

Unitarian Church of Montpelier (UCM)

Annual Reports 2025-2026 (FY2025)
In preparation for
ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 17, 2026
11:30 am UCM Sanctuary and on Zoom

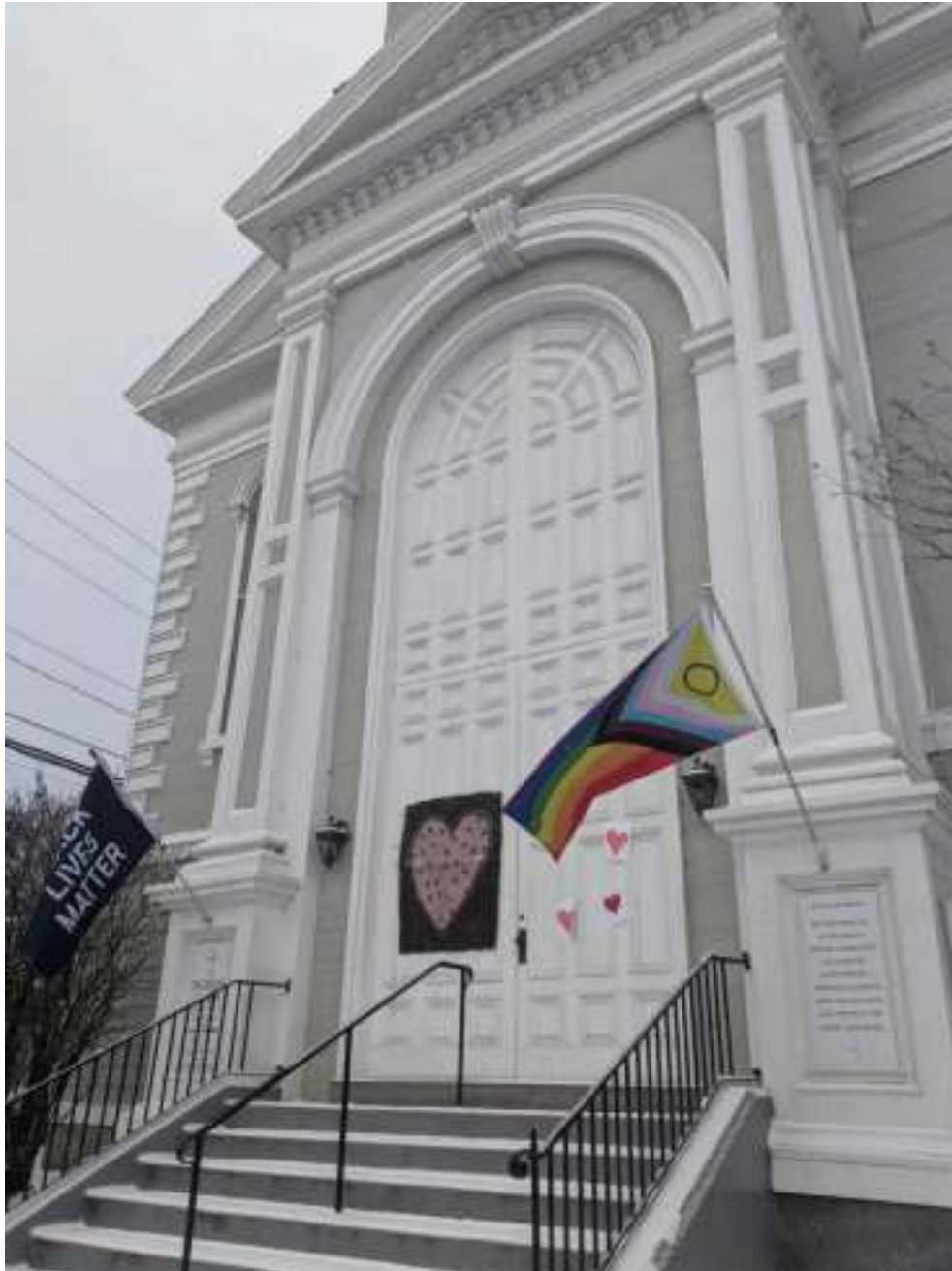


Photo of UCM taken by Emily Seifert on Valentine's Day, 2024.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Warning with Agenda.....	4
Minutes of Annual Meeting May 18, 2025.....	6
Minister's Annual Report.....	10
Governing Board's Annual Report.....	13
Nominees for UCM Board.....	18
Draft UCM Vision Statement.....	20
Executive Team's Annual Report.....	21
Executive Team FY27 Budget Memo.....	23
FY27 Proposed Budget GF	25
FY27 Proposed Budget CF	32
FY25 Financial Reports	33
UCM Annual Committee Reports.....	
UCM Caring Network.....	44
Church History & Records.....	45
2026 Grace Clarke Lecture Committee.....	46
Climate Action Team (CAT).....	48
Climate Resilience Study Group.....	50
UCM Community Lunch.....	50
Community Pouch Committee.....	51
Congregational Life Coordinator, Membership & Hospitality Committee..	52
Denominational Resources Group.....	54
Finance Committee.....	55
UCM's All Church Holiday Fair.....	55
Lay Pastoral Care Ministry	55
Music Program/Committee.....	57
Property Committee.....	58
Racial Justice Group (RJG).....	59
Spiritual Exploration and the Director of Spiritual Exploration.....	59
Adult Spiritual Exploration (ASE) Team.....	63
Women's Alliance.....	64
Report of the Worship and Arts Committee.....	65

UCM Administration, Building, and Rentals 73

Stewardship Annual Report : 75

2026 Annual Meeting Warning & Agenda

May 17, 2026, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM, UCM Sanctuary & Online

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 2025 Annual Meeting (May 18, 2025)
4. Update from the ET
5. Update from the UCM Governing Board
 - a. Visioning and Strategic Planning Process
 - b. UCM Climate Resilience Study Group
 - c. Kitchen Renovation
6. Approval of the UCM Vision Statement
7. Approval of the General Fund Budget for the FY 2026 church year
8. Approval of the Capital Fund Budget for the FY 2026 church year
9. Election of four members to serve on the UCM Board
 - a. Susan Koch (1 year term)
 - b. Jeremy Beaudry (2 year term)
 - c. Jen Matthews (2 year term)
 - d. Emily Seiffert (2 year term)
10. Election of Officers to the UCM Board
 - a. Co-Presidents - Susan Koch & Ansel Ploog
 - b. Vice-President - Emily Seiffert
 - c. Secretary - Jen Matthews
 - d. Financial Officer - Steve Gold
11. Affirmation of UCM Delegates to the 2026 Annual UUA General Assembly

12. Recognition of Staff and Volunteers
13. Conduct any other new business
14. Adjourn

Zoom Virtual Meeting Details

Topic: UCM Annual Meeting

Time: May 17, 2026 11:15 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92175368986?pwd=9AKkHn66OyiZxp9NwI2YoBi92vdUu8.1>

Meeting chat link

<https://zoom.us/launch/jc/92175368986>

Meeting ID: 921 7536 8986

Passcode: 474113

One tap mobile

*+13092053325,,92175368986#,,, *474113# US*

*+13126266799,,92175368986#,,, *474113# US (Chicago)*

Join by SIP

• 92175368986@zoomcrc.com

Join instructions

<https://zoom.us/meetings/92175368986/invitations?signature=RS5NFFbarsXnTgezPVxH0geGZEc6FyJciOBHr4Q3yXI>

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier

AGENDA AND MINUTES FOR ANNUAL MEETING MAY 18, 2025

1. *Welcome.*
 - a. *Review protocols for hybrid in-person/virtual meeting. (Refer to slides #2-5 of https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1o8N2kXlp_mWvAaUf0n8tRaulG0BXVW3S4dGvzf5QMWw/edit?usp=sharing.)* Jeremy Beaudry, UCM Board President, opened the meeting and reviewed the protocols for how this hybrid meeting will operate.
 - b. *Confirm Quorum. (Refer to slide #6.)* 60 Active Members are needed, counting online and in-person attendance. **Board members confirmed the quorum with 78 active members attending.**
 - c. *Election of meeting moderator.* David Peters nominated and Ansel Ploog seconded **Steve Gold to serve as Moderator.** No other nominations were offered, and **Steve was elected.**
 - d. *Approve agenda. (Refer to slides #9-12.)* Steve Finner moved and Ansel seconded **approving the agenda, which passed.**
2. *Chalice Lighting, In Memoriam.* Rev. Joan Javier-Duval lit the chalice in memory of the following members who died in the past year since the 2024 Annual Meeting: Rev. Maggie Rebmann, Heather Moz, Norma Raymond, Rob Chickering, plus church friends Irene Nettler and Marsha Bancroft. Rev. Joan also led us in reading out loud the UCM covenant (*refer to slide #13*).
3. *Approval of Minutes from 2024 Annual Meeting. (May 19, 2024.)* Paul Ohlson moved and Emily Seiffert seconded approving the minutes. Malcolm FitzPatrick suggested that the questions raised in that meeting be referred to relevant committees for answers. (*Another comment made was that on page 4 of the minutes under section 8 about “Approval of the Capital Fund Budget for the FY2025 church year” there is reference to AV equipment costing \$1.075 when it should have been \$1,075. The commentator did not request that this correction be turned into an amendment.*) **The minutes were approved as written.**
4. *Update from the UCM Governing Board. (Refer to slide #16.)* Jeremy thanked all Board members for their work, and he spoke about three major projects:
 - a. *Visioning and Strategic Planning Process.* Jeremy explained that in 2021 an addendum was added to the previous 2020 vision and strategic plan. Now it is past time for a new vision and plan. The Board recently started the process of re-visioning via a workshop led by Erica Baron of the UUA. 50 people participated. In the coming year there will be more opportunities for input.

- b. *UCM Climate Resilience Study.* The Board charged a group of 13 volunteers to objectively “create a *Climate Resilience Study* to identify and examine options for safe, accessible, and climate-resilient facilities. The Study group will research and objectively outline the pros and cons of each option identified and examined but make no recommendations. The final report is due in December 2025. The Board will then involve the rest of the congregation.”
 - c. *Kitchen Renovation.* One design was proposed and approved by the Board. Bids were sought and received, after which further technical issues became evident. The Kitchen Team is now awaiting the results of engineering assessments to determine whether the church’s electrical and ventilation capacities are sufficient for the new kitchen and - if not - what to do about it. Also, since the Climate Resilience Study will be completed in a few months, the Board may factor that research into future kitchen decisions.
- 5. *Update from the Executive Team (ET). (Refer to slide #17.)* Dawn Evans spoke about the work of the ET this past year to manage the affairs of UCM at an operational level, often by supporting groups and individuals in the church to carry out the UCM Mission.
 - a. An important ET function is to help with hiring of staff, which they did for the Director of Spiritual Exploration and for the very part-time Sexton(s).
 - b. The ET continued to work on flood recovery, including creating a Flood Preparedness Plan.
 - c. The ET worked with Christ Church and Good Samaritan Haven and UCM and other volunteers to assist with the Overnight Warming Shelter here, also to help raise and then spend over \$17,000 for 247 nights of emergency motel shelter for community members in Barre, Berlin, and Montpelier.
 - d. The ET participates in researching and helping to craft the UCM budget for approval by the Board before presentation to the Annual Meeting.

ET member Donna Russo-Savage pointed out that Dawn is retiring from the ET after 4 years. (*Dawn helped the ET revise UCM’s Personnel Policies.*) If interested in serving on the ET, speak with an ET member.

- 6. *Approval of the General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. (Refer to slides #19-24.)* Ansel moved and Dawn seconded approving the General Fund (GF) Budget as proposed. Brenda Bean, the Board’s Financial Officer, described how the budget proposal was developed, starting with the Stewardship Committee’s Annual Budget/Pledge Drive, which has so far produced 1.4% more money pledged than last year. Brenda reviewed highlights of the proposed budget: changes to personnel compensation, adding a “cafeteria plan” for benefits, moving the property insurance

expense back to the GF from the Capital Budget, increasing the UUA Program Fund contribution by 80% and the Community Lunch contribution by 100%.

Malcolm FitzPatrick asked for clarity and consistency about the use and labeling of Calendar Years, Fiscal Years, Church Years, etc. After some explanations were given to clear up confusion, Paul Ohlson called the question, which the Moderator explained is a motion that cannot be debated. Ansel seconded the motion to call the question; it passed. Then a vote was taken on the original motion. It, too, passed so **the GF Budget for FY2026 was approved.**

7. *Approval of the Capital Fund Budget for FY 2026. (Refer to slide #27.)* Ansel moved and Stuart Russo-Savage seconded approving the Capital Fund Budget as proposed. Brenda briefly reviewed the income and expenses. Barbara Conrey asked about paying for the engineering assessments now being done for the kitchen and was told payment will come from the Flood Recovery funds, not the Capital Fund. **The Capital Fund budget was approved with 1 abstention.**
8. *Election of Nominees to Serve on the UCM Board for Two-Year Terms. (Refer to slides #29-30.)* Jeremy moved and Steve Grunewald seconded approving the following **slate of nominees to the Board**: *Ansel Ploog (returning), Steve Gold (returning), Katie Spring (new), Leppurd (Rachel) MacMartin (new).* **The motion passed.**
9. *Election of Slate of Officers to the UCM Board. (Refer to slide #32.)* John Poeton moved and Dan Jones seconded approving the following **slate of officers and timing for choice of a Vice President**:
 - a. *President – Jeremy Beaudry.*
 - b. *Vice-President – to be chosen by the Board before end of September.*
 - c. *Secretary – Jen Matthews.*
 - d. *Financial Officer – Ansel Ploog.***The motion passed.**
10. *Approval of Slate of Changes to the Bylaws. (Refer to slides #34-43.)* The Moderator explained that approving a change to the bylaws requires a 2/3 affirmative vote. Dawn moved and Judith Hinds seconded approval of the whole slate of proposed changes. Jeremy then reviewed and explained the proposed changes, most being technical and two being more substantive:
 - One to increase the amount of unbudgeted spending which can be approved by the Board/ET from \$5,000 to 2% of the combined annual General Fund and Capital Fund budgets.
 - One - within section 3.2 of the Bylaws that describes how the Board acts on behalf of the Congregation – to acknowledge that the Board takes “considered public action as guided by the Mission, which it reports to the Congregation.”

