

Election of UCM Board Members – Meredith Warner made a motion to add Brenda Bean to the slate, Vic Guadagno seconded.

Mary Alice Bisbee moved to approve slate of Board members: Claudia Clark, Steve Gold, Brenda Bean and Ansel Ploog. Steve Finner seconded. Motion to approve slate passed.

Election of Officers to the UCM Board – Paula Gills moved to approve the officer positions as listed, Dawn Evans seconded. Motion to approve officer positions: Ansel Ploog as Vice-President; Brenda Bean as Secretary; and Fran Dodd as Financial Officer passed.

Motion to allow the Board to appoint individual to fill the position of President, Scott Hess seconded.

Discussion: Meredith Warner explained that the Board was asking the congregation to allow the Board some flexibility in filling the position of President, either from within the Board's current members or from the congregation. Ryan Kane explained that the Bylaws do allow for flexibility. There is precedent for this when members have stepped down and the Board has had to appoint someone to fill their open position.

Motion to allow the Board to appoint an individual to the position of Board President passed.

Recognition of Staff and Volunteers, Rev. Joan, and Departing Board Members – Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Ansel Ploog, and Fran Dodd each recognized and thanked everyone for their service to UCM.

Ordination of Verdis LeVar Robinson – Rev. Joan Javier-Duval explained how ordination works. Meredith Warner moved that the Unitarian Church of Montpelier ordain Verdis LeVar Robinson as a Unitarian Universalist minister. Vic Guadagno seconded.

Discussion: Rev. Joan Javier-Duval explained that UCM would be co-ordinating Verdis with another congregation and reiterated that there was no financial cost to UCM in ordination.

One person commented that they were thrilled to be a part of Verdis's ministry and ordination.

Motion to ordain Verdis LeVar Robinson passed.

New Business – Sandra Haddock, Chair of the Climate Action Team (CAT), shared her goals for CAT. Motion to adjourn was made by many and seconded enthusiastically!

Minutes of Special Meeting August 20, 2023

at UCM and on Zoom

Agenda (by Claudia Clark) and Notes (by Brenda Bean)

Welcome, Reading the Meeting and Voting Protocols, Confirming Quorum: Claudia Clark, Board President, welcomed people to this Special Meeting and referred them to the online slides being shown throughout the meeting (at  [2023 Flood Recovery Aug 20 Master.pptx](#)).

Elaine Ball, UCM Membership Coordinator and AV Technician for this Zoom event, told people the meeting was being recorded (including the Zoom "Chat"), and she read the Meeting and Voting Protocols (slides #2-5).

UCM has 258 active members, of whom 65 constitute an official quorum. 96 sites signed in on Zoom, with at least 89 or more active members counted by members of the Board. Claudia confirmed that a quorum was present (slide #6).

Chalice Lighting: Ansel Ploog, Board Vice-President, invited us to light a chalice at home (slide #7) and reminded us of "the love that grounds us as individuals and as a community."

Election of Moderator: A motion was made by Board member Hugo Liepmann to elect Steve Gold Moderator for this meeting. The motion was seconded and passed without discussion.

Approval of Agenda: Claudia moved that the agenda be approved; the motion was seconded by Ansel. The motion passed without discussion (slides #8-9).

Letter from Rev. Joan Javier-Duval: Because Rev. Joan was unable to attend this meeting (slide #10), Steve asked Hugo to read her letter to the "beloved UCM community" (see attached).

Update from the Board about Flood Recovery: Claudia gave a brief overview (slides #11-15) of what happened to/at UCM because of the July 11 flood. Then she introduced members of the Flood Recovery unitarian-universalist Team (FRuuT) to speak in more detail about damages (Phil Morse, see attached memo) and repairs (Kris Hammer). They both referenced information in slides #16-26.

Board member Fran Dodd explained the financial implications (slides #27-32). She said the \$171,131 estimate of flood recovery costs includes only what is currently known to need repair or replacement. *[The details are on slide #25 but were not discussed.]* The estimate does not include any need or increased expense which might still be discovered. Therefore, the Board requests permission to spend not only the money so far donated to the Flood Recovery Fund (\$106,095, slide #29) but also up to \$135,000 from the Long-term Invested Funds (LTIF). This allows an extra \$70,000 (more or less) to cover currently unknown needs/expenses to help the Board/FRuuT “proceed expeditiously with making the building safe without having to return for another vote and without tapping into the LTIF excessively.”

Following quick review of the meeting protocols and voting procedure (slides #34-35), the Moderator called for a motion to approve Question 1: Will the Congregation approve for flood recovery expenditure the insurance reimbursement and whatever grants and donations are made to the UCM Flood Recovery Fund? (slide #36) Ansel made this motion, which Sarah Franklin seconded. During the ensuing discussion:

Sarah and other congregation members thanked the Board/FRuuT, staff and volunteers for their solidarity, enormously hard work, and high commitment to moving forward.

Becky Webber noted this flood is an opportunity to improve the building as explored in the past through Building For the Future (BFF). Scott Hess, Chair of the Finance Committee and FRuuT, assured her the priority is opening the doors with sustainable improvements in line with BFF as much and as soon as possible.

Mary Alice Bisbee especially looks forward to a new ADA-compliant elevator, which she would like located to give access to the second-floor class/meeting rooms as well as to the Sanctuary. Barbara Conrey assured her multiple options are being considered. Fran added that BFF assumed there would be an elevator in the existing location even when a second elevator was proposed to be near the School Street entrance. Though FRuuT and the Board will provide a replacement elevator, when UCM reopens the worship service will be available online and via remote access in the Fireplace Room.

Steve suggested people stay informed of progress by reading the minutes of the FRuuT meetings on the FRuuT website, which can be reached at <https://sites.google.com/view/2023floodrecovery/home?pli=1> .

Vicky Viens cautioned that UCM will flood again, possibly much sooner than later! Steve acknowledged this possibility, saying the Board has taken the position that the basement should not be reused to limit damages there, and utility repairs are being installed 2-3 feet above the Vestry floor level as the City requires.

Several people commented on the UCM Flood Recovery Fund. It includes a grant from the UUA Disaster Relief Fund and donations from multiple churches. (Elaine Ball said UCM also received donations from UU churches across the country after the 1927 flood.) Steve Finner reminded us that at its May 2023 Annual Meeting UCM adopted a budget reducing its contribution to the UUA for this fiscal year; he suggested reconsidering.

Next, the Moderator requested a motion to approve Question 2 - Will the Congregation approve for flood recovery expenditure up to \$135,000 from Long-term Invested Funds (LTIF)? (slide #37) Hugo and Steve Finner moved approval of this question; it was seconded by Mary Alice. Steve Gold

explained that the UCM Bylaws require this motion to be approved by 2/3 of the people present. During the ensuing discussion:

Steve Gold assured the people present that the Board will spend up to the amount approved by the congregation only if necessary to safely reopen the building.

Questions arose about the likely cost of a replacement elevator. Barbara said the cost of an elevator itself is included in the spreadsheet but not all the associated costs - like for removing the elevette and rebuilding the shaft - because they are not yet known.

Sandal Cate asked about complying, communicating, and coordinating with the City of Montpelier. Kris replied that UCM has applied for a building permit for the flood recovery work minus the elevator replacement (which requires more information than is now known). The City has waived all fees except for recording. He said many FRuUT members attended the 1st of 3 meetings to be held in Montpelier to determine what should be done to increase resilience against floods for the future. Steve Gold added that what UCM wants to do for long-term climate resilience is an intense discussion the congregation needs to have in the future.

Susan Koch moved and many people seconded "calling" the question. This non-debatable motion passed with the approval of more than 2/3 of the people present, as required. **Subsequently, the original motion to approve Question 2 passed, almost unanimously.**

Adjourn: Paul Ohlson moved to adjourn; Elaine and others seconded the motion. Without further discussion, Steve Gold thanked those who attended the meeting. People voted by quickly leaving Zoom.

Remarks from Rev. Joan for August 20, 2023 Special Meeting

Hello, beloved UCM community,

Thank you for joining together this afternoon in the important ministry of shared governance and democratic decision-making. While I am not able to be with you physically, I am with you in heart and spirit as you engage in what I am sure will be a thoughtful and productive discussion.

I share my gratitude to all of you who have shown your support for our church community in the wake of the July Flood. You have worked hard in cleaning up the building. You have reached out to one another to check in on each other's needs. You have offered meals and direct support to church members directly impacted by the flood. You have dedicated many hours to coordinating and planning the administrative aspects of our church's flood response. You have donated money. All of your efforts and your general support and care are greatly appreciated.

The Board and Flood Recovery UU Team (FRUUT) have worked diligently to map out the immediate next steps needed to keep us moving forward in our congregation's disaster response. I hope that you will offer them your thanks and appreciation.

There are many longer-term, bigger questions of recovery and resilience that we will need to consider as a congregation in the weeks and months ahead in conjunction with the entire city of Montpelier and the greater central Vermont region. Our engagement with these questions will be important and will also come in due time. As we move through this crisis, we will need patience and careful discernment as we address the necessary issues as they arise.

Today, you will engage in the immediate question of authorizing unbudgeted spending as the power to do so lies with the congregation. Your stewardship of the congregation's shared resources is one of the sacred responsibilities you hold.

I think we can also all recognize that we are, yet again, facing an unprecedented crisis. While congregational polity is a gift passed onto us from our religious ancestors, our governance structures were not designed for times of crisis. I encourage you to balance the thoughtfulness and deliberation needed for democratic decision-making with the expedience required to address the immediate needs of our church building - a physical space our congregation, and the broader community, relies upon.

I am so grateful for your time, love, and care. Despite our current challenges, I remain hopeful that we will find our way forward together grounded in love, interdependence, and care for one another and our planet.

In faith, *Rev. Joan*

Minister's Annual Report

Summary of the Year

As you read the submissions for this year's Annual Report, you will find a common theme: our congregation has taken on many forms of adaptation in the face of the July 2023 flood. As if we didn't already have sufficient practice with adaptation in the face of traumatic change, the historic flooding stretched our capacities of agility, creativity, resolve, and resilience. I am amazed by and grateful for all the ways this congregation pulled together to restore the building for operational use and to implement creative ways of continuing our important ministries. I am also grateful for the incredible support we received from our Unitarian Universalist Association, UU congregations near and far, and the broader Montpelier and central Vermont community.

Besides the havoc wreaked by the flood, our church year began with continuing transitions in our staff team. Our sexton resigned at the end of September. After an unsuccessful hiring process for a Director of Spiritual Exploration, we hired former DRE, Sally Armstrong, in October as an interim director for the church year. And when the July flood hit, our Congregational Administrator, Sierra Lowell, had been with us for just six months. Despite these transitions, the staff team pulled together to fulfill essential functions in support of our church mission in all areas of church life.

Over the past several months, major transitions in clergy leadership took place in most of our downtown Montpelier congregations. The trends that impact mainline Christian congregations, such as declining membership and volunteerism, aging congregations, and less participation of families with children, are apparent in the religious life of our small city, including within our congregation. These are important trends to pay attention to as we work to clarify our shared vision for our congregation in this time of turbulence and uncertainty.

I remain grateful to be your minister and hopeful for the vital ministry we continue to offer. The work to offer ministry that is relevant to the spiritual needs of our time is challenging and exciting. We face big and consequential questions as a community, such as how we will adapt to become a more climate resilient congregation now and for future generations. It is good to be facing these questions within a compassionate and discerning community such as ours.

Below are some highlights from the past year in various areas of our shared ministry. You can read more in-depth reports in the rest of this Annual Report.