There was no discussion of the proposed technical changes or of the substantive financial change. The change about the Board taking considered public action

elicited an objection from Malcolm FitzPatrick to the Board setting goals and policies on behalf of the Congregation and then taking action but not engaging the Congregation in setting those goals/policies. He considers this undemocratic.

Steve Gold (*who, with Jen Matthews, led the Board's work on the Bylaws*) invited Malcom to submit to the Board in the future suggestions for changes to the goal-setting process. He invited other suggestions for Bylaw changes, too.

Some suggestions made were:

- Kenric Kite - Change the gender language to be more inclusive, non-binary, by using "they, their" instead of "him" or "her."
- Sarah Franklin – Define and specify fiscal vs. calendar years.
- Stuart Russo-Savage – Insert an article 1.1 that says "UCM" means the "Unitarian Church of Montpelier."

Being made at the Annual Meeting, these suggestions were not included in the Warning giving notice of proposed changes to the Bylaws so could not be voted upon now.

The vote to approve the proposed (and Warned) slate of Bylaw changes passed by well over 2/3.

11. *Affirmation of 5 UCM Delegates to the June 18-22, 2025 Annual UUA General Assembly (GA).* (Refer to slide #45.) Ansel spoke about GA, saying Rev. Verdis Robinson will be leading the GA Choir this year. She introduced the following people willing to serve as UCM's delegates to this GA:

- a. *Jen Matthews.*
- b. *Emily Seiffert.*
- c. *Steve August.*
- d. *Judith Hinds (attending remotely).*
- e. *Steve Grunewald (attending remotely).*

Ansel invited us to affirm them as our delegates and charge them to uphold UCM's mission. Done!

12. *Recognition of Paid Staff and Volunteers.* Rev. Joan recognized and thanked paid staff Emily Seifert, Elaine Ball, Caitlin Fauton, Donia Prince, Jason Kass, Eliza Thomas, Bryce Douglass, and Becky Webber and MANY volunteers! Ones leaving active committee leadership: Sarah Franklin, Maryann Ludlow, Peter Thoms, Mary Jane Ohlson, Dawn Evans, Fran Dodd (Treasurer), Steve Grunewald, Brenda Bean. Then the Board and ET officially thanked Joan!

13. *Conduct Any Other New Business.* None.

14. *Adjourn.* Liz Benjamin moved and Emily Seiffert seconded to **adjourn. Approved.**

**Minister's Annual Report
Unitarian Church of Montpelier
2025-2026**

Summary of the Year

“Meeting the Moment” was the overarching theme for the year at UCM. This theme mirrored the UUA’s General Assembly 2025 theme and a focus across our denomination. And, what a moment we are in. As a religious community, we are sustaining the practices of community-building, service, and spiritual nourishment that support our resilience, while also finding new ways to respond lovingly and courageously to immediate needs in our community and to growing authoritarianism more broadly.

It is notable that UCM celebrated the 160th anniversary of the completion and dedication of the church building this year. I believe that one of the most important things we can do in this moment is tend to our UCM community and support our health and vitality as a religious institution that is focused on living our values.

This past year brought continued transitions in our staff team. With Eliza Thomas’s anticipated retirement at the end of the 2025-2026 church year, we searched for a new Accompanist and brought Sara Huff onto our staff team. Brian Prendergast joined the team as UCM’s second Sexton at the end of May 2025. In January 2026, Donia Prince announced her retirement at the end of this church year. We formed a Music Director Search Committee and hired Matthew Torrez, who will begin on July 1.

We joined the Montpelier Faith Collaboration, an initiative to open dialogue among Montpelier’s faith communities, especially those impacted by the 2023 flood, about potential collaborations and sharing of resources. These collaborative conversations align with the work of the Climate Resilience Study Group and the proposed vision statement for UCM. I look forward to seeing where this goes.

Finally, I had a wonderful time at the Joy in Motion: Community Dance and Art Party in late April. I hope that we’ll continue to offer opportunities like this for connection and joy!

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

Highlights from Select Areas of Ministry

Worship

This year's themes were all connected to the overarching theme of "Meeting the Moment." Our average in-person attendance through the end of April was 140 (children and adults), with an additional 26 people (on average) joining the live stream each Sunday. A nine-person team of Worship Associates assisted in leading worship services, with tech support from AV Operator Bryce Douglass and the Production Committee.

Pastoral Care

During the past church year, we lost two church members: Harris Webster (d. June 18) and Tina Ruth (d. July 26). We utilized \$6,025 of our Care Fund to support people in our community with rent and motel rooms, electricity and phone bills, car repairs, and financial hardship. This is \$4,000 more than in the previous year.

Membership

We welcomed 9 new people into membership and certified a membership number of 243 with the UUA in February 2026. Among our new members are two youth under 18 and one young adult who grew up in the church.

Spiritual Exploration

For the second year, we hosted a weeklong summer camp in August, which was a great success. A new model for Sunday morning SE was rolled out that is more child-centered and experientially-based, and we offered Our Whole Lives for 4-6th graders.

On the adult side of spiritual exploration, church volunteers have provided leadership and support for continued Chalice Circle offerings as well as some new, one-time offerings based on a survey conducted in the fall of 2025.

Service and Prophetic Ministry

In June of 2025, the Monday Community Lunch joined Christ Church, Bethany, and Trinity in moving to Trinity Methodist Church as the new permanent location for the newly formed Community Table. On July 1, 2025, Community Lunch celebrated 10 years of the UCM-led initiative to offer a free meal every Monday. During the summer months, I hosted a training series based on Public Citizen's webinars, "Rise for Freedom," which addressed how to take action to oppose authoritarianism. Our support for unsheltered neighbors continued with UCM offering space to Capstone Community Action to operate an overflow shelter from mid-January through the end of May, while the emergency cold weather shelter moved to City Hall.

Congregational Life Coordinator, Elaine Ball, and I collaborated to make UCM available as a space for a Transgender Day of Remembrance gathering in November 2025. Members of the trans/queer community in central Vermont planned the event, which included a potluck, ritual stations, and the reading of names. About two dozen people attended.

UCM members and friends were active in pro-democracy demonstrations at the State House, including one of our youth participating as a featured speaker. In consultation with the Governing Board, I traveled to Minneapolis/St. Paul, during an intense period of immigration enforcement activity, as part of a delegation from Vermont Interfaith Action.

Denominational Activities

Following last year's UCM Annual Meeting, five delegates participated in the UUA General Assembly, three in person in Baltimore, MD, and two online. You can [read their reports here](#). We also sent one delegate to the Vermont-Quebec UU Convention.

My duties as one of the UUA Ambassadors to the UU Church of the Philippines continue, though responsibilities have been lighter this year.

Conclusion

As I approach the completion of eleven years of service as your minister, I remain grateful for this calling and hopeful for the vital ministry we continue to offer. I continue to tell my colleagues and people in our community what a caring and compassionate congregation I have the privilege to serve. I have also witnessed us deepening our relationships and partnerships with community groups and other faith institutions.

This dovetails nicely with the focus of my Doctor of Ministry project and degree program, which I hope to conclude in the spring of 2027. Be on the lookout for more information about this and how you can participate. Finally, I anticipate taking a two-month sabbatical in the early part of 2027 to focus on my D.Min. thesis. The Board and I will keep the congregation updated on these plans.

I am truly blessed to serve as your Minister. Your continued creativity, openness, caring, and courage are inspiring. Thank you for being my partner in ministry.

With gratitude,



Rev. Joan Javier-Duval
Submitted May 8, 2026

Report from the Governing Board

At the start of the 2025-26 church year, the Board reflected on the successes and challenges during the last church year, imagined what the coming church year might entail, and then determined how we might best guide UCM toward the future.

This has been a year of listening carefully to what our congregation values, hopes for, and needs from UCM as we navigate a challenging and uncertain moment in our shared life as a community and as a nation.

The UCM Governing Board entered this church year with two clear priorities: to complete a meaningful long-term visioning process, and to tend to the financial health and sustainability of our congregation. We are glad to report that we have made real progress on both fronts, and that the foundation we've built together this year will serve UCM well in the years ahead.

We are deeply grateful to every member and friend who participated in this process — your honesty, your hope, and your investment in UCM's future made this work possible.

Priority 1: Strategic Long-Term Visioning & Planning

How We Listened

Over the course of this church year, the board led a multiphase visioning process that engaged between 100 and 150 members, friends, staff, and lay leaders. We wanted to hear from as many voices as possible — not just those who are most active in congregational life — and we designed the process with that breadth in mind.

The phases of our listening process included:

- A Congregational Visioning Workshop, bringing together members to explore hopes and priorities together.
- A report and presentation by the Climate Resilience Study Group, ensuring our long-term thinking is grounded in our building and environmental reality.
- A feedback session with the Committee of Chairs, hearing from those who lead our congregational committees.

- A conversation with UCM Staff, centering the perspectives of those who do the day-to-day work of the church.
- A session with Parents and Caregivers, whose investment in UCM's future for their children offered a distinctive and vital perspective.
- A Congregational Survey, open to all, which generated a rich and wide-ranging body of input.

What We Heard

Across all of these conversations, several consistent themes emerged. Members and friends told us that UCM matters to them as a place of spiritual nourishment and genuine respite from a turbulent world — a community where they feel held and can tend to their inner lives. They told us how much belonging here means to them, and how deeply they want UCM to be a place where everyone truly feels welcome. They spoke with real passion about our service work — Community Lunch, our shelter partnerships, our leadership in the Montpelier community — and about the importance of doing that work in ways that are spiritually grounded and sustainable for volunteers. And they told us they want UCM to be resilient: financially, structurally, and in terms of the partnerships and governance that will carry us forward.

Alongside these shared hopes, we also heard honest concerns — about capacity, about our building and its flood vulnerability, about how we make room for younger generations and for people of color, and about how we sustain the intimate, values-driven community that makes UCM special even as we hope to grow.

Where We Are Now

Drawing on everything we heard, the board has drafted a new vision statement for UCM, which will be brought to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting. We have also developed a Strategic Intentions document — a framework that translates our congregational values and priorities into concrete areas of focus for the years ahead.

This document is a solid draft, and we are actively seeking your input. It belongs to all of us, and we want your voice in shaping it before it is finalized. Watch for announcements about how and when to engage with the draft later this year — your feedback is not just welcome, it is essential.

Priority 2: Financial Health & Long-Term Sustainability

Tending to UCM's financial health has been a consistent thread throughout this year. Like

many congregations, we are navigating real constraints — costs have risen, and the demands on our community's generosity are significant. We want to be honest with you about that reality, while also sharing our confidence that UCM is on stable ground.

This year, we were excited to organize the second annual art auction fundraiser, which generated both significant funds and wonderful congregational engagement – and paired so wonderfully with the “Joy in Motion” celebration! We were glad to support the Stewardship Committee's tireless campaign work, offering feedback and conducting individual outreach to reinforce how vital our collective financial commitment is to sustaining UCM's mission. We also worked closely with the Executive Team throughout the budget drafting process to ensure that our spending reflects our values while remaining within the bounds of what our community can sustain.

The board remains committed to making decisions that honor both our present needs and our long-term mission. We are grateful for the continued generosity of this congregation, which makes everything we do possible.

In addition to these primary goals, the Board also completed other tasks important to the governance and operations of UCM:

- We advised and provided leadership when necessary to the kitchen renovation team (see below for a more detailed update on this work).
- Each month we reviewed and monitored our compliance with the UCM Governing Board Policies.
- We partnered closely with the Executive Team to ensure various needs were met as UCM provided temporary shelter space in the Vestry.

Overall, the UCM Board made significant progress in achieving our priorities for the 2025-26 church year, while remaining accountable to the congregation and acting responsibly with shared assets. The Board looks forward to building on this progress in the coming year, as we welcome two new Board members to the team.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the 2026-27 church year, our work is clear: bring the vision to life. That means sharing the draft vision statement and Strategic Intentions document with the congregation, gathering your feedback, and moving toward adoption. It means beginning to translate our intentions into concrete goals and actions. And it means continuing to tend carefully to the financial and organizational foundations that make everything else possible.

Our Journey toward Climate Resilience

In January, the Climate Resilience Study Group (CRSG) presented its final report, which identifies and examines options for our future facilities that will enable us to fulfill our mission in anticipation of ever-increasing climate change. This dedicated group spent 2025 conducting research on and gathering perspectives from experts in our region about five options to address the climate challenges we face. These five options came from the congregation after the 2023 flood. The CRSG has created a document that clearly lays out these five options for UCM to discuss and deliberate, and ultimately decide on the best course of action. Later this year, the congregation will have the opportunity to objectively review the CRSG report, discuss its findings in different forums, and then make a collective decision about what action to take to become a climate-resilient congregation.

Acknowledgments

This year's work was only possible because of the dedication of so many people. Thank you to everyone who participated in the visioning process — in workshops, feedback sessions, and the congregational survey. Your willingness to reflect honestly and hopefully on UCM's future is a profound act of love for this community.

Thank you to our staff, whose commitment to UCM's mission sustains everything we do. Thank you to our committee chairs and lay leaders, who carry so much of the ongoing work of congregational life. And thank you to Rev. Joan, whose leadership and pastoral presence are among UCM's greatest gifts.

With gratitude,

The UCM Governing Board

Jeremy Beaudry (President), Emily Seiffert (Vice-President), Ansel Ploog (Financial Officer), Jen Matthews (Secretary), Steve Gold, Katie Spring, Susan Koch

Addendum: Kitchen Renovation Update

The kitchen renovation project has reached an important milestone. Engineering work is now underway, with construction documents expected to be completed by June 1. Once in hand, those documents will be submitted to the city for permitting and released to contractors for competitive bidding — with a goal of having all bids, pricing, and permits finalized by mid-June.

The renovation scope includes both the main kitchen work and a wheelchair ramp addition, which will be priced separately as an alternate bid item. Equipment procurement is proceeding on a parallel track: commercial-grade appliances are being competitively priced through local vendors, and specialty kitchen equipment — including stainless steel tables, sinks, and related fixtures — is being sourced through an established kitchen supply partner. Contractor bids will cover installation of both, though the equipment itself will be procured independently.

The equipment has been specified for commercial kitchen use, meaning it will be durable, flexible, and flood-damage resistant — an important consideration given UCM's building vulnerability. A list of potential general contractors is being developed to ensure at least three competitive bids.

Many thanks to the diligent and ongoing work of the UCM Kitchen Renovation team: Barbara Conrey, Sandal Cate, Scott Hess, Jason Kass, Janet Poeton, Donna Russo-Savage, Stuart Russo-Savage, Albert Sabatini - the Board greatly appreciates their service!



Susan has been a member of the UCM community for over 30 years, and calls UCM her spiritual home. Over three decades, she has witnessed the church's growth and remains deeply committed to its mission and its future.

She brings leadership experience to the Board, having served from 2009 to 2014. During this period, Susan served as Co-President of the Governing Board alongside Paul Ohlson, providing steady lay leadership during a significant era of transition and growth. Her previous tenure was defined by a commitment to clear governance, fiscal responsibility, and fostering a spirit of collaboration between the board, the ministry, and the congregation.

Most recently, Susan has served as a 2025 Board member and collaborated with the Stewardship Team to support the 2026 Stewardship Campaign, contributing to the "Gratitude Call" initiative and the planning of the Joy in Motion: Community Dance Party & Art Auction.

Susan's return to the Board is motivated by a desire to bridge UCM's rich history with its current vibrant energy. She believes in the power of saying "yes" to one another and is eager to continue with the Governing Board and supports a culture of compassion and generosity.

Emily A. Seiffert joined UCM in 2019, has served on the UCM Board since 2024 (vice president since 2025), 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.





Jen Matthews started attending UCM in 2015. Since that time she has become a member, joined the choir and has served on the UCM board since 2023 and as board secretary since 2024. Outside of UCM, Jen works as an occupational therapist where she gets to spend her days helping geriatric patients live to their fullest potential, especially those with dementia. In her spare time Jen loves spending time with her family and cats. Jen also loves singing; singing for joy, singing for health and singing as a spiritual practice. In addition to UCM's choir, Jen sings with the Green Mountain Gospel Choir and the Montpelier Community Gospel Choir where she has also served on their board since 2023. Jen and her husband, Bill, live in Montpelier.



DRAFT Vision Statement

At the Unitarian Church of Montpelier, love is at the center of all we do:

- ***We offer spiritual nourishment and respite grounded in interdependence, pluralism, justice, transformation, generosity, and equity.***
- ***We cultivate belonging by building authentic relationships across diverse backgrounds, ages, and identities.***
- ***We pursue personal and social change, deepening our spirituality by living our values in service to one another and as stewards of the earth.***
- ***We are a resilient congregation that builds collaborative relationships with community partners and thrives through adaptation and interdependence.***

Rooted in possibility, we work together to grow a just, generous, and loving world for all.

This Vision Statement will serve as a framework for our strategic planning in the coming fall, when we will combine it with the research done by the Climate Resilience Study Group and decide on specific actions this congregation will take to be climate resilient and make our visions reality.

With gratitude,

The UCM Governing Board

Report of the Executive Team

Members Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Diane Marie, Donna Russo-Savage, and Biz Tandy; Paula Gills, ex-officio

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 set broad governing policies or goals for the Church; instead, it implements the Church's Mission.

Activities During Fiscal Year 2025-2026, the ET continued to work in coordination with the Board, the Treasurer, and the Finance Committee to ensure that financial and administrative responsibilities previously handled by the Congregational Administrator and the Treasurer were addressed through contract labor or reassignment of responsibilities within existing staff or volunteers.

A second part-time Sexton was hired, bringing the total sexton hours to 28 per month. A substitute AV Operator was hired and trained to operate the livestream on those Sundays when the primary AV Operator cannot attend.

The ET worked with staff on a significant internet connectivity upgrade, completed in March 2026, and also on improving existing audio systems in the Sanctuary.

The ET approved the Climate Action Team's recommendation to switch to biofuels to reduce the level of carbon dioxide emissions from the UCM building. The switch was attempted in December, 2025, but our current configuration could not accommodate B99 fuel in the extreme cold weather. Adjustments are expected in the future.

The ET is considering ways to improve safety at UCM, including how to address concerns arising from the building's layout, as well as options for the safety of members and visitors in connection with potential ICE encounters inside the building. The ET and staff continue to explore the potential use of panic buttons and building alarms, and the possibility of training individual members of the congregation and the congregation at-large in de-escalation techniques and active shooter protocols. The ET has also explored options for improving digital security.

The ET worked with non-profit organizations and state entities to meet an unexpected emergency need to shelter Central Vermont neighbors who find themselves without housing. Initially, the ET arranged for UCM to host an Emergency Cold Weather Shelter (for nights when the forecast was below 10 degrees), staffed by volunteers, until mid-January when operations moved to the basement of Montpelier City Hall. Beginning on January 12 and to continue every night through the morning of June 1, UCM began hosting the Winter Overflow Overnight Shelter, staffed by employees of Capstone Community Action and funded by the State of Vermont's Office of Economic Opportunity. In advance of opening UCM's doors for the shelters, the ET identified potential issues and concerns and worked with Capstone to create a Memorandum of Understanding and a network of other faith communities and entities to address them.

The ET continued to work in conjunction with the Board and subcommittees on projects and issues that remained from the July 2023 flood including assessing the need for sump pumps capable of handling large flooding events, addressing occasional leakage on sills, and supporting the planning of work on the kitchen.

The ET supported three Committee of Chairs meetings on October 29, 2025, January 20, 2026, and April 29, 2026, which were facilitated by committee chairs and provided opportunities for sharing committee accomplishments and plans, and Board and ET updates.

Beginning in December, the ET worked with the Finance Committee to prepare a proposed budget for the Board's consideration. The process entailed collaboration between the ET, the Finance Committee, the Stewardship Committee, and the Board. As has been the case in post-Covid years, difficult choices were made in producing a balanced budget for presentation at the upcoming Annual Meeting while also striving to compensate our staff fairly. The ET is grateful for each person's participation in creating the budget, and for each and every person who has made a pledge in support of the coming year's budget.

The ET continues to seek individuals to fill the Treasurer's position, most recently filled by Fran Dodd, and an ET member position that will be vacant on July 1.

FY2027 BUDGET MEMO

April 29, 2026

GENERAL FUND

Income

- 4110: Increase pledge income to \$365,500 based on the projected total pledge amount of \$380,724
- 4225: Increase Fundraiser line to \$7,500
- 4311: Include 1% LTIF contribution of \$11,100
- 4660: Cash Reserve income of \$24,777.82

TOTAL INCOME = \$482,907.82 (7.9%)

- Salary Adjustments
 - In keeping with the ET recommendation, all staff salaries are placed one step above their current placement in the appropriate salary range within the updated recommended ranges for FY2027, with the exception of two staff who have been employed for five years or more. The ET recommends moving these to the midpoint of their recommended ranges. Staff hourly wages increase by 2.8% and 7.3%. (Total increase of \$21,628.07 from FY26 budget.)
 - Increase hours of the Music Director position to 18 hrs/week (0.425 FTE) from 16 hrs/week. Increased salary is included in the figure above.
 - Increase total hours of Sexton positions to 10 hrs/week from 28 hrs/month.
 - **Note:** It is anticipated that the Geo Index used to determine recommended salary ranges for UCM will reach Geo Index 3 in FY28. Appropriate salary increases in FY27 will lessen the burden of the necessary increases in FY28.
- Professional development
 - UUA suggests the greater of 10% of salary or \$5,000 prorated for the Minister, Director of Spiritual Exploration, and Director of Music. Adjustments have been made to work towards this recommendation.
 - Add the cost of the accompanist attending the annual music conference as a separate line item (\$1,500). (This amount was included in the line for the Director of Music in the FY26 budget.)
 - UUA does not provide a specific recommendation for other staff. Professional Development has been raised by the COLA for the

Congregational Life Coordinator and Office and Rental Manager.

- Cafeteria Plan
 - Cafeteria plan amount increased by 19.5% to reflect the 2026 increase for UUA Health Insurance premiums. (\$4,290 increase).

TOTAL EXPENSES = \$\$482,907.82

TOTAL INCOME =\$482,907.82

NET INCOME = \$0.00

CAPITAL FUND

Income

- 4% LTIF contribution

TOTAL INCOME = \$44,400

Expenses

- \$12,065 for TBD building and grounds projects
- \$5,000 for upgrades to audio equipment in the sanctuary.
- \$1,075 for miscellaneous AV equipment maintenance and replacement
- \$11,000 for flood insurance
- \$15,260 transfer to Capital Reserves [This amount can be adjusted if other expense amounts shift in order to balance the budget.]

TOTAL EXPENSES = \$44,400

TOTAL INCOME: \$44,400

NET INCOME = \$0.00

[illegible]

	4400 · Use of Building/Resources	10,993.83	16,000.00	68.71%	16,000.00	0.0%	
	4500 · Interest on General Funds	4,898.50	6,000.00	81.64%	6,000.00	0.0%	
	4600 · Other GF Unclassified Income						
	4610 · Grants	0.00	900.00	0.0%	750.00	-16.7%	VT Quebec convention grant
	4650 · Misc rebates refunds etc				0.00		
	4660 · Other GF Unclassified Income - Cash Reserve		0.00		24,777.82		Recommended by Board
	Total 4600 · Other GF Unclassified Income	0.00	900.00	0.0%	25,527.82	2,736.4%	
	Total 4000 · GENERAL FUND INCOME	375,435.20	448,499.00	83.71%	482,907.82	7.7%	
	Total Income	375,435.20	448,499.00	83.71%	482,907.82	7.7%	
	Gross Profit	375,435.20	448,499.00	83.71%	482,907.82	7.7%	
	Expense						
	6000 · GENERAL FUND EXPENSE						
	6100 · Ministry						
	6110 · Minister Compensation						
	6112 · Minister's Salary						
	6112a · Salary	25,852.94	31,738.56	81.46%	49,736.25	56.7%	\$15,000 reduction in Housing Allowance moved to Salary. Hourly rate increase of 3.1%.
	Total 6112 · Minister's Salary	25,852.94	31,738.56	81.46%	49,736.25	56.7%	
	6113 · In lieu of FICA - Minister	5,550.30	7,400.50	75.0%	7,629.82	3.1%	
	6114 · Retirement						
	6114A · UCM 10% Contribution	7,081.17	9,673.86	73.2%	9,973.63	3.1%	
	6114B · UCM 2% Match	1,424.39	1,934.77	73.62%	1,994.73	3.1%	
	Total 6114 · Retirement	8,505.56	11,608.63	73.27%	11,968.35	3.1%	
	6115 · Housing Allowance	44,999.94	65,000.00	69.23%	50,000.00	-23.1%	Requested reduction from Minister.
	6116 · Benefits						
	6116a · Life/Disab Insurance	1,313.11	1,389.00	94.54%	1,389.00	0.0%	
							19.5% Increase reflective of increase in UUA Health Insurance Plan premiums for 2026
	6116e · Cafeteria Plan	2,200.02	4,400.00	50.0%	5,258.00	19.5%	
	6116 · Benefits - Other	0.00	0.00	0.0%			
	Total 6116 · Benefits	3,513.13	5,789.00	60.69%	6,647.00	14.8%	
	6118 · Minister's Professional	9,491.11	7,500.00	126.55%	8,500.00	13.3%	For FY26, the Minister took a salary reduction of \$1,000 to add \$1,000 to her professional development funds for a total of \$8,500.