Highlights from Select Areas of Ministry

Worship - Our regular worship year began with the challenge of figuring out how we would gather with the building still needing repair in September. It felt important to the entire worship team, as well as other teams involved with Sunday morning programs, to prioritize gathering in person after having barely completed one full church year on fully in person services post-Covid crisis. Many people enjoyed the beautiful surroundings of the North Branch Nature Center where we gathered for the first five Sundays of the church year despite the limited seating available for worship attendees. From mid-October, when we returning to the UCM sanctuary, through the end of April, our average in-person attendance was 113 (children and adults) with an additional 25-30 people joining the live stream each Sunday. I was out of the pulpit six continuous Sundays from December 3 through January 14 mainly due to my sabbatical leave, and the Worship & Arts Committee, including staff, capably coordinated and led these Sunday services. Our congregation also had the honor of co-ordinating the Rev. Verdis LeVar Robinson, UCM's ministerial intern from August 2020-June 2022 and Ministerial Coordinator for Worship Arts Production and Adult Spiritual Exploration from August 2022-June 2023. The ordination took place at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Rochester, NY. Several UCM members traveled to Rochester to participate in the service.

Our Worship Associate team remained strong adding one new member this year. They capably took on additional worship duties during my one-month sabbatical. Thank you to Ginny Sassaman and Tom Schersten for taking on co-leadership of the Worship Associates.

Pastoral Care - During the past church year, we welcomed two children into our church community, Tycho Snow Hoxie Homick (b. September 20) and Aoife Marie Kane (b. October 20). We lost three church members: Eleanor Ott (d. August 13), Liston Tatum (d. August 13), and Colin Tait (d. February 24). Longtime UCM member, Norma Raymond, celebrated her 100th birthday on July 15. Originally set to take place at UCM, her birthday party was relocated to First Universalist Church in Barre due to the flood. Minister Emerita, Rev. Maggie Rebmann, entered nursing home care in the spring. We utilized \$2,879 of our Care Fund to support people in our community with flood relief, rent, electric bills, car repairs, and financial hardship. In the wake of the flood, we received care from UU Trauma Response Ministry who facilitated two processing circles in August and October. The Lay Pastoral Care Ministry team experimented with a new offering of fireside chats on specific topics.

Membership - We welcomed four new people into membership and certified a membership number of 236 with the UUA in February 2024. The drop in certified members from last year is due to members no longer meeting membership criteria as well as resignations.

Spiritual Exploration - We started the church year with fully staffed teaching teams for our children's Sunday morning spiritual exploration classes and also with some uncertainty in staffing and meeting location. The SE committee worked hard to start the year with a degree of normalcy despite the adaptations needed due to the July flood and staffing transition. Former UCM DRE, Sally Armstrong, joined the team as Interim Director of Spiritual Exploration in October. We continue to listen to and learn from our children, youth, and families to understand their spiritual needs at this time. On the adult side of spiritual exploration, church volunteers have provided leadership and support for continued Chalice Circle offerings. I led a well-attended series on the proposed Article II revisions.

Service and Prophetic Ministry - With the July flood closing down the kitchens at three of the five participating congregations in community meals, UCM joined Bethany Church, Christ Church, Saint Augustine's and Trinity Methodist in consolidating lunch operations to one location. Discussion has begun of forming a joint community kitchen project. To serve human need, UCM opened its doors several bitterly cold evenings in the winter to offer emergency shelter. We are also slowly beginning the process of recertification in the UUA Green Sanctuary 2030 program.

In November, I joined two other UCM members in a pilgrimage to Alabama to learn more about Civil Rights History and the ongoing work for racial justice in that state. We shared reflections with the congregation in an all-ages worship service. One other church member did the same pilgrimage in April, and I hope that others will in the future.

Through this past church year, I maintained leadership roles with Vermont Interfaith Action, serving on its board of directors through December, also with the Vermont Poor People's Campaign serving as the religious leadership tri-chair of the state coordinating committee. Over a dozen UCM members and friends participated in the March 2nd Mass Poor People's and Low-Wage Workers' Moral March and State House Assembly. The UCM Racial Justice Group and Governing Board both signed on as supporters of the event.

Denominational Activities - We received continuous support from the New England Region UUA staff, primarily through Erica Baron who fielded many phone calls and emails from church leaders and visited UCM on April 7. Congregational Life Coordinator, Elaine Ball, and I attended the June 2023 General Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA. Two UCM member delegates participated virtually. UCM received a \$50,000 grant for the UUA Disaster Relief Fund following the July flood for which I am incredibly grateful. We also received a \$1,500 grant from the UU Funding Program to support our membership in Vermont Interfaith Action. The UCM Racial Justice Group signed on as a sponsor of the DRUUMM Public Worship on May 8.

Conclusion - At the end of this church year, I will conclude my ninth year of ministry with you. On a personal note, I am grateful that UCM has been a spiritual home for my family, especially our now ten-year old son. The ways that he is shaped by your caring presence, the congregation's rituals and traditions, and our shared UU faith is increasingly evident as time goes by.

I anticipate that in the next year we will continue to need one another to face continued change in all the spheres of our shared and personal lives and in shared discernment of the bold and transformational future we will create through our ministry. Your continued kindness, open-mindedness, gracious love, and commitment to learning and growing are inspiring. Thank you for being my partner in ministry. Submitted April 30, 2024 with gratitude, *Rev. Joan Javier-Duval*

Governing Board's Annual Report

(President Claudia Clark; Vice-president Ansel Ploog; Financial Officer Fran Dodd; Secretary Brenda Bean; and At-large Members Report Steve Gold, Hugo Liepmann, and Jen Matthews)

The Board's work is supposed to be focused on forward thinking and is guided by the UCM vision and mission. This year, however, with the devastating flood in July the Board has been more involved with flood recovery. The Board helped create and then served on the Flood Recovery Team (FRuuT) and related recovery efforts. In late August the Board convened a Special Meeting of the

membership to approve spending the generous donations that were made to the UCM Flood Recovery Fund and to approve use of some Long Term Invested Funds if needed. (To date we have not required the use of any LTIF funds.) While most of the recovery projects are done, replacement of the elevator and restoration of the kitchen are still outstanding.

At the beginning of each church year the UCM Governing Board meets for an all-day retreat to set the goals and priorities for the upcoming church year. Last August the Board established five goals, to:

- sustain and support our involvement with the community-wide meals program.
- lead the flood recovery process and engage the congregation in discussions revolving around our building and congregation relative to climate resilience. (*The Board kicked off the discussion of climate resilience at its Feb. 11 Town Hall meeting.*)
- actively participate in city and regional flood recovery efforts.
- increase spiritual exploration opportunities and raise awareness of these opportunities.
- encourage greater awareness of existing UCM partnerships in the areas of food access, housing, racial justice, gender inclusion, and climate.

These goals are ambitious; none can be accomplished in a short period of time. They require a long-term commitment and active engagement with the congregation and broader community.

As we have all experienced during the last few years, situations can change and issues that have been simmering under the surface suddenly reemerge – like, in our case, the annual late winter/early spring ritual of drafting a budget and then struggling to raise the funds to support it. The Board and UCM must address the long-term sustainability of financial resources and support fair, equitable salaries and benefits for our staff (over 80% of the budget).

Another Board task this year is to find delegates who broadly represent our congregation's diversity to represent UCM at this June's on-line UUA General Assembly. The delegates will be discussing and voting on the final version of a new Article II in the UUA's core document, the UUA Articles of Association. In short, Article II defines who we are; it is the core statement of UU beliefs. (*Board members participated in the spiritual exploration led by Rev. Joan about Article II.*) For more information visit [UUA.org](https://uua.org).

This Annual Report summarizes the current church year – focusing on what we, as a congregation, have done to support UCM's mission throughout the year. The challenges we have all faced because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the summer flood have had an impact on our congregational life. As you read through the report, we encourage you to think of ways you might be able to further engage or re-engage with our mission and church community next church year.

We also want to acknowledge our heartfelt gratitude to all in our community who helped with our flood recovery efforts. Thank you for all your generous support of the UCM congregation and our UCM Mission!

Below are the most recent updates regarding the Air Quality Project (Final Report), UCM Flood Recovery (FRuUT), elevator installation, kitchen restoration and UCM Climate Resilience projects.

Air Quality Project (AQP) Final Report

Our new ventilation and heating systems have been functioning for the past year. A summary of the expenses is listed below. We are pleased to report that the project came under budget by approximately \$ 9,000. The unspent funds have remained in the Long Term Invested Fund. Again, many thanks to the UCM AQP Team for shepherding this critical project for UCM.

Air Quality Project Budget Summary

May-24

	<u>Actual Expenses</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Carpentry	\$ 24,882.38	\$ 15,000.00
Electrician	\$ 7,022.26	\$ 10,000.00
Thomas Mechanical	\$ 261,538.00	\$ 237,091.00
Contingency	\$ 13,465.90	\$ 47,607.00
Engineering	\$ 14,061.50	\$ 16,000.00
Legal	\$ 1,205.00	\$ 2,000.00
Asbestos	<u>\$ 16,810.00</u>	<u>\$ 20,000.00</u>
Total	\$ 338,985.04	\$ 347,698.00

Gift	Funds Available
Jan 31 Gift	\$ 125,000.00
Feb 28 Gift	\$ 20,000.00
Mar 28 Gift	\$ 30,000.00
Total Gifts	<u>\$ 300.00</u>
Congregation Approved	\$ 175,300.00
Total Funds Available	<u>\$ 173,000.00</u>
	\$ 348,300.00

Unspent Funds \$ 9,314.96

UCM 2023 Flood Recovery Work

On July 10th and 11th, 2023 Montpelier Vermont experienced a catastrophic flood due to an extended rainy spring and additional heavy rains. The waters filled the Unitarian Church of Montpelier basement and covered most of the first floor by about 2". With the efforts of many UCM members and community members the building was again opened for services in mid-October. **While there is still work to be done — including elevator and kitchen replacements — most of the work has been completed and summarized below.**

A Flood Recovery UU Team (FRuuT) was appointed by the UCM Board. Participants included at various times: *Scott Hess (Facilitator); Property Committee members: Allen Clark, Kris Hammer, Phil Morse; Board: Brenda Bean (Board Secretary), Fran Dodd (Board Financial Officer); Barbara Conrey, conferring on structural elements; Community Lunch volunteer: Janet Poeton; staff: Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Elaine Ball, Jason Kass, Sierra Lowell, Emily Seifert; and Executive Team members: Dawn Evans, Leslie Parr, Donna Russo-Savage.* Many volunteer hours were contributed in meetings and planning. Some of the same people and countless more volunteered to work in the building. Local professionals were hired when needed.

Work Completed --- July '23 to April '24

Basement:

Emptied of water, mud, belongings, then pressure washed and sanitized. Salvaged Holiday Fair gazebo. Removed flooded water heater, various refrigerators/freezer, old boiler & furnace and boiler ducts (*and asbestos removed, funded as part of Air Quality Project*). Mold remediation of basement floor, walls, and ceiling. Electric & telephone & plumbing lines sorted, thinned out, reattached to the ceiling. Sheetrock and insulation were replaced in stairwell and basement walls, and basement fire-door installed. New dehumidifiers for continual use in the basement. Insulation was replaced at the top of walls in the basement addition. *Now keeping the basement (nearly) empty in accordance with the new basement policy of the Board.*

First floor:

Moved 2' above flood level on first floor: Electrical panels upgraded and added to boiler room, and a new hybrid water heater, with a mop sink (*funded from Property Committee budget*), added to staff hallway closet. The fire alarm panel was upgraded in the School Street entrance. Replaced vestry dishwasher.

Kitchen: Kitchenware and equipment thinned out & stored in various locations.

Removed lower kitchen cabinets & island. Replaced drywall along part of the south side. Cleaned.

Offices & hallway addition: 1st floor and office furniture thinned out, stored & returned. Replaced one desk. Built new office shelves from salvageable wood from the kitchen's lower cabinets plus some new wood.

Sheetrock and insulation repaired with wool insulation and Truss-core.

Painted walls and trim boards. Sanded and refinished wood floors.

Painted walls and installed new vinyl flooring in the water heater closet and staff bathroom.

Main building:

Refinished wood floors in Vestry, Fireplace Room, Preschool Room.

Cleaned and sanitized (for mold remediation) Vestry, Fireplace Room, and Preschool Room.

Back stairs were rebuilt (found necessary after flooded carpet was removed). Risers painted and vinyl on stair treads.

Sheet vinyl installed in the School Street entrance, in the back hall, and on the back stair landings.

Filled and paved over sink holes.

Second Floor:

Borrowed an organ blower. A new one was ordered and has been delivered. Waiting for installation.

For mold remediation, cleaned and sanitized the Sanctuary and upstairs classrooms; had carpets and area rugs cleaned.

Whole Building: The Executive Team initiated testing of surfaces and air on each level for mold.

Total Expenses to Date: \$81,283

Planned Soon

May through June

New organ blower will be installed near the organ. Old organ blower and duct through the kitchen will be removed. Crawl spaces under both entrances will be paved with concrete to cover over mold and for easier clean-up. Pipes and flood-proof electrical power will be added to the basement to allow a portable sump pump to operate in multiple locations (in the furnace pit, in the addition, etc.) as needed. The vent pipes for the oil tank will be increased in length for greater flood-proofing. The Executive Team will assess mold reports and determine any actions.

Summer – in planning stage:

Remove destroyed elevette. Replace with open cab (half-cab) elevator.
[Reduce 2nd floor enclosure. Controls above flood level. Cab automatically returns to 2nd floor.]

Additional anticipated expenses estimated as of April 30, 2024: \$98,300.

Additional planning – timing and costs unknown:

Replace kitchen floor, but the extent of damage is unknown (vinyl flooring included above).
Options for the kitchen are still being explored.
Install moveable metal kitchen shelves or use metal carts to replace the removed lower cabinets.

Replace Community Lunch refrigerators (3), chest freezer (1), equipment (rice cooker, etc.).

UCM Flood Recovery Funding as of April 30, 2024

Expenses:

\$81,283 -- Spent to date*

\$98,300 -- Additional anticipated ... *Does not include any costs for kitchen or Community Lunch***

\$179,583 -- Total of expenses to date and identified anticipated expenses

Without hundreds of hours of volunteer labor and staff time, this total would be much higher.

*

Structural, Utilities			
Equipment & repairs	incl. water heater, electrical & fire panel updates, organ blower deposit		\$21,270
Building costs, mostly estimates	incl. floor refinishing & replacement, mold remediation, wall repairs		\$31,808
Additional repairs/flood proofing	incl. cleaning, basement walls, sink holes, painting, supplies		\$17,710
Total of Structural, Utilities		Subtotal	\$70,788
Miscellaneous extra costs - payroll	extra payroll and cell phone usage		\$4,525
Equipment, Appliances, Furnishings, and Supplies	including shelving, carpentry supplies, space rentals, misc.		\$5,970
		Total spent to date:	\$81,283

**

Remaining anticipated work and estimates/guesses		
Organ Blower - still anticipated - subtotal:	balance on organ blower, and installation	\$5,500
Additional basement work subtotal:	2nd sump pump, cement 2 crawl spaces	\$20,000
Miscellaneous extra costs subtotal:	extend oil pipe vent, landscape repairs	\$2,000
Elevette replacement subtotal:	open-top elevator, labor, electrical	\$70,800
Total of Structural subtotals		\$98,300
Kitchen options in planning stage and costs are unknown		
Community Lunch appliances & equipment replacements		unknown

Gratefully Received

Donations:

\$81,889.81 received from 106 donors, including UCM members and friends, the Women's Alliance, other UU congregations* and ministers, VT Interfaith Action, and many individuals with a connection to UCM.

Insurance:

\$10,000

Grants:

UUA Disaster Relief grant of \$50,000.

Partners for Sacred Places grant of \$50,000 towards replacement for elevator

Rebate:

\$1,805.33 Efficiency VT for the new hybrid hot water heater.

Total received: \$193,695.14

Also authorized, but not used yet, by Special Congregational Meeting in August 2023:

Use of up to \$135,000 in Long-Term Invested Funds (LTIF) if needed for flood recovery.

*Congregations and organizations donating:

First UU Society of Burlington.

UU Church of Rutland.

United Church of Northfield.

Champlain Valley UU Society, Middlebury.

UU Fellowship of Bennington.

All Souls Church, W. Brattleboro.

First Parish Church UU, Northborough, MA.

UU Society of Bangor, Maine.

UU Meeting House of Chatham, MA.

All Souls UU Congregation, New London, CT.

Village Harmony, VT - rental fee converted to flood relief donation.

2023 VT Flood Relief regrant from VT Interfaith Action, Burlington, VT.

Elevator Installation

We have received bids for the elevator and construction work and are waiting for approval from the Executive Team, which is expected in the next week. The current plan is for the new elevator to be installed during this summer. The \$50,000 grant UCM received from the National Fund for Sacred Spaces will be used to cover approximately 70% of the total cost for the new elevator. Please watch for elevator updates in the weekly e-News announcements.

Kitchen Restoration

An exploratory group has met to begin the process of the kitchen restoration. Currently there are some significant unknowns (extent of damage to the flooring and status of existing kitchen equipment). However, we do know that the top linoleum tile floor will need to be replaced (there are multiple layers of subflooring); a new ventilation system installed (not an expensive restaurant/industrial hood) per zoning regulations; and replacement of lost kitchen equipment (refrigerators/freezer) and storage and workspace (which needs to be able to withstand any future flooding). The first step will be to get cost estimates of what needs to be done and produce a kitchen layout and budget. We will be involving as many stakeholders as possible once the design phase begins. Please watch for kitchen updates in the weekly e-News announcements.

UCM Climate Resilience

One of the goals the Board identified last August was to “Lead the congregation in a process of flood recovery that addresses immediate building needs and results in decisions regarding long-term use of the building in light of climate disaster resilience.” Two Board members (Brenda Bean and Fran Dodd) participated with the flood recovery team (FRuuT), and two (Brenda Bean and Steve Gold, with help from Paul Ohlson) have been shepherding the Board’s attention to climate resilience. The Board brought this topic to the congregation at a [Feb. 11 Town Hall meeting](#) about UCM and climate resilience and has hosted a table during coffee hour since then to further engage in conversations about the issues.

Rev. Joan and others have helped us recognize it is critical to focus not just on the resilience of our physical space relative to climate change but also on the resilience of our congregation. The Covid pandemic and then the July floods significantly impacted our congregation and our broader community in a variety of ways. Also, As Rev. Joan clearly states in her report to the congregation:

“The trends that impact mainline Christian congregations, such as declining membership and volunteerism, aging congregations, and less participation of families with children, are apparent in the religious life of our small city, including within our congregation. These are important trends to pay attention to as we work to clarify our shared vision for our congregation in this time of turbulence and uncertainty.”

In 2016 the congregation approved a [2020 Vision](#), and an updated working vision was presented by the Board to the congregation in [May 2021](#). Considering our conversations over the last several months the Board believes it is important to now revisit the broader UCM vision, especially relative to climate change and resiliency.

At the next couple of Board meetings and during the upcoming church year, the Board will begin discussing what climate resilience means for our UCM community. Recognizing that it is not just about the building, how do we, as a congregation, achieve broader congregational resiliency? We will be inviting all to participate, and we hope to engage with as many of you as possible.

Below is a summary of the response/comments/thoughts we received at the Feb. 11th Town Hall Meeting and afterwards. While we will be taking a broader focus than just the building going forward, we want to share here the comments we received.

Ideas/Questions/Concerns about Process/Options/Outcomes for UCM Climate Resilience

<u>PROCESS</u>	<u>OPTIONS</u>	<u>OUTCOMES</u>
I don't know where to begin!	Don't store anything in the basement, ever.	
Who are the experts?	Find ways to further flood-proof! This might include: • Addressing the leaking through the addition's basement. • Sealing the basement windows. • Protecting the northern door and related low siding from water entering.	We can flood-proof our building (which has <i>[partially]</i> been done), return to lunches, and be a service to all.... A new, improved commercial kitchen usable for Monday Lunch, church events, AND rentals and community events! Invest now for many years' benefits! Climate-related: dishes instead of disposable items, cooked food instead of "to-go" (less packaging).
	Waterproof the outside of the building and fill in the basement to keep water out.	
	Should we price out the cost of raising the building a certain amount? Lift the building several feet onto a new foundation.... Maybe dig deep and add a parking garage underneath?	
What is being planned in town?.... Coordinate with Montpelier City Plan for climate resilience.... YES! How can we coordinate our thinking with other "enterprises" in downtown Montpelier?	Could we share this building (or some other building) with another congregation or non-profit organization? Why maintain 5 separate church buildings in one small city?!	Maintain UCM presence in downtown.... Our presence in Montpelier is valuable – provides an easy access for people in town who can't easily drive to another location. Our presence in Montpelier is a

		commitment to be here, despite challenges.... Our church here, in Montpelier, is a beacon. It would be a shame to move.
Is there a way to treat the problem (water) instead of symptoms (floods) decade after decade?	Work with the State to improve the course of the North Branch to mitigate flooding – i.e., widen banks of the river and create more turns; also create wetlands on either side.	
How to help members/friends/community during/after climate catastrophes? Actions taken to address climate change at UCM should be multi-purpose: how can we address homelessness at the same time?	Move out of our building. ... We should at least <u>consider</u> selling this building/property. Feasible? Not feasible? Does anyone know?	Being mindful of minimizing (through building decisions, etc.) the time/energy we need to spend recovering from climate events so that we can be a more useful haven for the community at large.
When considering options for physical changes, also consider what <i>[impact?]</i> those changes might have on the congregation size and giving capacity.	Build a new church on high ground? Should we buy land on higher ground and build a small structure in preparation for ultimate disaster?	
	The Nature Center is a location that is consistent with our values.	

Nominees for UCM Board



For a one-year term:

Steve Grunewald has been attending UCM since 2012. He has served on the Accessibility Task Force and the Committee on Ministry. For many years, he has worked with the LSE program, co-teaching the K-1 class and (currently) the pre-K class (with an amazing team!). He has done some carpentry work in the building, including accessibility work for the School Street entrance and for the bathroom in the South corner of the building. Originally from Washington State, he has lived in Vermont since 2011, working as a cabinetmaker and carpenter. He lives in Barre with his partner.



For a two-year term:

Emily Seiffert (pronounced "Sigh-fert") likes to say that she couldn't ask for a nicer doppelganger (the lovely Emily G. Seiffert, pronounced "See-fert", a fellow UCM member who is also the church's Office Assistant). Emily A. Seiffert joined UCM in 2019, and previously served on the 2020 Visioning Task Force and the Personnel Committee. She is the Deputy Director of North Branch Nature Center. Emily loves to sing with the Montpelier Community Gospel Choir, where she was Board Chair for about eight years, and she previously served as Board Secretary at Chandler Center for the Arts in Randolph. She and her husband, George, live in Montpelier and can often be found with their cameras on the trails and quiet waters of Central Vermont. Their teenager, Tessa, took this photo of Emily -- that's why it's her favorite.



For a two-year term, following her appointment last summer:

Jen Matthews and her family (Bill, Oskar, and Anna Neuburger) have been attending UCM since 2015. In that time Jen has served on the JOLLIFICATION committee and has volunteered for countless other programs and activities. During the last year Jen has enjoyed her time on the Governing Board learning as much as she could about UCM's governing structure and stewardship, all the while in awe of the budgeting process. When not volunteering or singing with UCM's choir or the Montpelier Community Gospel Choir, Jen has the privilege of being an occupational therapist in long term care.