	Total 6110 - Minister Compensation	97,912.98	129,036.69	75.88%	134,481.42	4.2%	
	Total 6100 - Ministry	97,912.98	129,036.69	75.88%	134,481.42	4.2%	
	<u>6200 - Spiritual Exploration</u>						
	6210 - LSE Director Compensation						
	6212 - Salary	29,471.80	37,562.50	78.46%	39,162.50	4.3%	25 hours/week
	6214 - Retirement						
	6214a - UCM 10% Retirement Contribution	2,947.18	3,756.25	78.46%	3,916.25	4.3%	
	6214b - UCM 2% Retirement Match	589.40	751.25	78.46%	783.25	4.3%	
	Total 6214 - Retirement	3,536.58	4,507.50	78.46%	4,699.50	4.3%	
	6216 - Benefits						
							19.5% increase reflective of increase in UUA Health Insurance Plan premiums for 2026
	6216e - Cafeteria Plan	4,980.84	4,400.00	113.2%	5,258.00	19.5%	
	Total 6216 - Benefits	4,980.84	4,400.00	113.2%	5,258.00	19.5%	
	6218 - Professional Development	1,517.99	3,000.00	50.6%	3,916.00	30.5%	ET recommendation to align with UUA recommendations
	Total 6210 - LSE Director Compensation	39,507.21	49,470.00	79.86%	53,036.00	7.2%	
	6220 - Teachers and Childcare						
	6221 - Childcare	0.00	700.00	0.0%	681.00	-2.7%	
	6222 - Nursery	1,065.96	2,138.00	49.86%	2,501.00	17.0%	
	6223 - Teacher Training	814.20	1,000.00	81.42%	1,000.00	0.0%	
	Total 6220 - Teachers and Childcare	1,880.16	3,838.00	48.99%	4,182.00	9.0%	
	6230 - Youth Programs						
	6232 - Bridging	0.00	250.00	0.0%	250.00	0.0%	
	6233 - Coming of Age/OWL	-156.00	500.00	-31.2%	500.00	0.0%	
	6239 - HS Youth Group	152.50	600.00	25.42%	1,000.00	66.7%	
	Total 6230 - Youth Programs	-3.50	1,350.00	-0.26%	1,750.00	29.6%	
	6250 - Supplies/necessities	159.23	1,200.00	13.27%	1,200.00	0.0%	
	6255 - Curriculum	372.97	800.00	46.62%	350.00	-56.3%	
	## Family Ministry				800.00		
	## Summer Camp				3,000.00		
	6260 - Adult Spiritual Exploration	195.50	1,300.00	15.04%	800.00	-38.5%	
	Total 6200 - Spiritual Exploration	42,111.57	57,958.00	72.66%	65,118.00	12.4%	
	<u>6300 - Music</u>						
	6310 - Music Director Compensation						
	6312 - Salary	18,030.06	24,040.00	75.0%	27,585.00	14.7%	18 hours/week. Salary figure offered and accepted.

[illegible]

	6434 · Copier Paper	284.70	560.00	50.84%	500.00	-10.7%	
	6435 · Printing	147.09	400.00	36.77%	460.00	15.0%	
	6436 · Supplies	27.18	150.00	18.12%	150.00	0.0%	
	6440 · Postage	61.00	250.00	24.4%	250.00	0.0%	
							We switched from Comcast to Fidium, which is \$150 or less per month.
	6450 · Telecommunications	3,228.28	4,500.00	71.74%	2,000.00	-55.6%	
	6455 · Website						
	6455.1 · Online Contrib Fees	1,168.92	2,000.00	58.45%	1,800.00	-10.0%	
	6455.2 · Web Services	1,355.37	2,400.00	56.47%	2,500.00	4.2%	
	Total 6455 · Website	2,524.29	4,400.00	57.37%	4,300.00	-2.3%	
	6460 · Equipment						
	6461 · Hardware	6,467.38	1,650.00	391.96%	3,500.00	112.1%	New Meeting Owl w/extra mic \$1,300; New computers
	6462 · Software	7.48	1,700.00	0.44%	2,353.00	38.4%	Quickbooks, Microsoft Suite, and Notebird
	Total 6460 · Equipment	6,474.86	3,350.00	193.28%	5,853.00	74.7%	
	6480 · Banking						
	6481 · Bank Fees	184.99	50.00	369.98%	100.00	100.0%	
	6482 · Supplies	0.00	100.00	0.0%	250.00	150.0%	Will need paper checks in FY27 estimated: \$60/mo (\$720) plus ~\$36 per employee per year (~\$400)
	6484 · Payroll Subscription	400.00	600.00	66.67%	1,120.00	86.7%	
	Total 6480 · Banking	584.99	750.00	78.0%	1,470.00	96.0%	
	6483 · Staff Travel	111.29		100.0%			
	6491 · Contracted Professional Service	5,303.55	11,000.00	48.21%	11,000.00	0.0%	
	6492 · Contracted Tech Support	1,526.25	780.00	195.67%	1,000.00	28.2%	
	6499 · Administration - Other	1,109.46	2,000.00	55.47%	1,500.00	-25.0%	FSA management; Job advertising; Misc.
	Total 6400 · Administration	53,123.88	68,844.45	77.16%	76,401.13	11.0%	
	6500 · Building						
	6510 · Sexton Compensation						
	6512 · Sexton Wages	5,905.04	6,810.00	86.71%	9,468.00	39.0%	Total hours for FY27 have been increased to 10 hrs/week or 520 total hours for the year to be split between two employees. Hourly rate increase of 4.3%.
	Total 6510 · Sexton Compensation	5,905.04	6,810.00	86.71%	9,468.00	39.0%	
	6522 · Cleaning service	4,500.00	8,550.00	52.63%	7,500.00	-12.3%	
	6524 · Snow/Lawns	417.84	400.00	104.46%	500.00	25.0%	

[illegible]

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual - General Funds
 July 2024 through June 2025

	<u>Jul '24 - J...</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>% of Bud...</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
4000 · GENERAL FUND INCOME			
4100 · Contributions Income			
4110 · Pledges - Current Year	355,867.28	348,130.35	102.2%
4111 · Pledges- Prior Year	10,322.51	0.00	100.0%
4120 · Checks & Online Gifts	15,663.09	3,000.00	522.1%
4121 · Pouch cash	7,457.32	5,000.00	149.1%
 4122 · Donations to Community Pouch			
4123 · Christmas Eve	0.00	900.00	0.0%
4122 · Donatons to Community Pouch - ...	18,208.41	12,000.00	151.7%
 Total 4122 · Donations to Community Pouch	18,208.41	12,900.00	141.2%
 4130 · Coffee/Tea Table	875.09	300.00	291.7%
 Total 4100 · Contributions Income	408,393.70	369,330.35	110.6%
 4200 · Fund Raising			
4210 · Holiday Fair	9,415.54	12,000.00	78.5%
 4225 · Fund Raiser	7,466.01	10,000.00	74.7%
4235 · Yard/Rummage Sale	2,775.10	2,000.00	138.8%
4240 · Musical Events	40.61		
4260 · Clarke Lectures	1,835.42	2,500.00	73.4%
 Total 4200 · Fund Raising	21,532.68	26,500.00	81.3%
 4300 · Income from outside funds			
4311 · LTIF Transfers for Budget	0.00	9,177.00	0.0%
4313 · Transfer from Keve	0.00	1,760.00	0.0%
4320 · from Wyman Trust	4,067.77	4,112.00	98.9%
4360 · Interest from outside funds	142.60		
4300 · Income from outside funds - Other	0.00	0.00	0.0%
 Total 4300 · Income from outside funds	4,210.37	15,049.00	28.0%
 4400 · Use of Building/Resources	16,505.00	13,000.00	127.0%
4500 · Interest on General Funds	162.26	6,000.00	2.7%
4600 · Other GF Unclassified Income			
4610 · Grants	697.24	1,650.00	42.3%
4650 · Misc rebates refunds etc	0.00	40.00	0.0%
4600 · Other GF Unclassified Income - Other	0.00	500.00	0.0%
 Total 4600 · Other GF Unclassified Income	697.24	2,190.00	31.8%
 Total 4000 · GENERAL FUND INCOME	451,501.25	432,069.35	104.5%
 Total Income	451,501.25	432,069.35	104.5%
 Gross Profit	451,501.25	432,069.35	104.5%
 Expense			
6000 · GENERAL FUND EXPENSE			
6100 · Ministry			
6110 · Minister Compensation			

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual - General Funds
 July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - J...	Budget	% of Bud...
6112 · Minister's Salary			
6112a · Salary	27,389.04	27,379.08	100.0%
Total 6112 · Minister's Salary	27,389.04	27,379.08	100.0%
6113 · In lieu of FICA - Minister	7,067.04	7,067.00	100.0%
6114 · Retirement			
6114A · UCM 10% Contribution	9,238.86	6,928.43	133.3%
6114B · UCM 2% Match	1,847.76	1,847.58	100.0%
Total 6114 · Retirement	11,086.62	8,776.01	126.3%
6115 · Housing Allowance	64,999.92	65,000.00	100.0%
6116 · Benefits			
6116a · Life/Disab Insurance	1,348.20	1,389.00	97.1%
6116e · Cafeteria Plan	0.00	0.00	0.0%
6116 · Benefits - Other	0.00	0.00	0.0%
Total 6116 · Benefits	1,348.20	1,389.00	97.1%
6118 · Minister's Professional	8,500.20	8,500.00	100.0%
Total 6110 · Minister Compensation	120,391.02	118,111.09	101.9%
Total 6100 · Ministry	120,391.02	118,111.09	101.9%
6200 · Religious Education			
6210 · LSE Director Compensation			
6212 · Salary	32,499.03	32,245.36	100.8%
6214 · Retirement			
6214a · UCM 10% Retirement Contribution	121.68	1,209.20	10.1%
6214b · UCM 2% Retirement Match	0.00	322.45	0.0%
Total 6214 · Retirement	121.68	1,531.65	7.9%
6216 · Benefits			
6216d · Health Insurance	2,547.77	8,778.41	29.0%
Total 6216 · Benefits	2,547.77	8,778.41	29.0%
6218 · Professional Development	1,874.85	2,000.00	93.7%
Total 6210 · LSE Director Compensation	37,043.33	44,555.42	83.1%
6220 · Teachers and Childcare			
6221 · Childcare	0.00	0.00	0.0%
6222 · Nursery	1,483.06	2,838.00	52.3%
6223 · Teacher Training	793.86	1,000.00	79.4%
Total 6220 · Teachers and Childcare	2,276.92	3,838.00	59.3%
6230 · Youth Programs			
6232 · Bridging	0.00	250.00	0.0%
6233 · Coming of Age/OWL	818.65	1,000.00	81.9%
6239 · HS Youth Group	273.48	600.00	45.6%
Total 6230 · Youth Programs	1,092.13	1,850.00	59.0%

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual - General Funds
July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - J...	Budget	% of Bud...
6250 · Supplies/necessities	2,335.82	1,200.00	194.7%
6255 · Curriculum	634.60	800.00	79.3%
6260 · Adult Spiritual Exploration	398.91	1,400.00	28.5%
Total 6200 · Religious Education	43,781.71	53,643.42	81.6%
6300 · Music			
6310 · Music Director Compensation			
6312 · Salary	22,255.44	22,255.53	100.0%
6314 · Retirement			
6314A · UCM 10%Retirement Contribution	2,225.53	1,869.17	133.3%
6314b · Retirement 2% Match	445.15	445.11	100.0%
Total 6314 · Retirement	2,670.68	2,114.28	126.3%
6316e · Cafeteria Plan Benefit	0.00	0.00	0.0%
6318 · Professional Development	1,780.49	1,700.00	104.7%
Total 6310 · Music Director Compensation	26,706.61	26,069.81	102.4%
6322 · Accompanist	9,773.60	9,573.66	102.1%
6330 · Organ/Piano Tuning	966.50	1,200.00	80.5%
6340 · Sheet Music	1,505.13	1,100.00	136.8%
6350 · Special Music	1,070.00	1,100.00	97.3%
6360 · Professional memberships	90.00	100.00	90.0%
6399 · Music - Other	194.50		
Total 6300 · Music	40,306.34	39,143.47	103.0%
6400 · Administration			
6410 · Cong. Admin. Compensation			
6412 · Salary	0.00	49,811.67	0.0%
6414a · UCM 10% Retirement Contribution	1,386.00	1,867.94	74.2%
6414b · UCM 2% Retirement Match	277.20	498.12	55.6%
6416 · Benefits			
6416d · Health Insurance	0.00	9,109.24	0.0%
Total 6416 · Benefits	0.00	9,109.24	0.0%
6418 · Professional Development	0.00	400.00	0.0%
Total 6410 · Cong. Admin. Compensation	1,663.20	61,686.97	2.7%
6420 · Office/Rental Manager Compensat			
6422 · Office/Rental Manager Salary	27,720.00	21,540.73	128.7%
6424A · UCM 10% Retirement Contribution	1,386.00	1,615.55	85.8%
6424B · UCM 2% Retirement Match	277.20	430.81	64.3%
6426e · Cafeteria Plan Benefit	0.00	0.00	0.0%
6428 · Professional Development	175.00	200.00	87.5%
Total 6420 · Office/Rental Manager Compe...	29,558.20	23,787.09	124.3%
6430 · Copier			
6431 · Copier Lease	1,639.93	1,500.00	109.3%
6432 · Copier Maintenance	348.27	472.50	73.7%