For a two-year term:

Jeremy Beaudry began attending UCM with his family (Meredith, Lucie, Esme, and Dashiell) in 2018 and became a member in 2021. Past service at UCM has included facilitating the middle school Crossing Paths program, organizing the summer camping trip, serving on the Administrator Position Hiring Committee, and volunteering at community lunches. Jeremy is a writer, musician, artist, and designer by profession. He currently manages innovation, design, and strategy at The University of Vermont Health Network. He also writes a newsletter on art, poetry, nature, and community called The Ministry of Imagination. [Subscribe at <https://jeremybeaudry.substack.com>.]

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Executive Team's Annual Report

Members: *Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Dawn Evans, Leslie Parr, and Donna Russo-Savage*

Purpose: The role of the Executive Team (ET) is to manage the affairs of the Church at an operational level. Unlike the Governing Board, the ET does not make broad governing policies or set goals for the Church but instead implements the Church's Mission. The ET operates by consensus and is convened by the Minister. The ET meets regularly with the professional staff as a combined Management Team.

Activities: During Fiscal Year 2023-2024, the ET's work has focused primarily on responding to issues arising from July's catastrophic flood. In addition to working with the Flood Recovery UU Team (FRUUT), the ET has considered and addressed issues such as:

- Did the church need a remote work policy? How should staff be reimbursed or compensated for expenses incurred related to remote work?
- At what point did we need to make alternate plans for the start of the church year? (e.g., Where would Sunday services be held? Would it be possible to offer Sunday morning Spiritual Exploration for children and youth? Where would the choir rehearse? What space could be used for community gatherings such as coffee hour and Adult Spiritual Exploration offerings?)
- How would we continue to provide the Community Lunch?
- For how far into the future would we need to cancel rentals?
- What budgetary implications of the flood would need to be addressed (e.g., lost rental income and the purchase of flood insurance)?
- What steps can the church take to ensure a safe and healthy environment - particularly in the aftermath of the July flood - within our church building for staff, volunteers, and church members?

The ET has also provided guidance and assistance to an array of committees and ad hoc groups concerning issues such as the Community Pouch, the Clarke Lectures, and ongoing efforts to hire a Director of Spiritual Education. The ET finalized a substantial revision to Church personnel policies, completing work begun by its Personnel Committee in October 2021. And the ET hosted three Committee of Chairs meetings in November, January, and April, providing opportunities for sharing committee accomplishments and plans and for the Board and ET to provide updates.

The lay members of the ET took greater responsibility for day-to-day operations during Rev. Joan's sabbatical from mid-December to mid-January, especially to support the Board with financial oversight. After Joan's return, the ET focused on assisting the Finance Committee and Governing Board with preparing a proposed budget for the upcoming Church fiscal year (FY25). With recognition that increases in some expense areas are necessary at a time when Church membership and participation have not rebounded to pre-flood levels, creating a balanced budget has been a daunting task. The ET expresses gratitude for the diligent efforts of the Stewardship Committee and for everyone who made pledges for the coming year. Ultimately, hard choices were necessitated by the continued challenge of raising enough revenue, including pledge contributions, to support our growing operating expenses. With gratitude for the diligent efforts of the Finance Committee and the

thoughtful work by the Board, a well-considered and pragmatic budget will be presented at the upcoming Annual Meeting. *Submitted by the Executive Team*

Executive Team FY25 Budget Memo, followed by Proposed Budget

The FY25 budget development process required careful consideration, difficult decisions, and creative thinking in order to achieve a balanced General Fund budget. Operating expenses related to fair compensation for staff and building costs continue to go up while our sources of revenue, including pledge contributions, remain closer to level.

The proposed budget takes into consideration three staff vacancies at the start of the new fiscal year: Director of Spiritual Exploration, Congregational Administrator, and Sexton. It also includes a significant decrease in retirement contributions effective January 1, 2024. The proposed budget maintains the significantly decreased contribution to the UUA put into effect in the FY24 budget. Finally, the proposed budget includes General Fund income from the Long Term Invested Funds (LTIFs) and significant fundraising with activities yet to be determined.

GENERAL FUND

Income (Line Item 4000)

- Based on total pledges of \$366,453 and a historical 95% fulfillment for total of \$348,130.35
- Total reduction in Contributions Income of \$13,477.65 compared to FY24 (23/24)
- TBD Fundraiser = \$10,000
- 1% LTIF transfer of \$9,177 based on available balance on 12/31/2023.
- Addition of \$2,000 income from Social Responsibility Fund, which is no longer active.
- No Cash Reserves Contribution

TOTAL GENERAL FUND INCOME \$434,069.35

Expenses

Personnel:

- Staff salary increases: Minister 1.6%; Administrator 4.5%; other positions 3.2%.
- Eliminate health insurance for dependents (currently not utilized by staff)
- UCM retirement contribution reduced from 10% to 5% on January 1, 2025.

Ministry (#6100)

- Allocated \$2,000 from Minister Salary & Housing to Professional Development

Spiritual Exploration (#6200)

- SE Director position delayed until August 1.
- Reduced hours to 25 hrs./week (0.63FTE).
- Reduced Professional Development to \$2,000

Music (#6300)

- Music Director's hours maintained at 16 hrs./week.
- Accompanist's hours maintained at 10 hrs./week.

Administration (#6400)

- Congregational Administrator hours increased to 40 hours (1 FTE)
- Budgeted to begin August 1
- Reduced Professional Development for Admin. and Assist. by \$1,000 total.
- Added contracted bookkeeping support.
- Added contracted "IT" support.
- This budget includes allowing the Executive Team more flexibility in designing appropriate staffing levels in Administration (#6400). The amount to be no more than the total approved for administrative staff and professional services.

- Building (#6500)

- Sexton position to remain vacant.
- Weekly cleaning service will continue.
- Allocated funds for ad hoc maintenance.
- Property insurance expense transferred to Capital Fund.

Program Expenses (#6600)

- Congregational Life Coordinator hours maintained at 0.5 FTE.
- Separated out A/V wages as new line item.
- UUA Delegate support 5@\$400 each
- Community Lunch support increased to pre-Covid levels.

Outreach (#6700)

- Maintained UUA Dues at \$5,000
- Interfaith Action Committee partly covered by UU Funding Grant

Other Expenses (#6800)

- New fund established by a donation to support Clarke Lectures
- Payroll Expenses (#6900)
- Included new Vermont Childcare Contribution Tax (effective July 1)

TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENSES: \$431,211.49

Net General Fund: \$ 2,857.86

CAPITAL FUND

Income:

- Funded by a withdrawal of 4% of the balance available from long term invested funds (LTIF) as of Dec 31, 2023.

TOTAL CAPITAL FUND INCOME: \$ 36,740.48

Expenses:

- Property Insurance transferred from Building Expense (\$11,265)
- Flood Insurance added (\$11, 285)
- A/V equipment (\$1,075)
- Misc. Building & Grounds (\$13,085.84)
- Any remaining funds at the end of the FY will be placed in Capital Reserves

TOTAL CAPITAL FUND EXPENSES: \$ 36,740.48

Net Capital Fund: \$0

[illegible]

	6113 · In lieu of FICA - Minister	7,106.00	7,067.00	
	6114 · Retirement			
	6114A · UCM Contribution	9,289.00	6,928.43	Assumes 10% contribution through Dec. 2024 and 5% beginning Jan. 2025
	6114B · UCM 2% Match	1,858.00	1,847.58	
	Total 6114 · Retirement	11,147.00	8,776.01	
	6115 · Housing Allowance	70,000.00	65,000.00	Adjusted at Minister's request
	6116 · Benefits			
	6116a · Life/Disab Insurance	1,389.00	1,389.00	
	Total 6116 · Benefits	1,389.00	1,389.00	
	6118 · Minister's Professional	6,500.00	8,500.00	\$2,000 from salary & housing
	Total 6110 · Minister Compensation	119,034.00	118,111.10	
	6125 · Sabbatical Reserve	0.00	0.00	
	Total 6100 · Ministry	119,034.00	118,111.10	
	6200 · Spiritual Exploration			
	6210 · LSE Director Compensation			
	6212 · Salary	37,496.00	32,245.36	Reduce by 1 month (8/1 start) AND Reduce to 25 hrs/wk
	6214 · Retirement			
	6214a · UCM Retirement Contribution	2,045.00	1,209.20	Assuming 50% to partially cover in case qualifies
	6214b · UCM 2% Retirement Match	409.00	322.45	Assuming 50% to partially cover in case qualifies
	Total 6214 · Retirement	2,454.00	1,531.65	
	6216 · Benefits			
	6216d · Health Insurance	8,298.00	8,778.41	
	Total 6216 · Benefits	8,298.00	8,778.41	
	6218 · Professional Development	3,000.00	2,000.00	
	Total 6210 · LSE Director Compensation	51,248.00	44,555.42	
	6220 · Teachers and Childcare			
	6221 · Childcare	700.00	0.00	
	6222 · Nursery	2,788.00	2,838.00	
	6223 · Teacher Training	1,000.00	1,000.00	
	Total 6220 · Teachers and Childcare	4,488.00	3,838.00	
	6230 · Youth Programs			
	6231 · Interfaith Group			
	6232 · Bridging	250.00	250.00	
	6233 · Coming of Age	1,000.00	1,000.00	
	6239 · HS Youth Group	600.00	600.00	
	Total 6230 · Youth Programs	1,850.00	1,850.00	
	6250 · Supplies/necessities	1,200.00	1,200.00	
	6255 · Curriculum	1,000.00	800.00	
	6260 · Adult RE	1,500.00	1,400.00	
	Total 6200 · Spiritual Exploration	61,286.00	53,643.42	
	6300 · Music			
	6310 · Music Director Compensation			
	6312 · Salary	21,563.00	22,255.53	0.4FTE; 3.2% Salary Increase
	6314 · Retirement			
	6314A · UCM Retirement Contribution	2,156.00	1,669.17	Assumes 10% contribution through Dec. 2024 and 5% beginning Jan. 2025
	6314b · Retirement 2% Match	431.00	445.11	
	Total 6314 · Retirement	2,587.00	2,114.28	
	6318 · Professional Development	1,700.00	1,700.00	

						Total 6310 · Music DirectorCompensa.on	25,850.00	26,069.81	
						6322 · Accompanist	9,277.00	9,573.66	0.25FTE; 3.2% Salaryincrease
						6330 · Organ/PianoTuning	1,200.00	1,200.00	
						6340 · Sheet Music	1,200.00	1,100.00	
						6350 · SpecialMusic	1,000.00	1,100.00	
						6360 · Professionalmemberships	100.00	100.00	
						Total 6300 · Music	38,627.00	39,143.47	
						6400 · Administra.on			
						6410 · Cong. Admin.Compensa.on			
						6412 · Salary	46,800.00	49,811.67	1.0FTE; 4.5% salary increaseBudgeted for 11 months
						6412a · Salaryadjustment		0.00	
						6412 · Salary- Other		0.00	
						Total 6412 · Salary	46,800.00	49,811.67	
						6414a · UCM Re.rement Contribu.on	1,560.00	1,867.94	Assuming 50%to par.ally cover in case qualifies
						6414b · UCM 2% Re.rement Match	312.00	498.12	Assuming 50%to par.ally cover in case qualifies
						6416 · Benefits			
						6416d · HealthInsurance	8,376.00	9,109.24	Employee-only with 12.5%projected increase for 2025; 11 months
						Total 6416 · Benefits	8,376.00	9,109.24	
						6418 · ProfessionalDevelopment	1,100.00	400.00	
						Total 6410 · Cong. Admin.Compensa.on	58,148.00	61,686.96	
						6420 · Office AssistantCompensa.on			
						6422 · Office AssistantSalary	20,869.00	21,540.73	0.5FTE; 3.2% SalaryIncrease
						6424A · UCM Re.rement Contribu.on	1,043.00	1,615.55	Assumes 10%contribu.on through Dec. 2024 and 5% beginning Jan.2025
						6424B · UCM 2% Re.rement Match	209.00	430.81	
						6428 · ProfessionalDevelopment	500.00	200.00	
						Total 6420 · Office AssistantCompensa.on	22,621.00	23,787.10	
						6430 · Copier			
						6431 · CopierLease	1,500.00	1,500.00	
						6432 · CopierMaintenance	450.00	472.50	
						Total 6430 · Copier	1,950.00	1,972.50	
						6434 · CopierPaper	580.00	500.00	
						6435 · Prin.ng	317.00	250.00	
						6436 · Supplies	132.00	132.00	
						6440 · Postage	500.00	300.00	
						6450 · Telecommunica.ons	3,286.00	4,100.00	Comcastis \$340/month
						6455 · Website			
						6455.1 · Online ContribFees	1,169.00	1,227.45	
						6455.2 · Web Services	1,100.00	1,155.00	
						Total 6455 · Website	2,269.00	2,382.45	
						6460 · Equipment			
						6462 · SoOware	0.00	1,800.00	QuickbooksSubscrip.on
						6460 · Equipment- Other	1,200.00	1,200.00	
						Total 6460 · Equipment	1,200.00	3,000.00	
						6480 · Banking			
						6481 · BankFees	64.00	117.85	
						6482 · Supplies	400.00	200.00	
						6484 · PayrollSubscrip.on	707.00	912.66	
						Total 6480 · Banking	1,171.00	1,230.51	

		- Contracted Professional Services		1,325.00	Bookkeeper Line Item TBD
		- Contracted Tech Support		1,000.00	For AV and other network needs
		6499 · Administration - Other	4,500.00	4,500.00	Contingency for health insurance
		Total 6400 · Administration	96,674.00	106,166.51	<i>The Budget vote will include a provision allowing the ET more flexibility in designing appropriate staffing levels. The amount to be no more than total approved for administrative staff and professional service positions.</i>
		6500 · Building			
		6510 · Sexton Compensation			
		6512 · Sexton Wages	11,700.00	0.00	Position to remain unfilled
		6510 · Sexton Compensation - Other		0.00	
		- Contracted Maintenance		3,000.00	Hire contracted "handy person"
		Total 6510 · Sexton Compensation	11,700.00	3,000.00	
		6522 · Cleaning Service	5,231.00	8,505.00	
		6524 · Snow/Lawns	500.00	400.00	
		6526 · Rubbish Removal	1,800.00	1,300.00	
		6527 · COVID-19 Related	400.00	200.00	
		6530 · Fuel Oil	6,000.00	8,000.00	
		6540 · Electricity	2,743.00	3,900.00	
		6550 · Water/Sewer	1,500.00	1,600.00	
		6560 · Custodial Supplies	800.00	800.00	
		6565 · Fire alarm test	760.00	610.00	
		6566 · Furnace Cleaning/inspection	450.00	450.00	
		6568 · Fire Alarm Monitoring	240.00	571.00	
		6571 · Property Insurance	8,000.00		Moved to Capital Fund Budget
		6573 · Elevator Inspection	500.00	300.00	
		Elevator Maintenance		0.00	
		Total 6500 · Building	40,624.00	29,636.00	
		6600 · Program expenses			
		6610 · Membership/Extension	700.00	700.00	
		6611 · Welcoming Congregation	100.00	100.00	
		6612 · Memb. Coordinator Compensation			
		6612-A · Memb. Coordinator Salary	19,944.00	20,585.51	0.5 FTE; 3.2% Salary Increase
		6614 · Retirement			
		6614A · UCM Retirement Contribution	1,994.00	1,543.91	Assumes 10% contribution through Dec. 2024 and 5% beginning Jan. 2025
		6614B · UCM 2% Retirement Match	399.00	411.71	
		Total 6614 · Retirement	2,393.00	1,955.62	
		6618 · Professional Development	1,250.00	1,250.00	
		Total 6612 · Memb. Coordinator Compensation	23,587.00	23,791.13	
		6622 · Donations to Community Pouch	12,900.00	12,900.00	Offsets above Line Item #4122
		6625 · Communications Comm.	400.00	400.00	
		6630 · Worship/Arts	2,500.00	2,000.00	
		AV Operator Wages	4,000.00	4,128.00	Separated as new line item; 3.2% increase
		6631 · Flowers	1,200.00	1,200.00	
		6641 · UUA GA Delegate Support	1,800.00	2,000.00	June 2025 will be in person: 5 @ \$400 each
		6645 · Governing Board	750.00	500.00	
		6655 · Stewardship	2,000.00	2,000.00	
		6660 · Racial Justice Team	500.00	500.00	
		6661 · Climate Action Team	100.00	100.00	
		6663 · Social Responsibility GF			

					6672 · Lay Pastoral Care	100.00	100.00	
					6680 · Church Historian	900.00	900.00	Covered by VQCUU Grant
					6685 · UCM Community Lunch	100.00	1,000.00	Based on CL request; partially funded
					Total 6600 · Program expenses	51,637.00	52,319.13	
					6700 · Outreach/Denominational			
					6720 · UUA Annual Dues	5,000.00	5,000.00	
					6750 · VT Interfaith Ac.on Commisee	1,000.00	1,500.00	Partly covered by UU Funding Grant
					6751 · SoulMasters Sharing Circle	375.00	375.00	
					6755 · VT Interfaith Power & Light	200.00	200.00	
					Total 6700 · Outreach/Denominational	6,575.00	7,075.00	
					6800 · Other Expense			
					6810 · Coffee/Tea Table	500.00	500.00	
					6820 · Clarke Lectures	1,600.00	0.00	New special fund established
					6831 · Holiday Fair	3,500.00	3,500.00	
					Total 6800 · Other Expense	5,600.00	4,000.00	
					6900 · Payroll			
					6910 · Employer FICA	12,688.00	10,893.06	
					6920 · Employer Medicare	2,659.00	3,190.80	
					6940 · Payroll Expenses			
					6950 · Worker's Comp. Ins.	4,000.00	6,000.00	
					VT - Childcare contribu.on tax		1,033.00	New VT tax
					Total 6900 · Payroll	19,347.00	21,116.86	
					Total 6000 · GENERAL FUNDEXPENSE	439,404.00	431,211.49	
					Total Expense	439,404.00	431,211.49	
					Net Ordinary Income	138.00	2,857.86	
					Capital Fund			
					Income			
					5100 · CAPITAL FUND INCOME			
					5191 · Transfer from LTIF		36,710.84	4% of 12/31/23 LTIF Balance
					5196 - Building Grants			
					Total 5100 · CAPITAL FUND INCOME		36,710.84	
					Expense			
					Property Insurance		11,265.00	
					Flood Insurance		11,285.00	Based on es.mate obtained in Dec. 2023
					AV Equipment		1,075.00	
					7000 Capital Projects			
					Misc. Building & Grounds		13,085.84	Any remaining funds at year end will be transferred to Capital Reserve
					Transfer to Capital Reserve			
					Total 7000 Capital Fund Projects		36,710.84	
					CAPITAL FUND NET OPERATIONS		0.00	

More Annual Reports for FY24

CareGivers Support Group

Launched in May 2022, the Caregivers Support Group welcomes anyone caring for a spouse, child, parent or other loved one. Participants share challenges and fears, hopes and uncertainty, despair and joys. We shed tears, laugh, hold space, and breathe in silent, deep reflection - - as the moment moves us. We listen, wanting to truly hear one another. Participants often relate that this group is the only place where each can speak their truth and be met with compassionate understanding. The group meets every two weeks, year 'round, on Zoom. The group is open to new participants at any time throughout the year. *Gale Pekar and Hugo Liepmann, facilitators*

UCM Caring Network

The UCM Caring Network is a volunteer group of individuals whose mission is to respond to the needs of the congregation as they arise. Typical requests that come to the group are for meals and rides, but the network coordinator will evaluate any request, possibly as a reference point for other church or community services. This past church year found 44 volunteers potentially responding to 13 requests for a service. There may be multiple people in the group responding, particularly for an ongoing situation. Some degree of follow-up is provided by the coordinator to try to ensure that the needs of the congregation are met. One particular need arose immediately after the July flood. A decision was made to attempt to contact members and friends in the current directory the church did not know anything about to determine their status and respond to any request for support. The following individuals volunteered during a very difficult time to be callers: Elaine Ball, Liz Benjamin, Paula Gills, Judith Hinds, Betty McKinnell, Johanna Nichols, Gale Pekar, and Ruth Witte. Immense thanks to all our volunteers for being willing to serve the congregation! *Paula Gills, Coordinator*

Church History

Church Records: A continuing endeavor – shepherded by Claudia Clark and Peter Thoms – is to gather and file active and recently discovered older documents. These include copies of Weekly Announcements, Sunday orders of service, sermons, obituaries, important financial documents, and records of significant capital improvements, such as the new AV and Air Quality projects. To enhance our digital records capacity, we spent \$425 for two new hard drives.

Vermont Quebec Universalist Unitarian Convention (VQUUC): This year we received an \$870 grant. In May 2024 UCM member Steve Finner begins a two-year term as President of VQUUC; he will represent UCM at the 2024 Annual Meeting in Middlebury. VQUUC, incorporated in Vermont in 1888, includes all UU congregations in Vermont and Quebec. Steve wrote a brief history of VQUUC in April of this year; it will be included in our archives.

History Highlights of the Year:

Women's Alliance: With creative leadership from Sarah Franklin, at the October meeting of the Women's Alliance Peter Thoms presented a visual history of UCM in 12 objects. The meeting was held at the Brick Church in East Montpelier; UCM was unavailable because of the July flood.

Rev. Charles Allen : After the History Group pondered alternatives, a smaller version of a recently-discovered photograph of our first minister, Rev. Charles Allen (who was instrumental in

founding and serving the Church of the Messiah, 1864-1869), was framed by the Drawing Board and installed in the Fireplace Room. The caption relates the significance of his tenure.

Historic 1928 Blueprints: On the morning after the July flood, Ana Neuburger discovered two water-damaged blueprints under the vestry stage. They were prepared in February 1928 by a Hanover, NH architectural firm, after the catastrophic flood of November 1927. The drawings describe the basement and first floor. The blueprints have been restored by Carolyn Frisa of Works on Paper of Bellows Falls, for a discounted cost of \$300. After a study to determine their significance (that is, were the blueprints' recommendations followed?), and after a showing in the vestry on a Sunday, they will be stored. High quality photographs of the blueprints may be taken for display.

Return of Vestry Photographs and a Painting: A few months after the July flood - when they were removed from the vestry walls for cleaning - three large photographs of the congregation (from 2001, 2006, and 2019), an aerial picture of UCM from 1982 (taken by Charles Ferry), and a photograph of Catherine Orr were restored in place. A fine, small oil painting of the church by Elmer Warren (c.1965) was moved from the Fireplace Room and now hangs to the right of the vestry stage.

Looking to 2024 – 2025: We will prepare a full inventory of photographs, drawings, and paintings that hang on UCM's walls. We will ponder whether to retain over 50 very old books from the 19th century. And we will prepare an exhibit honoring Thomas Silloway, the architect (and Universalist minister) who designed the State House (1857) and UCM (1865).

Members, 2023 – 2024: *Elaine Ball, Claudia Clark, Sarah Franklin, Kenric Kite, Dave Peters, Barbara Thompson, and Peter Thoms.*

Grace Clarke Lecture Committee

Members: *Sandal Cate, Abby Colihan, Kathy Johnson, Mary Jane Ohlson.* Also, many volunteers were recruited to assist with baking desserts, ticket sales, set-up, serving and clean-up. All help was greatly appreciated.