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual - General Funds
 July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - J...	Budget	% of Bud...
Total 6430 - Copier	1,988.20	1,972.50	100.8%
6434 - Copier Paper	311.70	500.00	62.3%
6435 - Printing	433.03	250.00	173.2%
6436 - Supplies	250.65	132.00	189.9%
6440 - Postage	103.86	300.00	34.6%
6450 - Telecommunications	5,069.23	4,100.00	123.6%
6455 - Website			
6455.1 - Online Contrib Fees	2,203.68	1,227.45	179.5%
6455.2 - Web Services	1,368.67	1,155.00	118.5%
Total 6455 - Website	3,572.35	2,382.45	149.9%
6460 - Equipment			
6461 - Hardware	493.93	0.00	100.0%
6462 - Software	2,543.74	1,800.00	141.3%
6460 - Equipment - Other	70.00	1,200.00	5.8%
Total 6460 - Equipment	3,107.67	3,000.00	103.6%
6480 - Banking			
6481 - Bank Fees	163.64	117.85	138.9%
6482 - Supplies	92.37	200.00	46.2%
6484 - Payroll Subscription	600.00	912.66	65.7%
Total 6480 - Banking	856.01	1,230.51	69.6%
6491 - Contracted Professional Service	11,158.80	1,325.00	842.2%
6492 - Contracted Tech Support	60.00	1,000.00	6.0%
6499 - Administration - Other	566.05	4,500.00	12.6%
Total 6400 - Administration	58,698.95	106,166.52	55.3%
6500 - Building			
6510 - Sexton Compensation			
6512 - Sexton Wages	1,165.50		
6510 - Sexton Compensation - Other	0.00	0.00	0.0%
Total 6510 - Sexton Compensation	1,165.50	0.00	100.0%
6515 - Contracted Maintenance	0.00	3,000.00	0.0%
6522 - Cleaning service	6,862.50	8,505.00	80.7%
6524 - Snow/Lawns	522.72	400.00	130.7%
6526 - Rubbish Removal	1,300.95	1,300.00	100.1%
6527 - COVID-19 Related	188.61	200.00	94.3%
6530 - Fuel Oil	8,005.67	8,000.00	100.1%
6540 - Electricity	4,522.84	3,900.00	116.0%
6550 - Water/Sewer	1,710.38	1,600.00	106.9%
6560 - Custodial Supplies	1,085.62	800.00	135.7%
6565 - Fire alarm test	436.00	610.00	71.5%
6566 - Furnace Cleaning/inspection	341.99	450.00	76.0%
6568 - Fire Alarm Monitoring	571.20	571.00	100.0%
6571 - Property Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.0%
6573 - Elevator Inspection	375.00	300.00	125.0%

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual - General Funds
 July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - J...	Budget	% of Bud...
Total 6500 · Building	27,088.98	29,636.00	91.4%
6600 · Program expenses			
6610 · Membership/Extension	702.24	700.00	100.3%
6611 · Welcoming Congregation	0.00	100.00	0.0%
6612 · Memb. Coordinator Compensation			
6612-A · Memb. Coordinator Salary	20,585.52	20,585.51	100.0%
6614 · Retirement			
6614A · UCM Retirement Contribution	2,058.63	1,543.91	133.3%
6614B · UCM 2% Retirement Match	411.66	411.71	100.0%
Total 6614 · Retirement	2,470.29	1,955.62	126.3%
6617e · Cafeteria Plan	0.00	0.00	0.0%
6618 · Professional Development	1,462.42	1,250.00	117.0%
Total 6612 · Memb. Coordinator Compensa...	24,518.23	23,791.13	103.1%
6622 · Donations to Community Pouch	18,050.42	12,900.00	139.9%
6625 · Communications Comm.	409.99	400.00	102.5%
6630 · Worship/Arts	3,358.76	2,000.00	167.9%
6631 · Flowers	1,715.00	1,200.00	142.9%
6632 · AV Operator Wages	4,400.60	4,128.00	106.6%
6641 · UUA GA Delegate Support	1,845.97	2,000.00	92.3%
6645 · Governing Board	493.08	500.00	98.6%
6655 · Stewardship	1,354.39	2,000.00	67.7%
6660 · Racial Justice Team	404.50	500.00	80.9%
6661 · Climate Action Team	0.00	100.00	0.0%
6672 · Lay Pastoral Care	204.00	100.00	204.0%
6680 · Church Historian	0.00	900.00	0.0%
6685 · UCM Community Lunch Support	1,000.00	1,000.00	100.0%
Total 6600 · Program expenses	58,457.18	52,319.13	111.7%
6700 · Outreach/Denominational			
6720 · UUA Annual Dues	5,000.00	5,000.00	100.0%
6750 · VT Interfaith Action Committee	1,500.00	1,500.00	100.0%
6751 · Soul Matters Sharing Circle	0.00	375.00	0.0%
6755 · VT Interfaith Power & Light	200.00	200.00	100.0%
Total 6700 · Outreach/Denominational	6,700.00	7,075.00	94.7%
6800 · Other Expense			
6810 · Coffee/Tea Table	1,244.72	500.00	248.9%
6820 · Clarke Lectures	165.57	0.00	100.0%
6831 · Holiday Fair	1,879.15	3,500.00	53.7%
6890 · Miscellaneous	0.01		
Total 6800 · Other Expense	3,289.45	4,000.00	82.2%
6900 · Payroll			
6910 · Employer FICA	7,344.57	10,893.06	67.4%
6920 · Employer Medicare	1,717.67	3,190.80	53.8%
6940 · Payroll Expenses	0.00		

2:13 PM

10/02/25

Accrual Basis

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual - General Funds
July 2024 through June 2025

	<u>Jul '24 - J...</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>% of Bud...</u>
6950 · Worker's Comp. Ins.	-1,023.00	6,000.00	-17.1%
6951 · VT Childcare Contribution Tax	690.23	1,033.00	66.8%
6900 · Payroll - Other	0.00		
Total 6900 · Payroll	<u>8,729.47</u>	<u>21,116.86</u>	<u>41.3%</u>
Total 6000 · GENERAL FUND EXPENSE	<u>367,443.10</u>	<u>431,211.49</u>	<u>85.2%</u>
Total Expense	<u>367,443.10</u>	<u>431,211.49</u>	<u>85.2%</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>84,058.15</u>	<u>857.86</u>	<u>9,798.6%</u>
Net Income	<u><u>84,058.15</u></u>	<u><u>857.86</u></u>	<u><u>9,798.6%</u></u>

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual - Capital Funds
 July 2024 through June 2025

	<u>Jul '24 - ...</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>% of Bud...</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
5100 · CAPITAL FUND INCOME			
5191 · Transfer from LTIF			
5191-B · Capital - Unrestricted	36,710.84		
5191 · Transfer from LTIF - Other	0.00	36,710.84	0.0%
Total 5191 · Transfer from LTIF	36,710.84	36,710.84	100.0%
Total 5100 · CAPITAL FUND INCOME	36,710.84	36,710.84	100.0%
Total Income	36,710.84	36,710.84	100.0%
Gross Profit	36,710.84	36,710.84	100.0%
Expense			
7000 · Capital Projects			
7024-A · Building Projects 2024			
7024.01 · Misc. Building & Grou...	3,754.19	13,085.84	28.7%
Total 7024-A · Building Projects 2...	3,754.19	13,085.84	28.7%
7024B · Unbudgeted 2024			
7024.04 - AV Equipment	1,558.58	1,075.00	145.0%
Total 7024B · Unbudgeted 2024	1,558.58	1,075.00	145.0%
Total 7000 · Capital Projects	5,312.77	14,160.84	37.5%
7100 · CAPITAL FUND EXPENSE			
7101 · Flood Insurance	11,285.00	11,285.00	100.0%
7102 · Property Insurance - CF	16,883.00	11,265.00	149.9%
Total 7100 · CAPITAL FUND EXPEN...	28,168.00	22,550.00	124.9%
Total Expense	33,480.77	36,710.84	91.2%
Net Ordinary Income	3,230.07	0.00	100.0%
Net Income	<u>3,230.07</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2025

	Jun 30, 25
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1001 · CNB - Women's Alliance	5,014.43
1110 · NSB - Checking	90,350.18
1150 · NSB - UCM Community Lunch	4,954.34
1180 · NSB - FLOOD REcovery	7,172.88
1185 · NSB - PayPal Account	10.00
1201 · NSB - Investment/Brokerage A...	183,176.08
1211 · NSB - Savings GF Summer #328	20,535.51
1350 · Vt Community Loan Fund	
1350a · VCLF 0614	4,182.00
1350b · VCLF 0720-300	2,100.80
1350c · VCLF new	1,000.00
Total 1350 · Vt Community Loan Fund	7,282.80
1500 · Trust Company of Vermont	
1501 · TCV - Long Term Invested Fu...	966,647.49
1503 · TCV -Capital Reserve Fund	73,500.00
Total 1500 · Trust Company of Vermo...	1,040,147.49
1560 · TCV - Keve	42,230.17
Total Checking/Savings	1,400,873.88
Other Current Assets	
2125 · Prepaid Expense	937.92
Total Other Current Assets	937.92
Total Current Assets	1,401,811.80
Fixed Assets	
1900 · Building	
1901 · Air Quality Upgrade	339,027.21
1900 · Building - Other	138.00
Total 1900 · Building	339,165.21
Total Fixed Assets	339,165.21
TOTAL ASSETS	1,740,977.01
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2000 · Accounts Payable	21,026.37
Total Accounts Payable	21,026.37
Other Current Liabilities	
2100 · Payroll Liabilities	4,407.24
2400 · Prepaid Pledges Deferred Inc...	30,744.82

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2025

	Jun 30, 25
2500 · Deferred income	32,748.22
Total Other Current Liabilities	67,900.28
Total Current Liabilities	88,926.65
Total Liabilities	88,926.65
Equity	
3000 · Opening Bal Equity	2,878.30
3100 · Retained Earnings	1,633,021.32
Net Income	16,150.74
Total Equity	1,652,050.36
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,740,977.01

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual - Special Funds
 July 2024 through June 2025

	<u>Jul '24 - Jun 25</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
5500 · SPECIAL FUND INCOME			
5515 · Music projects	107.35		
5520 · Care Fund			
5520a · for Community outreach	-946.30		
5520b · Care Fund Congregation	-1,405.00		
5520c · Emergency Housing	21,158.08		
5520 · Care Fund - Other	5,476.23		
Total 5520 · Care Fund	24,283.01		
5523 · Bequests	2,000.00		
5525 · Targeted Gifts	-19,050.00		
5560 · RE Special Fund Income	-879.34		
5570 · LTIF			
5571 · LTIF Capital Appreciation	49,524.17		
5575 · Keve Investment Return	4,190.84		
5570 · LTIF - Other	15,828.37		
Total 5570 · LTIF	69,543.38		
5585 · Sabbatical Reserve	-5,000.00		
5599 · Other income - non GF	1,988.63		
Total 5500 · SPECIAL FUND INCOME	72,993.03		
5750 · Donor Based Flood Recovery	10,000.00		
5800 · Comm. Lunch Donations thru ...	4,643.03		
5901 · Comm. Lunch Income (own ac...	6,741.25		
5902 · Women's Alliance Income	6,045.86		
Total Income	100,423.17		
Gross Profit	100,423.17		
Expense			
7500 · SPECIAL FUND EXPENSE			
7515 · Music projects	107.35		
7520 · Care Fund	3,019.54		
7522 · Care Fund Emergency Housing	21,158.08		
7525 · Targeted Gift	950.00		
7560 · RE Special Fund			
7561 · RE Special Supplies	347.55		
7563 · RE Special Program	152.00		
7564 · RE Special Fund Personnell	2,916.80		
7560 · RE Special Fund - Other	224.00		
Total 7560 · RE Special Fund	3,640.35		
7570 · LTIF Expense			
7573 · LTIF trf to Capital	36,710.84		
Total 7570 · LTIF Expense	36,710.84		

The Unitarian Church of Montpelier
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual - Special Funds
July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - Jun 25	Budget	% of Budget
7599 · Other expense - non GF	9,835.80		
Total 7500 · SPECIAL FUND EXPENSE	75,421.96		
7800 · Comm. Lunch Donation pass t...	2,660.10		
7901 · Comm. Lunch Expense (own a...	11,641.83		
7902 · Women's Alliance Expense	9,159.84		
Total Expense	98,883.73		
Net Ordinary Income	1,539.44		
Net Income	1,539.44	0.00	100.0%

Annual Reports 2025-2026

Report of the Caring Network

The Caring Network had 12 requests for service since the last report, and three new members came on board. There was a significant variety of requests outside of the customary meals and ride needs. I like to think that our church community is close enough that, at times when these kinds of things come up, they get handled within the congregation without any formal request to the network. Here is a snapshot of our responses:

- I worked with Mhairi Paget, who heads the Care Fund, to help someone with a rental payment and also help someone at a shelter needing support.
- I received a request from a woman overseas who is a close friend of someone local. She was very concerned about her having enough food and medical assistance, as she is disabled and appeared to be in crisis. We worked together to assess the situation, and it turned out that there was an extended family member who was able to intervene.
- There was a request for help with meal preparation.
- There was a request from a couple who had run out of motel shelter time. Various resources were recommended.
- Another rental payment request came in from a couple with an infant while dealing with an injury and not able to work. Various community resources were recommended in their area.
- A CVRAN family was in need of meals in their initial days of transition.
- A social worker reached out for a client in need of funds to purchase glasses as well as needing some meal support. The Care Fund received the request for funds. The Network reached out for more information about meal support needs and provided a list of local hot meal resources in Montpelier at lunchtime as well as other possibilities.

Thanks to all of the volunteers in our network who remain ready to respond, sometimes at very short notice.

Submitted by Paula Gills, Coordinator

Report on Church Records & 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.

Vermont Quebec Universalist Unitarian Convention (VQUUC) This year’s annual grant was \$700. Peter will represent UCM at the 2026 Annual Meeting in Derby Line, on the border with Canada. VQUUC, incorporated in Vermont in 1888, includes all UU congregations in Vermont and Quebec. Since 2010, UCM has received grants from VQUUC, of \$14,565 in total, all supporting UCM’s church records and history endeavors.

Highlights of the Year

- *History of the Labyrinth on the North Lawn* Kate Duprey, a longtime UCM member who lives in North Carolina, was the force behind the labyrinth in the 1980s. She wrote a report on its origins and value last May, including this:

There are many options when reaching the center:

- *meditate*
- *do a sun salutation to the four directions, north, south, east, west*
- *express gratitude*
- *consider a problem that you want help with*
- *whatever, the choice is yours*

One exits quietly, allowing one to listen to your thoughts and “be at peace.”

- *Women’s Alliance* In November, Peter gave a presentation to the Women’s Alliance, covering a wide range of church history: its several names; architect, Thomas Silloway, who designed Vermont’s third State House (he was also a Universalist minister); an all-encompassing Timeline, created in 2008, led by Interim Minister, Marta Franagan; and looking ahead to the church’s 160th anniversary in January 2026.

- *UCM's 160th Anniversary* Claudia and Peter assisted Joan by locating sources to celebrate the 160th, including colored drawings by Sandy Vitzthum (reflecting several interiors over decades), the sermon given by Rev. Frederick Frothingham in January 1866, and material about Thomas Silloway.

We provided historical material, to complement the organ concert by Shaun Booher on April 26th, celebrating its presence at UCM for 160 years.

While in the planning stage longer than intended, we are giving attention to a six-part exhibit on Thomas Silloway's role as architect of the State House and UCM.

- *Old Books* For years, UCM has had 45 very old books, stored in the Records Office. Many had belonged to Rev. J. Edward Wright, our minister, 1869 – 1914. Sensing that they play no active role for the church, we explored potential interest in them with the Vermont Historical Society, Harvard Divinity School, and Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. Meadville accepted 12 books. In early April, we held an "Old Books Giveaway" in the vestry; another 15 books found new homes.
- *Records* In recent years, we have retained both paper (the majority) and digital records and intend, in the coming year, to explore narrowing the ratio of paper to digital, in the interest of both accessibility and of limited physical space.

Submitted by Peter Thoms

Report of the 2026 Grace Clarke Lecture Committee

Members Sandal Cate, Abby Colihan, Kathy Johnson, and Peter Watt

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 Lecture Committee met on October 22 and November 12, 2025, to plan for our 2026 series. We set the lecture dates as January 17, February 21, and March 21. Again, we hosted a dessert and beverage social followed by each lecture. Initial planning included lining up notable presenters as well as soliciting bakers and workers. We coordinated with the UCM office

(thank you, Emily!) to have tickets sold online via Breeze as well as in person during coffee hour, receiving payment in cash, checks, and credit cards. Brian Prendergast created our annual poster without charging us for his service. Thanks, Brian.

The January presenter was Sean Beckett of North Branch Nature Center talking about the ecology of wolves in the greater Yellowstone Park area. We had about 40 attendees. We coordinated with the Vestry “overnight accommodations team” as they would be having people in the building later on due to the cold temperatures.

The February presenter was Dr. Amy Seidl who had been suggested by Reverend Joan. She talked about flooding patterns in areas of Vermont and how forests and proper river design can help to alleviate flood issues. Attendance was also about 40 people.

In March we happily featured Dr. Aaron Hartmann, a member of UCM and a marine biologist now living back in Montpelier, his hometown. He is working with an interdisciplinary team on coral reef restoration and community enhancement off the coast of Madagascar. Fifty to sixty people attended.

For all events we had tasty desserts donated by several church members. Congregational Life Coordinator, Elaine Ball, provided warm mulled cider for two of the evenings. Thank you, Elaine! We charged \$14 for adults and \$5 for children to join in the social time. There was no charge for people simply attending the lecture.

Our total intake was \$1,418, and expenses were \$175 for Breeze and the social hour. Our total profit was \$1,243. The budgeted profit was \$1,350.

The main purpose of the series is for ecological education and sociability, and we charge for food and beverages. This format of “dessert and beverages” is fairly easy for the committee to arrange, and we do recommend keeping with this format in the future. We appreciated both church attendees and area guests who supported our efforts by buying tickets or who came for the talks.

In 2024, a church member offered to re-endow the Grace Clarke Lecture. This allows the series to host 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.” This year’s lecturers seemed very pleased with the opportunity of presenting on their topic and the hospitality of the evening.

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 below at the start of the 2026-27 church year. We welcome your ideas and help. The committee maintains a file box of information related to the process of running the lecture series.

Submitted by Sandal Cate

Report of the Climate Action Team

Members Geoff Brumbaugh, Allen Clark, Malcolm Fitzpatrick, Tim Flynn, Maryann Ludlow, Anne Sarcka, Dan Tartaglia, Andrea Warnke, and Peter Watt. The Dream Team!

We were fortunate that three new members joined this year, Andrea Warnke, Geoff Brumbaugh, and Dan Tartaglia. They have brought new energy and ideas, much appreciated.

It has been a busy and productive year. The most significant project we are involved in, the switch to biofuels to heat the church, has had a bumpy ride. Our team requested that the Executive Team take this on; it took an unexpected turn when it was found that the B99 (99% biofuel) oil was too cold for the components to work, so we are currently using something like B15. Efforts to solve this problem are ongoing.

This Year’s Activities

- *Resources Still Being Developed*
 - Fuel switch to B99 - Allen Clark and Climate Resilience Study Group
 - Energy Resource Bank - Tim Flynn
- *Presentations Offered*
 - UUA’s Climate Justice Revival meeting, led by Tim Flynn and Peter Watt
 - Dam removal, river mitigation: Jon Copans, Dir. Commission for Recovery and Resilience

- Brainstorming session on home energy use
- Recycling best practices, John Jose, Central VT Solid Waste Mgmt District
- Emergency preparedness, Jon Copans, Diana Chace
- Findings of the Energy Action Network's annual report, Jared DuVal
- UCM Energy Resource Bank, Tim Flynn
- River mapping and flood issues, Ned Swanberg, DEC Flood Mapping Coordinator
- *Collaborations with Other Organizations/Visitors*
 - 350VT, four presentations
 - Third Act VT Washington County Chapter: EV show and tell, monthly meetings
 - Rev. Fred Small workshop, cosponsored by VIA, VIPL, and VNRC
- *Field Trips/Model Projects*
 - Organics Recycling Center, Williston
 - Dog River Park with Friends of the Winooski River
 - Barbara Conrey's net zero Additional Dwelling Unit
- *Scheduled for April*
 - Earth Day celebration at UCM, organized by Peter Watt
- *On Hold, Made a Start*
 - Prescription Bottle project, with Montpelier Senior Center

Several team members were involved in UCM's Earth Day service, and some of us took action on legislation.

For the coming year, a search is on for projects with greater impact/longer staying power. We'd like to discover to what extent climate considerations could be part of the practices of all or most UCM committees and teams.

Submitted by Anne Sarcka, Interim Chair

Report of the Climate Resilience Study Group

The Climate Resilience Study Group (CRSG), consisting of 12 members of the UCM community, continued and completed its research efforts on the five options for achieving climate resilience for the home of the UCM congregation, whether in the current building or somewhere else, after 12 months of work, during the first half of the current 2025-26 church year. These options had been developed from congregational input after the devastating flood of July, 2023. The group was formally charged by the UCM Governing Board in the first half of the 2024-25 church year to research the five options during calendar 2025 and to present its findings to the Board soon thereafter. The CRSG presented the report of its findings to the Governing Board on January 11, 2026. The Board accepted the report, thanked the Study Group for its work, and committed to having the Study Group present the report's findings to the UCM congregation once the Board's work on a new UCM Strategic Plan is completed and approved by the congregation. The Board wants the findings of the CRSG to have the new Strategic Plan as their context, and to have them and whatever decision making process regarding those findings follows be integrated into the implementation of the new Strategic Plan. The current plan is to have the CRSG report its findings to the congregation in the fall of 2026.

Submitted by Steve Gold, Co-Chair

Report of the UCM Community Lunch Committee

Volunteer Coordinator Liza Earle-Centers; *Site Manager* Janet Poeton.

In June of 2025 four groups providing free lunches to the community moved to Trinity Church at 137 Main Street. The fifth group moved back to St. Augustine's at 16 Barre Street. There have been meetings and some progress in creating a 501(c)(3) for the groups to be working together.

Presently each church is responsible to fund its own lunch program, and newly created breakfast program, this is where your financial support is very much appreciated.

The cooks, Albert and Sue, with Dan as a support chopper, create delicious meals using food from Community Harvest of Central Vermont, Vermont Food Bank, and local groceries.

About 80 to 90 lunch meals are served each Monday. There are usually 20 folks in to eat breakfast at 8 am on Monday as well. UCM and community volunteers are essential to creating, serving and cleaning up each week. PLEASE check the weekly e-news to sign up for a volunteer spot.

We are grateful to Paula Gills for sharing her music each Monday.

The newest news is that a \$3,000 grant from Vermont Food Bank was received to purchase farm items from local farmers for the lunch program. A total win – win for the area !

Submitted by Janet Poeton

Report of the Community Pouch Committee

Members Ansel Ploog, Dawn Evans, Dell Waterhouse, Judith Hinds, Juliana Plummer, Kenric Kite, Tina Muncy, Winna Curran, Janet Poeton

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

This year the Committee focused on organizing a list of the past few years pouch recipients and checking for diversity. This will become an ongoing focus.

Suggestions for pouch recipients are received from committees, individuals, and groups from UCM. YOU can suggest an organization by submitting the name to:

ucm.communitypouch@gmail.com

The generosity of UCM has made the larger community a better place for all over the years. Thank you notes and letters of gratitude are being posted on the UCM website for you to read. Many local groups are grateful.

Submitted by Janet Poeton

Report of the Congregational Life Coordinator and Membership & Hospitality Committee

The Mission Statement of the Membership & Hospitality Committee is:

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.

While we no longer have an active Membership & Hospitality Committee, and continue to adjust/re-define what we do, and how, the above statement expresses accurately what we strive for in our work. Some of the responsibilities fulfilled by Congregational Life Coordinator, Elaine Ball, and volunteers are:

- Offer hospitality & welcome for newcomers, and fellowship within the church community, on Sundays and throughout the church year. This includes Barista, Usher, and Elevator Operator volunteers and all those who welcome newcomers during Coffee Hour.
- Assist Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, staff, and Board and Committee Leaders with planning & offering “UU History and Theology” classes, Activities Fairs, “Info to Pathways to Membership & Building Tour” sessions, and New Member Ceremonies.
- Promote understanding of Unitarian Universalist (UU) principles, primarily through communications in weekly and quarterly newsletters and at the Welcome Table on Sundays.
- Coordinate Circle Suppers, Potlucks, Brunches, and Receptions throughout the Church Year, in collaboration with other committee leaders, staff, and volunteers.
- Collaborate with Rev. Joan and staff to keep in touch with church members and friends; contact persons interested in the church; and keep accurate Membership records.

~ Deep gratitude to Peter Thoms, Jen Roberts, and Jo Romano for organizing Lift Operators, Baristas, and Ushers; to Dave and Ellie Peters for assisting with numerous Sunday-morning tasks; to John Poeton for filling in at the Welcome Table; to Jason Boyd and Biz Tandy for assisting with the weekly e-news; and to UCM Board and Executive Team Members for supporting Membership-related classes and events. ~

This church year has brought changes in how Elaine collaborates with Rev. Joan and other staff and volunteers to keep in touch with members – both new members as well as people who have been members for many years. Rather than reaching out to members who no longer meet the criteria for membership only once a year, prior to submitting our certification to the UUA, Elaine (and/or other staff and volunteers) now reaches out two or three times a year. Since members are connecting more frequently with someone from UCM than they may have in the past, more opportunities arise for us to offer pastoral or community care. We hope that this aligns well with the above stated mission of “fostering a sense of belonging in our spiritual home.”

During the 2025-26 church year, we held “**UU History and Theology**” classes with Rev. Joan in the Fall and Spring. Twenty-one people expressed interest in the Fall, and eleven in the Spring. With some cross-over as to who was interested and able to attend, about 18 participants attended either in Nov 2025 or March 2026.

We held a **Fall Activities Fair** in Oct 2025, and two “**Intro to the Pathways to Membership + Building Tour**” sessions, one in Nov 2025 and one in March 2026, with about 4-6 participants each time. Elaine also created a ‘Bingo Card’ to go with the Pathways to Membership, and now has them at the Welcome Table to give to people who ask about becoming a member.

Three people offered to host a **Circle Supper** in the Fall/Winter, with about 17 attendees, and ten hosts have signed up for hosting in the Spring, which will allow for approximately 40 attendees! We have also hosted and/or collaborated to offer a **Thanksgiving Leftovers Potluck** and a **New Member Reception** in November, **Cider & Cookies** in December, and a Pizza Party/Potluck at the **Annual Talent Show** in March, with a **Members Mix & Mingle Brunch** planned for April 2026. An **All-Church End-of-Year Social & Picnic** is also planned for June.