The Grace Clarke Lectures for 2024 were planned for February 17 and March 16. Because the church kitchen was unavailable, the committee planned to host a “dessert and beverage” sitting followed by the lecture. We started planning in early January to line up notable presenters as well as to solicit bakers and workers. We coordinated with the UCM office to have tickets sold online as well as in-person during coffee hour.

The February presenter was Al Freeman, the Climate Forester for the VT Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, who helped us learn about visible and future changes to our forests. We had about 50 attendees. It was a nice opening night, coordinated due to the cold temperatures with the vestry overnight accommodations team for sheltering people at UCM after the Lecture.

The March presenter was Alex Tait of the National Geographic Society. About 70 people attended that night and enjoyed “traveling” with Alex to the Himalayan region of the world.

For both events we had tasty desserts donated by several church members. We charged \$10 for adults, \$5 for children and \$25 for families attending each event. The main purpose of the series is for ecological education and sociability, but it has been customary to charge for food and beverages. This format of “dessert and beverages” was much easier for the committee to arrange, and we do recommend keeping with this format in the future.

The committee and the UCM Executive Team were quite pleased to be offered a substantial amount of money by a church member to re-endow the Grace Clarke Lecture funds this year. This will allow the series to host either professional or reputable speakers who can present enlightening talks in the realm of ecology and the environment well into the future. It supports our church mission goal of helping to "protect the Earth, our home."

If you know of potential speakers or wish to assist with this series in the future, please contact an Executive Team or Clarke Lecture committee person listed above by the end of this calendar year. We welcome your ideas and help. *Submitted by Sandal Cate*

Climate Action Team (CAT)

CAT's mission has been to serve as a support group that works toward positive action both individually and collectively, while striving to educate, engage and challenge the entire congregation toward ever more sustainable living, and to create bold, measurable initiatives toward the UUA's Green Sanctuary Recertification.

Team participation has been inconsistent, but mainly has been *Sandra Haddock, Anne Sarcka, Margaret Schultz and Mary Alice Bisbee*. Also, earlier in the year, *Harris Webster* participated.

Mary Alice and Sandra met twice in the Fall to begin to write the "Who We Are" portion of the Green Sanctuary application but did not get very far. The CAT had a "retreat" last August where about 10 members gathered to support each other's climate anxiety and brainstorm programs for the coming year. Several CAT team members also attended the VIPL's Lament for the Earth on the Equinox, September 23rd. Beginning in January, we attempted to have 1-2 regularly scheduled meetings per month, of which a couple were well attended with lively discussions, but attendance was sporadic, mainly due to scheduling conflicts as it was difficult to find a time that worked for people. Having purchased a number of copies of *The Climate Book* and given them out to members of the congregation, we hosted a book club and subsequently planned to propose a challenge to the congregation to join us in the 1.5 degree Celsius lifestyle, which was discussed in the "solutions" section of the book. This initiative would provide a friendly & accessible way for congregants to speak with each other about changing the way they live in the face of climate change and give us an initiative to report on for our Green Sanctuary efforts. The team participated in the April 28th service, *Keep the Circle Whole*, and brought this initiative to the congregation during coffee hour afterwards.

As Chair, I have been sustained by my passion for sustainable living and seeking to live ever more lightly upon the Earth. I loved feeling we could make a difference. Unfortunately, I have been overwhelmed with other commitments and had to resign my position a month before my tenure was up. I believe Anne Sarcka will provide much more consistent and available leadership for this team moving forward. CAT definitely needs to find a way to attract more members and elevate the energy behind the message to be a spark in the revolutionary shift at hand. *Submitted by Sandra Haddock*

UCM Community Lunch

Advisory Committee – Claudia Clark, Abby Colihan, Steve Gold, Scott Hess, Fran Krushenick, Hugo Liepmann, Ilene Siegel, Linda Sproul, Janet and John Poeton.

Site manager – Janet Poeton

Volunteer Coordinator - Lisa Earle-Centers

Weekly volunteers: on average 14 volunteers each Monday. (Volunteers are needed in shifts from 8:30 until 1:30. Sign-up information is in the weekly e-news. Questions may be sent to ucm.communitylunch@gmail.com.)

Mission: The mission of the UCM Community Lunch Program is “to provide the best possible healthy meal in a least restrictive environment for the least amount of money.” We continue to welcome all and provide a high-quality meal in a welcoming environment with music.

We welcome all to build a loving community: We serve a very diverse population. All guests are warmly welcomed verbally by volunteers who serve and eat with our guests and offer information and help with other needs and questions. All tables are cloth-covered, music is provided, guests and volunteers are often invited to sing and sometimes even dance. Frequent positive comments suggest that everyone feels valued and deeply appreciated.

Serve human need: We always keep two things in mind:

When dealing with food – safety and cleanliness.

When dealing with people - dignity and kindness.

We serve a freshly cooked meal with salad, vegetables, homemade desserts and a beverage each Monday from 11:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Meals are now being cooked and served at Christ Church, 64 State Street. We provide home deliveries as needed and offer take-out meals. This year we have been providing hot beverages and breakfast snacks to guests who arrive early in need of warmth and companionship. Also, each week 20 snacks, fruits and desserts are provided to Another Way for the Monday evening meal.

Protect the Earth, our home: We still partner with Community Harvest of Central Vermont and The Vermont Food Bank for fresh produce and protein. We recycle. We deliver leftover meals to Another Way. We clean and sanitize everything before and after use in the kitchen and dining area.

Flood Update: Since the flood and the pandemic, the cost of meals has increased almost 300% and donations have decreased by 85%. All donations are appreciated.

Community Pouch Annual Committee

Members: *Winna Curran, Steve Finner, Sarah Franklin, Kenric Kite, Fran Krushenick, Ansel Ploog, Juliana Plummer, Dell Waterhouse, Dawn Evans (ET rep), Janet Poeton (chair).* The committee expanded its membership and has met three times.

Mission: To direct half of the pouch cash and other monies labeled Community Pouch to a local non-profit aligned with the mission of the UCM - showing diversity of organizations throughout the years.

We are working toward having a file for all past recipients and outcomes after a group receives the pouch. An example is Circle of Courage, the November 2023 Pouch Recipient. They shared their talents during a service in April 2024.

Pouch recipients are chosen by this committee from suggestions submitted to ucm.communitypouch@gmail.com by individuals, committees, and other groups from UCM. This year pouch recipients have been the UCM Care Committee, Just Basics, Circle of Courage, CVRAN, People’s Health and Wellness, Rainbow Bridge Community Center, Montpelier Gospel Choir, UCM Community Lunch, Friends of the Winooski, and a group suggested by the youth of UCM.

Thanks for your generosity.

Membership & Hospitality Committee

Members *Elaine Ball (staff, Congregational Life Coordinator) and Nancy Read*. We have begun working as a more loosely organized team, delegating certain tasks to others in the congregation who are not on 'The Membership & Hospitality Committee.' With only one staff member and one congregant currently active, the committee is no longer functioning as it has in past years.

Mission: The Membership & Hospitality Committee provides welcoming and outreach to newcomers, members, and friends of the church with the intention of fostering a sense of belonging in our spiritual home. The primary responsibilities of the committee/team have been to:

- Offer hospitality & welcome for newcomers, and fellowship within the church community by training Hospitality Team Volunteers (Baristas, Greeters, Hospitality Hosts, and Ushers).
- Assist UCM's Congregational Life Coordinator and Minister with planning & offering 'New UU' sessions each Fall and Spring, as well as "New Member Sunday" worship services.
- Help the Minister and the Congregational Life Coordinator contact persons interested in the church; keep in touch with church members; and keep accurate membership records.
- Promote understanding of Unitarian Universalist (UU) principles – by regularly engaging with UCM programming, reaching out to get to know UCM friends and members, and actively building our loving community.

Hospitality: Before the 2023-24 Church Year began, in July 2023, Montpelier and many other areas in Vermont experienced historic flooding, severely damaging our building, the homes of at least two of our congregants, and much of the surrounding area. As the flood waters were rising, church members and friends began calling each other to check in, asking if they needed anything, if they were on high ground, if there were ways others could help, etc. The Caring Network shared the work of calling approximately 400+ people, all the members and friends listed in our Church Directory, to make sure everyone had what they needed and felt connected and held in our community.

As the 2023-24 Church Year began in September, we were still displaced from our building and held services at the North Branch Nature Center. It took a dedicated team of Worship & Arts, Women's Alliance, and Membership & Hospitality volunteers to come together in this temporary space to set-up and clean-up, make Coffee Hour happen, and invite friends and family to these services, which were well-attended. Congregants were grateful to have space to be together in-person after a difficult summer rather than closing the building as we had to do during the height of COVID-19.

Once we were able to return to our building (though the elevette did not work), we held "New UU" sessions in November 2023 and again in April 2024; two Activities Fairs, in the Fall and the Spring; and a Newcomer's Brunch in March. Approximately 14 - 18 participants attended one or both of the "New UU" classes offered. The "UU History & Theology" class with Rev. Joan was well-attended in both the Fall and Spring, while the "All About UCM" classes reached five participants.

Members and friends of UCM also volunteered to be hosts and attendees for three Circle Suppers in the Fall of 2023 as well as a Thanksgiving Leftover's Potluck, enabling both newcomers and longtime community members to meet new people and connect with each other over a meal.

We are deeply grateful to all who attended and helped to host these classes, events, and meals – and to all who helped call and check in on each other during the summer. It is through you that we fulfill our mission to “welcome all.”

Membership: We hosted one New Member Sunday service this Church Year, on April 14, 2024, when **we welcomed five New Members**, two of whom had signed the Membership Book previously, and three of whom signed that day. Each received a Membership Certificate signed by Rev. Joan, a carnation, and a copy of the “Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide” edited by Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray.

During the pandemic our membership **increased** (from 252 certified in 12/2019 to 258 certified in 12/2022) even while across the country during these same years, “Churches [have been] closing at rapid numbers.” [[“Losing Their Religion: why US churches are on the decline,” by Adam Gabbatt, January 22, 2023](#)] However, UCM now has 240 members (in 12/2023 we certified 236).

The UCM Bylaws say in Section 2.3 that “A person remains an active member as long as s/he has made an identifiable (i.e., not anonymous) financial contribution and has participated in an activity of the Congregation at any time during the preceding twelve months.” It is important for UCM to keep track of its number of active members so quorums can be established for voting at the Annual and Special Meetings where the business of the church is conducted, and so UCM can annually certify to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) the size of its congregation.

This year Elaine reached out to approximately 40 people to ask if they would like to retain their membership, passing along pastoral concerns to Rev. Joan when appropriate. Of these, 21 resigned their membership and/or no longer met the criteria. While we recognize the difficult times we are all facing and regret the loss of 20+ active members, we gladly welcome our new members and continue to be hopeful and committed to living into UCM’s mission to *welcome all, build a loving community, nurture each person’s spiritual journey, serve human need, and protect the Earth, our home.*

Denominational Resources Group

The Good News: The primary focus of the undersigned has been on developing a process for selection and credentialing of UCM delegates to the UUA General Assembly, to result in a full delegation representative of the congregation. To this end, a draft process was presented to the Board a few months ago. The Board modified and executed the process and, with the assistance of the minister and the undersigned, recruited a full slate of five delegates (the number allowed by the UUA based on UCM’s membership). They range in age from 39 to the late 70’s; one is male and four are female. Three have previous experience as GA delegates. This slate shall be presented to the Annual Meeting of the congregation for affirmation. This is the first time in many years that such a process has been followed; the minister is due major credit for this singular accomplishment.

Two members of the congregation continue to be active in the Vermont Quebec Unitarian Universalist Conference (VQUUC). The Board has named the undersigned to be the delegate to this year’s conference on May 18th at the Champlain Valley Congregation in Middlebury, following which our delegate will become the president of the Conference to serve for the next two years. UCM’s other member active with the VQUUC is on its Nominating Committee.

Three members of the congregation have been involved in the Housing Organizing Committee of Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA). A fourth has just become involved and, as a result, one of our other members will be moving over to the VIA Corrections Organizing Committee to focus on issues

affecting the incarcerated. There are serious problems in this area which demand the attention and involvement of faith communities.

The minister has applied to the UUA Fund for Social Responsibility for a Congregation Based Community Organizing matching grant of \$750 to be contributed by UCM to the VIA.

The Not So Good News: A group of one is not a group. It is suggested that the congregation and the Board consider what message is being sent when only one person is carrying most of the responsibility for denominational matters and relations. The Board may want to appoint one of its members to assist in and focus on this area to recruit more congregational members to be involved.

Also, it is noted with sadness that because of financial stringency, the proposed congregational budget maintains a reduced contribution to the Unitarian Universalist Association. It is hoped that eventually the contribution can be increased to its former more generous level, especially since the UUA granted UCM \$50,000 from its Disaster Relief Fund to help with flood recovery. *Report submitted by Stephen L. Finner, Ph.D.*

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met numerous times throughout the year. The major intense concentration in late winter and early spring was to establish a FY2025 budget recommendation to the UCM Governing Board. The committee was tasked with matching the anticipated income and anticipated pledges to the fiscal needs of the church and compensation for the staff. The committee also implemented increased internal financial controls for the institution. *Submitted by Scott Hess, Chair*

UCM's All Church Holiday Fair

The Holiday Fair is led by *Sandal Cate, Kristin Glaser, Ginnie Humphreys, Leslie Parr, Jo Romano, and John and Janet Poeton.*

The July 2023 flood swept away all support materials for the Fair except the Gazebo. Thanks to each person who saved, power-washed and repainted it, the Fair had its long-standing trademark front and center! The kitchen could not be used so there was no Norma's Ham Loaf luncheon. Still, there were other highlights: the Friday night Cocoa Bar with youth music, a huge amount of donated children's books, jewelry and items for gifts, the wreaths decorated by volunteers, and the amazing talent of the UCM bakers for all the sweet and savory treats, as well as the fresh pecans!

All were welcome to donate, volunteer, and purchase. There was a lot of positive energy creating a loving community. Items were sold at a low cost, especially because the larger community took quite a hit from flooding in July and again in early December. Items remaining at the end of the Fair were donated to local charities to help protect the Earth from an abundance of things.

Planning for the 2024 Holiday Fair has begun. It will be the first weekend in December – Friday the 6th and Saturday the 7th, 2024. Hope we see you at the Fair! *Submitted by Janet Poeton*

Music Program/Committee

As with all other church activities and programs, the start of the church year for the Music Program was shaped by last July's flood. Fortunately, the choir is well practiced in flexibility from the pandemic years, as we had to find rehearsal space in other locations until we could safely move back into the sanctuary. While we missed our sanctuary, we appreciated the intimacy of singing at the North Branch Nature Center for our first services.

The Music Program's only significant physical loss due to the flood was the blower for our organ, which was located in the basement. We were able to borrow a blower so that we had our organ back for December holiday performances; we are now awaiting installation of a new blower, which will be at least initially located in the space behind the organ. Apart from some tuning issues because of rapidly changing humidity levels, we thankfully avoided damage to our pianos.

Shortly after the flood occurred, I asked our UCM choir if they would like to get together to learn and sing a beautiful piece of music that had been written in response to another water disaster, the 2004 Asian Tsunami, and perhaps ask singers from other choirs to join us. There was an overwhelmingly positive response, and the Montpelier Flood Choir was born. Twenty-five past and present UCM choir members, along with about 40 other area singers, joined together in late July to rehearse at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. The rehearsals themselves were immensely moving and healing experiences, and groups of singers performed our 3-piece set outdoors at the Montpelier Farmer's Market, in front of City Hall (after the bulk of the debris there was removed,) and in front of the Statehouse prior to one of the public forums for Climate Resilience. Apart from the ministry of the rehearsals and performances themselves, this experience was valuable in creating connections within the community and establishing a model of collaboration that carried over into other activities.

A highlight of the musical year was the post-covid/post-flood return of the Community Carol Sing in December. In a break from the tradition of each participating church preparing separate musical offerings, this year we worked together with Lynette Combs of Christ Church, Christopher McWilliams of Bethany Church, and the First Congregational Church of Berlin to create a large, combined choir performing multiple pieces. Members of the Old Meeting House Choir also participated. Hosted by UCM and very well attended by the greater community, there was a palpable feeling of joy and relief to all be gathering and singing together after the isolating covid years and the trauma of the past summer. The event was recorded by ORCA Media.

The choir enjoyed an inspiring 3-hour workshop with vocalist David Ruffin in November.

Our UCM choir generally sang at about 3 services per month, with guest musicians performing for the remaining services. The choir gained a few new and returning members but also lost some due to health and mobility issues, exacerbated by the loss of the elevator in the flood. While our overall numbers did not increase this year—currently around 20, with inconsistencies due to travel and health—I feel we gained cohesion as a musical and supportive community.

We presented a diversity of music, including music from classical, folk, popular and African American musical traditions, in addition to pieces by Native American, Arabic, South African, and local composers. About half of the music we performed was composed by women. Some children and youth joined us for one service.

An intention this year was to feature more individual choir members in solo capacities, and at least 11 different choir members were featured: Amy Cavanagh, Bronwyn Fryer, Kate Latz, Diane Marie, Phil Morse, Eric Oberg, Kathleen Poole, Nan Prince, Tom Schersten, Cecile Sherburn, and Garret White.

A musical highlight for our congregation came during our pledge drive in February and March, when we featured multiple musicians from our own congregation, including Case Phinney on organ, Lotus on piano, Kenric Kite with his traditional group “North Branch”, Esme Beaudry singing and playing guitar, Paula Gills, and Eileen Shine with Vic and Elena Guadagno playing and singing together.

Other congregants who shared their musical gifts with the congregation this year were Kris Hammer, Heather Moz and Lindsay Wade, Callum and Isla Robachek, and Dan and Will Lindner.

Staff members Rev. Joan, Elaine and Emily joined me in performing a musical setting (by me, at the poet’s request) of a poem written by a new church member for the recent new member’s ceremony.

Additional guest musicians have included Marc Gwinn, Jon Gailmor, the Montpelier Community Gospel Choir, Carolyn’s Angel Band, and The Crones.

Our spring choir schedule was disrupted by my being out for a few weeks due to surgery and subsequent recovery. The choir carried on fabulously on their own at 2 separate services with the help and guidance of our pianist Eliza Thomas and the leadership of individual choir members. This also resulted in the postponement of, and some changes to, the Music Sunday Service. Originally scheduled on April 21st to coincide with Earth Day, it will now be held on May 19th. The program is called Earth Songs and will feature our choir and Eliza Thomas performing selections in honor of the earth, along with projected images and spoken word. Last year we offered the Music Sunday program at an evening performance for the greater public, and we were looking forward to doing the same again this year; however, we will not be doing so because of the changed circumstances. We are already looking forward to trying again next year!

In addition to the choir serving the mission of the church community through its contributions to church services and community collaborations, as a church group our non-auditioned choir serves to fulfill the church’s mission for its individual members. In order to welcome all, build a loving community, serve human need and nurture each person’s spiritual journey, we continue, for example, to provide rides and other support for those in need, to provide extra support for people to learn their music with practice tracks as possible, and to recognize important milestones in each other’s lives. While for many in the choir the act of working hard together to produce high quality music is an important spiritual activity, the choir is also a close-knit supportive community in itself.

Our pianist Eliza Thomas has continued to provide exquisite music for preludes and postludes as well as to accompany the choir. She was an integral part of the Good Friday Tenebrae service and is a generous-spirited and skilled support to the Music Program.

A Music Committee per se has not been active this year, although individuals (notably Lani Seifert, KaeMaple Poole, and Ginny Sassaman) have been invaluable helping with specific projects. For example, they have kept the music library organized and documented, kept track of member’s birthdays, staffed activity fair tables, advised on Music Sunday questions, and more. *Submitted by Donia Prince, Director of Music*

Property Committee

Over the past three years Property Committee members have taken active roles in the Air Quality Project and the UCM flood recovery process. UCM is fortunate to have had such skilled and committed volunteers to oversee and actively engage in these critical projects. These projects have taken a toll on our volunteers, and it is critical at this time – with the Sexton position remaining vacant this next church year – that other UCM members and friends step up to volunteer on this committee. One doesn't need to be a contractor, electrician, or plumber to participate. The role of the committee is primarily to manage maintenance and contracted projects. There is a 20 Year Maintenance Plan that has been used as a road map for ongoing maintenance of the building. Considering the AQP project and the work done as a result of the flood recovery, this plan needs to be updated. We have spent approximately \$500,000 on the building infrastructure over the last three years, and it is critically important that we have volunteers to help maintain our 159-year-old building. If interested in participating and learning more, please reach out to a member of the Executive Team or Governing Board. *Submitted by Claudia Clark, Governing Board President*

Racial Justice Group (RJG)

RJG consists of Dell Waterhouse, Steve Finner, Judith Hinds, Paula Gills, Sarah Franklin, Peter Thoms, Liz Benjamin, Margaret Blanchard, Barbara Thompson.

The focus of our work together:

1. Advocate and educate within the UCM community around the 8th principle of building the Beloved Community.
2. Outreach to local racial justice groups and BIPOC-led organizations.

Our collaboration with Farmer Ama of Salon Black Walnut continues to grow. We co-sponsored a Black History event in February: OurStory Dance and Poetry party. RJG contributed money from our budget allocation to help fund the BIPOC artists who made the event a success: Ama Peyman, Kiah Morris, Rajnii Eddens, and the DJ Saddao and Diversity.

Salon Black Walnut planned a Spring Seed Swap and Human Family Potluck event in the vestry for April 19, 2024, again featuring Black artists and drummers.

Following the February event, Hazel Turrone of The Everything Space requested collaboration with UCM's Adult LSE program and the RJG to sponsor a workshop on Racial Trauma for White People, based on the work of Resmaa Menachem, author of *My Grandmother's Hands*.

Kim Pierce, President of the Board of the Montpelier Gospel Choir, requested RJG's collaboration for an event in May 2024 to focus on the healing ministry of Gospel Music. It will feature a viewing and discussion of the PBS special, *Gospel*.

On November 26, 2023, RJG members who accompanied Rev. Joan on a Living Legacy Pilgrimage to Civil Rights Sites in Selma, Birmingham, and Montgomery Alabama shared their stories at a Sunday service. In February, the group did a slide presentation for the Women's Alliance after-dinner program.

For the second year in a row, RJG is a sponsoring congregation for DRUUMM's Public Worship fundraiser to be held on May 8, 2024.

The most fulfilling aspect of our work this year has been learning to work together as a team and to value the contributions of all RJG participants.

Spiritual Exploration

Report from the Spiritual Exploration Committee

Members: *Liz Benjamin-Chair, Johanna Nichols, Tim Favorite, Ian Campbell*

Mission Statement -The Spiritual Exploration Committee, working in community, supports opportunities for transformational learning, faith formation, action, and fellowship across the lifespan within our congregation.

The Spiritual Exploration Committee works with the Director of Spiritual Exploration to support the volunteer leaders, provide supplies for the program, and give out information to all at the Spiritual Exploration table each Sunday. The committee has also organized special events to enhance our intergenerational connections at UCM. These include the Beach Day at Wrightsville Reservoir, the non-competitive kickball game, and March Mystery Madness, during which new friends of all ages meet and get to know each other.