We will be hosting two **New Member Sunday** services this Church Year, one that took place November 23, 2025 when we welcomed four new members, and one that will take place April 12, 2026. Two long-time friends of the church have already signed the Membership Book, and 4-6 people plan to sign during the service on April 12.

We estimate that from July 2025 through June 2026, we will have welcomed 8-10 new members. In December 2025 we certified 243 members and since the submission of last church year's Annual Report, we have lost two long-time members to death, Tina Ruth, and Harris Webster. We estimate that our active, voting membership at the close of this church year will be between 249-252. While grieving the loss of two beloved members in the past year, we are grateful to welcome the new and returning members and long-time friends who have joined us in that time.

Submitted by Elaine Ball, Congregational Life Coordinator

Report of the Denominational Resources Representative

We have maintained our denominational relationships with the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Vermont Quebec Unitarian Universalist Convention, and Vermont Interfaith Action.

We have increased our contribution to the UUA Annual Program Fund.

We had a full slate of delegates to the UUA General Assembly last June. However, the reports of those delegates were not completed until early this year. We will try to persuade this year's GA delegates to complete their reports shortly after GA.

We will be represented at the Vermont Quebec UU convention May 16 by Peter Thoms who is also the Treasurer of that organization (the President is the undersigned).

We continue to maintain contact with and are active in Vermont Interfaith Action activities relating to the homeless. Currently there is no group focused on corrections.

Submitted by Steve Finner, Denominational Resources Representative

Report of the Finance Committee

The UCM Finance Committee's main task this year has been to construct the 2026-27 fiscal budget. The Finance Committee weighs committee requests along with projected staff and various church and building costs. These expenses are weighed against estimated pledge, rental, and other anticipated income to come up with a budget. This work is passed to the ET. The UCM Board ultimately presents the budget to the membership for a vote.

Submitted by Scott Hess, Chair

Report of UCM ALL Church Holiday Fair

This ALL CHURCH activity is led by Sandal Cate, Kristin Glasser, Ginnie Humphreys, Leslie Parr, Jo Romano, and Janet Poeton

This is the third year that the Fair was opened during the Friday night ART Walk, with youth musicians and a cocoa bar. This year the entire Fair was open Friday night, Saturday 9 to 2, and on Sunday after service. This is a huge undertaking and many hands make the work light. YOU each play a vital role, be it donating, decorating wreaths, selling items, bringing friends to shop, or shopping.

Holiday Fair income: \$11,989.12 (budgeted: \$10,000)

Holiday Fair expenses: \$1,975.86 (budgeted: \$2,500)

Net profit: \$10,013.26 (budgeted \$7,500) ! ! !

There will be an organizational meeting in May. The Fair is the first weekend in December. YOU can have a say in what the next Fair will look, sound and be like!

Submitted by Janet Poeton

Report of the Lay Pastoral Care Ministry

The Lay Pastoral Care Ministry (LPCM) is a freestanding ministerial program that provides a confidential caring presence to congregants who are undergoing stressful life challenges or who are in a time of spiritual discernment. The ministry is an extension of the Minister's own pastoral

care presence. Lay pastoral caregivers are recruited by and report directly to the Minister and a lay coordinator. The current membership of volunteers includes Denise Bailey, Victoria Battin, Dawn Evans, Mary Jane Ohlson, and Gale Pekar. Dawn Evans serves as lay coordinator.

At the beginning of each church year, the volunteers meet with the Minister for a retreat that includes either initial or refresher training on topics related to the provision of pastoral care. The LPCM meets monthly to review recent interactions with persons seeking pastoral care, identify persons who may be in need of pastoral care, plan for future events, review the calendar to ensure coverage of Sunday services, and periodically receive training or information on topics germane to pastoral care.

Recent topics presented by the Minister included a training on UCM's policy regarding the reporting of sexual abuse and a review of statutorily-mandated reporting requirements pertaining to vulnerable adults that impact various categories of caregivers and professionals, as well as a session on trauma-informed ministry.

A member of LPCM is on hand each Sunday after church services in the event a congregant wishes to speak confidentially with someone regarding their concerns. The LPCM members are neither counselors nor therapists; they can, however, provide a listening ear and a safe space in which to hear the congregant's concerns. Members maintain confidentiality regarding anything that has been shared while providing pastoral care.

In addition, LPCM volunteers are available to meet by telephone or in person with persons requesting lay pastoral care. Requests are at times made through the Minister and might also be sought through the UCM website on the LPCM page. During this church year, such visits have taken place in hospitals, homes, and at the church building.

The LPCM periodically holds "fireside chats," typically following a church service, which provide an opportunity for those interested to attend a session on a particular topic during which participants can be in community with others who are facing similar challenges. Recently, a fireside chat was held for parents facing challenges with adult children, including estrangement.

Anyone interested in serving on LPCM may indicate interest to the Minister or Dawn Evans, the lay coordinator.

Report of the Music Program/Committee

The core of our music program remains the choir and keyboard offerings during services. Our new pianist, Dr. Sara Huff, has been a tremendous addition to our musical staff, providing a diverse selection of music on both piano and organ, often highlighting music of women and other underrepresented composers, as well as her own compositions. Her integration into the musical life of our church has been very smooth.

Our UCM choir generally sang at about 3 services per month, with guest musicians performing for the remaining services. We have presented music from diverse traditions, as well as from local composers. We have been attentive to including ample musical selections from women, LGBTQ, and BIPOC composers.

Our choir numbers have remained at around 20, although, as has been typical, the winter saw a lot of variation due to health, travel, and other issues. We gained a couple of new members this winter. The choir again enjoyed a collaboration with the LSE program, together singing “This Little Light of Mine” for a service with many of the children and their parents.

Many of our guest musicians this year have come from within the church, with a handful from the larger community, and have included: Paula Gills, Carolyn’s Angel Band, Michael Close, Bronwyn Fryer, Hilary Poff, Kris Hammer, Callum and Isla Robechek, Lotus, Diane Marie, Kate Latz, members of the Montpelier Community Gospel Choir, Kenric Kite and friends, Patti Casey, Marc Gwinn and Dee Davis, the vocal ensemble Many Waters, and a number of our children and youth. Many choir members have also had featured parts in our choir offerings.

Our Music Sunday service this year (which as of this writing is in the future) is titled “Our Songs, Our Stories” and features all UCM composers, including Lotus, Liz Benjamin, Steve Finner, Tim Flynn, Bronwyn Fryer, Kenric Kite, Steve Grunewald, Paula Gills, Sara Huff and me.

This year we have been happy to utilize the new UUA online hymn resource, Sing Out Love, allowing us to expand our hymn offerings. It has been a wonderful resource but has also presented its challenges since the music is all online not in a book! We have tried a variety of

approaches to help familiarize the congregation with the new music, including printing out copies for the pews and projecting word slides.

For the third year (following the covid hiatus) the December Community Carol Sing was held at the Unitarian Church, featuring a combined choir composed of the UCM, Berlin Congregational Church, and Christ Church choirs and keyboardists. Our hope is to begin rotating among the different churches as had been done in the past. So far various challenges and transitions in the partner churches have prevented this. In the meantime, we are fortunate to have had the space and capacity to be able to host. This year guest musicians included the Teen Trad Band from the Summit School, a children's choir from Stowe, violinist Lotta Suter, and Tenor Saxophonist Kris Hammer, in addition to piano and organ selections from the churches' keyboardists. As usual it was a well-attended, feel-good event highlighting community collaboration, and raising money for The Community Table.

In the winter I announced my retirement as Music Director. At the time of this writing the search for a replacement is underway, with a number of high-quality candidates having applied. By the time you read this the new director will likely have been announced! I have confidence that the new director will lead this community into a wonderful new era of music at UCM. It has been a great privilege to serve this community through music, and to work with our choir, congregation, and staff.

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 to provide support and recognition for members in a variety of ways. While for many in the choir the act of working hard together to produce inspiring music is an important spiritual activity, the choir is also a close-knit supportive community in itself.

Submitted by Donia Prince, Director of Music

Report of the Property Committee (currently inactive)

Report of the Racial Justice Group

Members Dell Waterhouse, Steve Finner, Judith Hinds, Paula Gills, Liz Benjamin, Steve August, Paul Keith, and Barbara Thompson. We meet every other month on Wednesdays.

The focus of our work continues to be:

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

We are studying the CSAI on Abolition, Transformation, and Faith Formation adopted by the UUA General Assembly in June, 2025, and plan to bring it to the attention of the UCM congregation in the 2026-27 church year through study groups, speakers, and a public awareness campaign.

For the fourth year in a row, UCM will be a sponsoring congregation for DRUUMM's (Diverse & Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries) Public Worship and fund raiser to be held on May 14, 2026, with Rev. Summer AlBayati as Guest Preacher, and Verdis Levar Robinson as Music Director.

Submitted by Barbara Thompson

Report of the Spiritual Exploration Committee and the Director of Spiritual Exploration

Members Caitlin Fauton (Director) and Tim Favorite (Chair)

We moved forward with the mission statement that we adopted last year focusing on three primary areas: *The Mission of the UCM Spiritual Exploration program is to 1) help children, youth, and their families cultivate their spirituality, 2) practice love as action, and 3) ensure they know that they matter deeply to our community and the world.*

Following a growing trend in Unitarian Universalist religious education programs, we have moved away from using curriculum across our age groups and emphasized child-centered programming. Our approach has been to take a middle path, providing children and youth with

pre-selected themes and then giving them choice within those themes for how they would like to explore and engage with them.

This has allowed us to engage children in a variety of ways, to be responsive to their individual needs and interests, to make sure that our programs are welcoming and inclusive for multiple learning types, and to focus on cultivating connections between volunteers and children and youth. (More information from the UUA on de-centering curriculum [here](#).) Overall, feedback from families about this approach has been positive.

In total, 56 children and youth were registered across our programs with an additional 20-25 attending but not enrolled. Each week, we serve approximately 15-30 children and youth across our programs and worship service.

- *Nursery*
 - This year small stations for young children to explore were created (farm, building, kitchen, dolls, etc.), building the experience of choice into our youngest program.
 - We are working on integrating emotional learning resources and UU rituals.
 - Feedback has been that the welcoming nursery team and small adult to child ratio help children and their families have a positive experience integrating into UCM church life.
- *Grades PreK - 4*
 - This group is very engaged with a core group of about 16 families attending regularly.
 - We have been utilizing a “Wonder & Explore” format where children learn about the service theme of the week and then break out into different groups to explore it (through art, movement, free play, reading, etc.) before coming back for shared reflections.
 - We also have been offering “Love in Action Days,” which are service project based.

- *Middle School Youth Group*
 - This group adopted a framework that emphasizes service projects as they have been the most popular days for attendance for this group. Regular attendance is about 2-3 youth on average, with participation increasing to 5-7 for social and service project days (bowling trip, Community Lunch baking, Trash Tramping, etc.).
 - Service projects this year included drives for Just Basics, the Montpelier Cold Shelter, and the Mitzvah Fund. These have been appreciated by the organizations, and we are grateful for the support of the greater UCM that have made these possible.
 - Two youth and two youth group leaders also attended YouthCon in Nashua, NH in March with approximately 40 other UU youth. We hope to have similar opportunities in the future.
- *High School Youth Group*
 - This group started in December with 2 high school youth and now has 5 attendees. It is led by Rev. Joan and UCM young adult, Erin Kelley.
 - It meets monthly one Sunday a month for games and dinner.
 - The group provides our older youth time to connect with our minister and a young UU adult during formative years in their spiritual development as well as build relationships with youth who share similar values.
- *Our Whole Lives for Grades 4-6*
 - OWL for Grades 4-6 launched at the end of March with 14 youth – with 4 UCM youth and 10 youth from the local community.
 - We hope to continue to grow our pool of facilitators and offer OWL more regularly.
- *Bridging*
 - This year we will have a condensed bridging program with one youth and 2 mentors.

- It will be followed by bridging ceremony during the annual Lifespan Spiritual Exploration service in May.
- *Family Ministry*
 - Combining family ministry offerings with All Ages services has resulted in greater participation in church activities by children and adults. Events have included Back to Church Night, Tending Your Spiritual Well winter retreat for caregivers and SE volunteers, and Parent and Caregiver Meet Ups.
 - We have increased our food offerings based on recommendations in [“Caring for Parents as Whole Human Beings: Report from the Spring 2025 Wave Cohort.”](#) Feedback from families has been positive that it makes it easier to attend church events.
 - Adult SE has been a significant contributor to our ability to launch the Parent and Caregiver Meet Up group. We’re grateful for this support and collaboration.
 - While family ministry is emerging and presents some logistical challenges, it’s clearly an important need in our multigenerational community.
- *Summer Camp*
 - Our summer camp helps provide childcare for UCM families during a week when summer camps typically are not available (the week before school starts in August).
 - This year we have 16 children signed up (1 waitlist) and 2 youth counselors in training. It filled up within a week of registration being open, so it’s filling an important need for summer care in our community.
 - Camp helps children to learn about our UU values in a more in-depth way, build friendships, and create a deeper connection to our community and building.
 - Scheduling and staffing is being worked on to make this a sustainable program.

Most importantly, we wish to recognize all the volunteers and SE team staff who make each of these ministries possible. Thank you for all your talents, time, and care that nurture the spiritual development of our UCM children and youth.

Submitted by Caitlin Frauton, SE Director

Report of the Adult Spiritual Exploration Team

The purpose of the ASE Team continues to be supporting Rev. Joan in her Adult Spiritual Exploration ministry. Our goals were:

- to maintain and expand our Chalice Circle offerings;
- to work more closely with the children and youth Spiritual Exploration program; and
- to offer one or more new faith development classes/discussions.