The committee is very appreciative of our interim Director of Spiritual Exploration, Sally Armstrong, who has encouraged us with her good ideas and her positive attitude. We look forward to new initiatives as we connect with a new Director in August. We welcome all who care about our significant and enjoyable programs for children and youth.

Report from the Interim Director of Spiritual Exploration

When I came on board in October after the devastating July flood, my main goal was to help get our program out of the ditch and back on the road. There's still a lot of mud on the tires, but the backroads are drying out and Spring is here. It won't be long until someone new takes the wheel and steers us safely into the future.

Back in October, we were meeting at the North Branch Nature Center. Teaching teams were in place, curricula had been selected, and Liz Benjamin schlepped plastic bins of supplies back and forth faithfully every week. The Preschool/Kindergarten cohort met inside, the Elementary team gathered under a tent, and the Middle School group met at a picnic table under a tree. North Branch offered opportunities to expand the lessons with short walks and tiny field trips on the trails, but as fall approached, there were some Sundays, and we were all looking forward to being back at 130 Main.

As we continue to regain traction, it is rather remarkable that we have provided quality programming for children in preschool through eighth grade every single Sunday. Despite all the challenges we faced this year we never once had to cancel Sunday morning offerings for lack of teaching teams. Even when children stayed home...the teachers did not. When we were hit with two snowstorms and volunteers had trouble getting into Montpelier due to lost power and road conditions, those who made it seamlessly combined classes, lessons, and art projects. Our volunteers truly live out the mission of our church. I continue to be amazed at the caliber of the programming our volunteers provide. They often adapt and enrich the curriculum, making it deeper and richer than what the authors provided. Their commitment, caring, compassion, and creativity have kept our program alive and growing.

We have 36 children who are officially registered in our program and many others, like our adult congregants, who come in and out on an occasional basis, as well as visitors who come once or

twice. On Sunday mornings, we have an average of about ten children present. It may be a different ten children from one week to the next, but we seem to stay in the same range.

Numbers are interesting but they are an incomplete picture. Our success cannot really be measured by statistics. It is difficult to assess how children learn to trust adults and peers, giving them the confidence to join discussions, share joys and concerns, and know that they are an integral part of our spiritual community. Just as with adults, it's important for children and youth to know that they matter and that they belong. There are no numbers for that.

We have begun to offer Jr. Coffee Hour on the first Sunday of the month. The idea is to give parents opportunities for adult conversation and children a chance for fellowship and snacks with their peers.

Beyond Sunday morning groups, we have a blossoming Middle School cohort of seven young people. What a delight to see this developing. It is especially affirming to witness and recognize the empowerment of this group who bravely asked for what they needed and wanted.

We also have a snail-mail ministry for fifteen emerging adults who have recently Bridged from our church. The lack of a post office has made this a challenge at times, but it is a wonderful reminder for the young adults and our congregation that our love and concern follow them wherever their chosen path takes them.

"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see."

John F. Kennedy

Submitted by: *Sally Daab Armstrong IDSE*

Report from the Adult Spiritual Exploration (ASE) Team

The purpose of the ASE Team this year was to support Rev. Joan in her Adult Spiritual Exploration ministry. Our goals were:

- to maintain and expand the Chalice Circle program;
- to support ASE offerings by other UCM groups such as the Climate Action Team (CAT), the Racial Justice Group (RJG), and the Membership & Hospitality Committee; and
- to offer one or more faith development classes/discussions.

Organized more as a network than a formal committee, we met twice early in the year for planning purposes. Since then, we have worked via email and informal contacts. Contributing members included *Elaine Ball, Sandra Haddock, Judith Hinds, Rev. Joan, Hugo Liepmann, Paul Ohlson, Leslie Parr, Gale Pekar, Nancy Read, Barbara Thompson, and John Turner.*

Chalice Circles: Two new Seasoned Souls groups and one new Small Group Ministry were added. The Caregivers Support group continues and welcomes new members as needed. More Circle facilitators are needed; please speak to Rev. Joan if you can fill this role.

The CAT led a discussion series on Greta Thunberg's Climate Book. The RJG sponsored two multicultural events and hopes for a spring series based on *My Grandmother's Hands* (if enough people sign up). The Membership & Hospitality Committee, along with Congregational Life Coordinator Elaine Ball, ran two New UU classes (fall and spring).

Rev. Joan prepared and facilitated a four-part exploration of proposed changes to Article II of the UUA Bylaws "Purposes and Covenant." The wording of this section defines who UU's are as a people of faith. Participants in the series reflected deeply on the meaning of Unitarian Universalism in their personal lives and the life of our congregation.

The ASE Team welcomes more members and ideas for new offerings. One caveat – if you suggest a new offering, please be prepared to help make it happen! Submitted by *Judith Hinds, Team Leader*

Stewardship Team

The Stewardship Team led our annual pledge drive, themed ‘Transformed by Our Care.’ This theme was inspired by a line from the song ‘Wake Now, My Senses’ which includes the line “work toward a planet transformed by our care.” After the damaging floods of July (and December), we were inspired by both the care and generosity of our communities’ responses and the clear interdependence of our human world and the planet.

The Stewardship Team recruited around 20 people to make personal calls as part of the pledge drive. We hope this process led to some fruitful conversations and connections. We are so thankful to our stewards, many of whom serve in multiple other capacities at UCM, for agreeing to be a part of this drive in this way. The Stewardship Team is also thankful to our staff and the many people involved in creating UCM’s budget.

This year, we received 183 pledges to raise a total of \$366,453. Thank you to everyone who pledged! Pledges represent around 80% of UCM’s income and are vital to continuing the mission of this spiritual community.

As I look ahead at the future of Stewardship, I see the need to stay creative and realistic. At one of our early Stewardship meetings, Rev. Joan shared some language from another congregation that really struck me – e.g. the statement “we are a mixed-income community.” This simple statement of fact grounds me. The financial demands of our budget mean that we are asking a lot of our congregation during our pledge drive and sometimes, as was the case this year, we must go back and ask for more. Yet this process stays rooted in self-determination and respect – each person or family evaluates their capacity to pledge and how much. ‘Mixed-income community’ means that all contributions to UCM – pledge or donation, volunteerism or presence – of all amounts, are valuable and valued. Thank you for the ways that you are a steward.

Abundant joy and deep gratitude to our Stewardship Team this year: *Brenda Bean, Fran Dodd, Scott Hess, Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Ansel Ploog and Peter Thoms*. Special thanks to *Brian Prendergast* for his graphic design. Submitted by *Ansel Ploog*

Women’s Alliance

The Women’s Alliance resumed their monthly meetings in September of 2023 despite the church building being closed due to flood damage. Here is what we did for each month’s program:

- September, 2023 - We met offsite at the Old Meeting House Parish Hall in East Montpelier Center for a potluck supper and special program about the paintings of James Franklin Gilman, with many copies of his work on display there.
- October – We met at the Old Brick Church in East Montpelier Village for a potluck and program by Peter Thoms who shared several artifacts telling of earlier times at UCM.
- November - Finally, we returned to UCM for a combined meeting with the East Montpelier and Calais Historical Societies. We enjoyed a musical and historical presentation by Linda Radtke who sang “Songs of the Suffragettes” under the auspices of the Vermont Humanities.

- December - Our post-Holiday Fair celebration dinner included an evening of music by Rich Atkinson and Bob Sassaman.
- January, 2024 - Early in the New Year we all sang along with Lindsay Wade and Heather Moz in a program of songs from the "American Songbook," with Sally Armstrong serving as Master of Ceremonies.
- February – We saw images and heard accompanying descriptions from Barbara Thompson and Pam Walker explaining their involvement in the Civil Rights Pilgrimage trip to Alabama with Reverend Joan Javier-Duval.
- March - We traveled via amazing photos with Leslie Parr and Stuart and Donna Russo-Savage to East Africa.
- April - We learned much about managing one's retirement accounts from Ellie Stubbs, a financial advisor with Ameriprise Investments.
- May - Our meeting will be a more in-depth talk by Rev. Joan about her Philippine pilgrimage to discover more about her heritage and the role of UU churches there.
- June - We will end our year with a June picnic gathering.

At least 15-25 people attended our meetings each month.

In addition to social gatherings with educational aspects, the Women's Alliance supports UCM and local non-profits through a few key fundraising efforts. We donated \$1,000 to the UCM Flood Recovery Fund. Our fall rummage sale raised \$2,031, of which half goes to the General Fund. We netted \$619 from the Holiday Fair pecan sales and added that to the Fair's total profit. The 2nd Sunday Soup Sales netted \$384, which will be donated to the Montpelier Food Pantry. We plan to donate \$300 to a few other local non-profits. We also gifted each staff member with a small "honorarium" at Christmastime. We will hold a May rummage sale.

This year's officers are *Sandal Cate, president; Jane Osgatharp, vice president; Betty McKinnell, secretary; Abby Colihan, treasurer; Fran Krushenick, corresponding secretary.* Our program committee includes *Barbara Thompson, Ginnie Humphreys and Sarah Franklin.* *Janet Poeton, former president, assists in a variety of ways.* Many others, including *Nancy Schulz, Anne Ferguson and Elaine Ball,* lend helping hands to all our annual efforts, for which we are greatly appreciative.

All are welcome to attend our monthly meetings, usually held on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 5:00 p.m. You do not need to join us officially to attend, though only dues paying members may vote on critical items. We do hope you will join in if you haven't in the past. Check the weekly UCM e-news for details about our gatherings. Submitted by *Sandal Cate, President, Women's Alliance*

Worship and Arts Committee

Members: *Betty Roy, chair, Sarah Franklin, Jim Phinney, Alana Phinney, Case Phinney, Jen Roberts, Pat Carstensen, Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Minister, Donia Prince, Music Director, Sally Armstrong,* Interim Director of Spiritual Exploration (Some members participated for only part of the church year.)

Our Mission Statement: The Worship and Arts Committee is the steward of the Sunday service. In collaboration with the minister, music director and interim director of spiritual exploration, we strive to ensure that elements of the service -- music, meditation and prayer, joys and concerns, readings, announcements, the sermon -- nurture each person's spiritual journey.

The committee is responsible for making sure that the pulpit is full on Sundays when the minister is away, whether by guests or with special services led by members of the church. We coordinate service elements such as candles and multimedia offerings with a dedicated budget.

The Summer Meditation services met in the vestry for a few weeks until the flood closed our building. The Beth Jacob Synagogue, Montpelier, generously offered space for the meetings. Meditations continued in that comfortable space until the church year began. A quote for reflection was offered for each meeting and attendees appreciated the discussions and the opportunities for sharing.

The committee supported the coordination of the first five services of the church year which were held at the North Branch Nature Center since our building was closed. During Joan's sabbatical Rev. Mellen Kennedy led four Sunday services and the Christmas Eve candlelight service; the committee gave assistance for those services.

The committee arranged guest speakers for Sundays throughout the year - Randy Kritkauskys, Ginny Sassaman, Simon DeVoi, Johanna Nichols, Rev. Debbie Ingram, and Peter Thoms. There were other special services planned by members of the committee. December's Mystery Theme included a service of readings and movement exploration. Betty Roy and Leah Greenberg created and led a service titled "Holding Space for the In-betweens" on December 31st, reflecting on the end of the year. In honor of Poetry Month congregants were invited to share original poems, and the committee facilitated an inspiring service of poetry sharing. Additionally, included in this year's services, was a pulpit swap between Rev. Joan and Rev. Karen Johnston, minister at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington.

Beth Damon continued her work with the committee to provide Sunday flower arrangements offering the beauty of nature's gifts.

The committee appreciates the robust Production Team which supported worship services throughout the year to consistently make the livestream possible.

This church year included the "To Say Their Names" service of remembrance and 1 "New Member" Sunday. There will also be memorial services - one for Roger Ormiston on May 3rd and one for Colin Tait on May 12th. *Submitted by Pat Carstensen*