The team met twice early in the church year; since then we have coordinated our efforts via email and informal contacts. Contributing members at various times have included Elaine Ball, Paula Gills, Judith Hinds, Rev. Joan, Hugo Liepmann, Elsie Murphy, Paul Ohlson, Gale Pekar, Nancy Read, Anne Sarcka, Ginny Sassaman, and Barbara Thompson. Many thanks to Hugo and to Brian Prendergast for our new ASE brochure!

We began the year with a congregational survey, hoping to find out what new offerings people wanted to have at UCM. We received 32 responses. Interest was highest in four areas: remaining positive in difficult times, spiritual writing, prayer, and taming our technology. Rev. Joan and Elsie Murphy led a well-received session in January on finding positivity in difficult times. A discussion of “Prayer: An Intimate Conversation with Yourself” is scheduled for April 26th, and a “tech talk” is on the calendar for May 31st. We advertised a series of “Writing to Meet the Moment” circles that would have taken place in the winter months, but no one signed up. Rev. Joan led a refresher training for chalice circle facilitators in October. Seven Seasoned Souls groups, two Small Group Ministries, and one Caregivers Support group are up and running. We still need more facilitators in order to expand the number of Small Group Ministries. The Caregivers Support group is actively seeking additional members this spring.

We partnered with Caitlin Fauton, SE Director, to develop a parent/caregiver support group that now meets on Family Ministry Sundays. Our role was primarily to help this group define its purpose, and to provide facilitators. The group is happily self-directed.

The UCM library is a work in progress. Almost all of the books have been catalogued and a catalogue file is available upon request. The books are currently in three separate

bookcases—two on the stage in the vestry and one in the vestibule at the School Street entrance. We are waiting for our new shelves which will be located in the former preschool classroom. In the meantime, feel free to borrow books as you like. Sign-out forms are on the top of each bookcase.

The ASE Team welcomes more members and ideas for new programming.

Submitted by Judith Hinds, Team Leader

Report of the Women's Alliance

About the Women's Alliance The Women's Alliance, originally founded in the 1860s as The Ladies' Society, and now open to all regardless of gender identity, is an organization whose purposes are to raise funds for the church, enjoy each other's company, and learn together during the church year (September – June).

Alliance members and friends meet the first Tuesday (usually) of each month at 5 p.m. with a brief business meeting, followed by a potluck dinner at 5:30 p.m. and a program starting around 6 p.m. All are welcome. Dinner guests are invited to bring a dish to share or make a contribution.

Leadership 2025–2026 Jo Romano led the Alliance as President. Leoppurd McMartin stepped down as Vice President. Betty McKinnell and Abby Colihan continued their good work as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Janet Poeton and Sandal Cate, past presidents, remain the steadfast organizers of events that the Alliance hosts. Connie Kite, Liz Benjamin and Patty Latz designed and led interesting and educational programs. Special thanks to these outgoing program planners, to Peter Thoms and Peter Watt, who set up the tables prior to each meeting, and to the administration at UCM for overall support. Thanks to everyone who attends, helps set up and clean up!

Next year's 2026-2027 officers tentatively, upon election, include Jo Romano, President, Vice President tbd., Betty McKinnell, Secretary, Abby Colihan, Treasurer, and Program Committee members tbd.

Financials and Fundraising Efforts In addition to social gatherings with educational programs, the Women's Alliance supports UCM and local non-profits through a few key fundraising

efforts. Our 2025 fall rummage sale raised \$2,703, of which half goes to the UCM General Fund. The 2nd Sunday Soup Sales netted \$572 and Woman's Alliance donated \$200 each to Migrant Justice, Montpelier Food Pantry, and Good Sam Haven Equipment. We will hold the 2026 May rummage sale in early May. We anticipate making a donation to the kitchen project when needed.

All are welcome to attend Alliance Monthly meetings and to bring along friends and visitors. You do not need to join us officially to attend, though only dues-paying members may vote. Check the weekly UCM e-news for details about our gatherings.

Submitted by Jo Romano, President

Report of the Worship and Arts Committee

Members Jim Phinney (Chair), Rev. Joan Javier-Duval (Minister), Donia Prince (Music Director), Vic Guadagno, Kate Latz, Maryann Ludlow, Jen Roberts

Mission Statement The Worship and Arts Committee is the steward of the Sunday service. In collaboration with the Minister, Music Director, and Director of Spiritual Exploration, we strive to ensure that elements of the service — music, movement, meditation and prayer, joys and concerns, readings, announcements, the sermon — nurture each person's spiritual journey. The committee is responsible for ensuring the pulpit is filled on Sundays when the Minister is away, whether by guest speakers or through special services led by members of the congregation. We coordinate service elements such as candles, flowers, and multimedia offerings with a dedicated budget.

Highlights of the Church Year 2025–2026

- *Worship Planning and Collaboration*

This church year's worship was organized around the overarching theme "Meeting the Moment," with monthly themes guiding the arc of services from September through June: Kinship, Integrity, Rootedness, Reverence, Compassion, Faith, Resolve, Possibilities, Abundance, and Play. This framework gave our worship a coherent spiritual spine while leaving room for timely, responsive services in a year that brought no

shortage of moments demanding attention — from political upheaval to international conflict to the intimate griefs and joys of our congregation.

A new initiative this year introduced a monthly “Earth Teacher” — a non-human presence (rivers for September, soil for November, winterberry for January, and so on) lightly woven into services to ground our worship in the living world. As individual schedules allowed, committee members collaborated with Rev. Joan, Donia Prince, and Caitlin Frauton through regular brainstorming sessions for each thematic season, using a shared digital Padlet to gather ideas between meetings.

- *Guest Preachers and Pulpit Support*

The committee organized and supported a strong slate of guest preachers and special pulpit services throughout the year:

- Rev. Fred Small (October) brought a nature-centered sermon on spiritual sustenance; his visit also sparked productive committee reflection on how to communicate sensitively with guest ministers.
- Mohsen Mahdawi (October) — a Columbia student and activist — joined Rev. Joan in a memorable interview-style service on Integrity. The conversation drew strong congregant interest, with many requesting a shareable recording of the exchange.
- Rev. Jordinn Nelson Long (November) offered intellectually engaging and emotionally resonant preaching, incorporating an innovative attention-focusing technique during meditation. She is a welcome addition to our guest preacher list and will be returning in the spring for PhD research.
- Rev. Jo Murphy (December 28) led a service on grief and justice, supported by beautiful music from Callum Robeck and Liberty Street Kids.
- Rev. Verdis LeVar Robinson (January) delivered what many considered one of the most memorable services of the year — a moving sermon about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s kitchen table conversation with God, filled with historical narrative and congregational singing.
- Ginny Sassaman (February) offered timely preaching on hope and resolve that was widely praised for meeting the congregation where they were.

- Rev. Simon Ruth de Voil (March), in his final service before returning to Scotland, wove music and reflection into a rich, resonant offering — improvising gracefully to acknowledge the outbreak of conflict in Iran that weekend.

Guest minister logistics received ongoing attention this year. The committee identified the value of proactively offering lodging for preachers traveling long distances.

- *Notable Services and Elements*

During regular monthly meetings, the committee discussed what worked well, what could be improved, how elements connected to the theme, and how effectively were the arts incorporated. Below is a sampling of services and elements that stood out as having particular resonance (as of April 8, 2026, the last regular meeting as of this writing):

- Ingathering and Water Ceremony (September) introduced a new “Empty Cup for Gaza” ritual of lament and solidarity, along with a multi-voice reading featuring youth accompanied by piano — an early signal of this year’s commitment to expanding congregational participation.
- “To Say Their Names” (November 2) remained one of the most powerful services of the year. Jen Roberts co-led with Worship Associate Dell Waterhouse, and the Hospice Choir participated. The extended length due to high participation led to productive discussion about candle logistics and timing guidance for future years.
- Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20) was held as an evening service, drawing local queer community members new to the building and reinforcing UCM’s role as an inclusive space.
- Roots and Wings of UU (November 16 and 23) honored Unitarian Universalist ancestors through a powerful echoing responsive reading and a Love Mosaic art-making activity, blending history, community, and multigenerational participation.
- Solstice / Turning Toward the Light (December 21) was a highlight of the year. The sun moved through the sanctuary window at the moment of the actual solstice (10:03 am), the choir surrounded the congregation in the opening song, and starry lights created an atmosphere of darkness giving way to light. The service featured original compositions by Donia Prince and Dr. Sara Huff.

- No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant (December 14) brought joyful, participatory energy to the sanctuary, with Caitlin Fraiton refining the script and coordination for smooth flow.
- 160th Anniversary Service (January 25) was warmly received, featuring historical photos, Sara Huff on organ, a brief history from Peter Thoms, and a meaningful ritual in which members stood to be recognized by years of membership.
- Trans Day of Visibility (March 29) was widely considered the most cohesive and moving trans-related service UCM has offered. Personal, heartfelt contributions — including a written reflection delivered by a spouse, visibly moved while reading — created a profound experience of being witnessed and beloved.
- Easter / Rising Up for Life (April 5) drew a fuller house than usual. Rev. Joan’s theologically rich call to worship — weaving together Easter and Passover imagery — was particularly striking. Organist Lynette Combs brought dramatic, joyful energy to the service.

- *All-Ages Worship*

All-ages services moved to a roughly monthly cadence this year, aligned with Caitlin Fraiton’s Family Ministry calendar. These services consistently brought energy, inclusivity, and moments of genuine cross-generational connection — from children sitting close to hear fiddles and tin whistles during a Celtic music service, to a young child’s spirited exchange with Caitlin that the congregation found deeply charming.

The committee engaged in ongoing, nuanced conversation about what it means for a service to be truly multigenerational versus simply “adult worship that children attend,” and how to continue deepening the spiritual experience for all ages.

- *Expanding Visual Arts in Worship*

This year marked a significant development in the integration of visual art into the sanctuary. Working with volunteer curator Carolyn Shapiro, the committee established a practice of displaying works aligned with monthly worship themes and Earth Teachers.

The committee’s aesthetic vision coalesced around larger-scale, immersive work displayed across both sanctuary columns for visual balance, with a preference for pieces

that invite closer engagement and connect organically with the service's themes. As Donia Prince moves toward retirement, Maryann Ludlow has volunteered to serve as the new visual art liaison with Carolyn, ensuring continuity.

- *Music and the Virtual Hymnal*

Music continued to be a cornerstone of worship. Dr. Sara Huff's playing drew repeated spontaneous applause from the congregation; her postludes — including a rendition of Scott Joplin's Bethena and a lively "I've Got the Joy" — became events in their own right. The year also featured remarkable moments from a cappella choir singing, Celtic folk musicians playing for children, guest organist Lynette Combs on Easter, and Aaron Marcus on concertina stepping in gracefully on short notice.

The committee continued the ongoing integration of the virtual hymnal *Singing the Living Tradition*, exploring how best to introduce new music through rote learning, projected lyrics, and having song leaders use a microphone during the prelude so the congregation can learn melodies before singing together. A highlight of the year so far has been Donia and Sara's arrangement of the Norbert Capek song "My Life Is Made Worthwhile," which has drawn interest from at least two other congregations.

- *Broadening Participation in Worship*

Responding to feedback from the congregational visioning survey, the committee focused this year on finding meaningful ways to bring more voices into worship beyond designated roles. Efforts included:

- Developing a more intentional chalice lighting recruitment system, inviting groups — chalice circles, the money-counting team, the Climate Action Team, and others — to light and briefly introduce their work to the congregation.
- Piloting co-reading formats at the pulpit, in which Rev. Joan and a worship associate or congregant read together — a technique noted as effective for keeping congregational focus and conveying a sense of shared energy.
- Exploring monthly themed personal reflections offered by worship associates or congregation members.

- Beginning to plan a “Worship 101” small group discussion, pulling back the veil on worship design and inviting conversation about why we do what we do.

- *Indigenous Perspectives in Worship*

In response to a congregant’s request for more intentional incorporation of Native American spirituality, the committee engaged in a substantive discussion about how to honor indigenous perspectives authentically and avoid tokenism. The committee’s approach, consistent with Rev. Joan’s vision, is to allow indigenous worldviews to inform the underlying character of services — through personally crafted land acknowledgments, readings by Native poets, and genuine thematic connections — rather than through scheduled or formulaic inclusion.

- *Production Team and Technology*

The production team continued to provide coverage every Sunday. Bryce’s creative camera work (including thoughtful fading and zooming during special moments) was noted as a consistent strength.

Sound quality presented a persistent challenge this year. The sanctuary sound system is approximately 30 years old, and aging amplifier components caused intermittent and sometimes mysterious failures. The committee regularly discussed the impact of audio fidelity on the worship experience, noting that it’s easy to take sound production for granted (people generally notice only when things go wrong) and that the production team does an excellent job of problem-solving and troubleshooting, often on the fly.

- *Budget and Operations*

The committee’s budget for 2025–2026 was \$2,760, supporting guest preachers, candles and worship supplies, the online hymnal, flowers, and miscellaneous materials. The committee submitted a budget request of \$2,925 for 2026–2027, reflecting modest increases in supply costs and a commitment to maintaining 5–6 guest preachers per year. Candle logistics received particular attention this year, including sourcing new vendors,

establishing safety protocols for the joys and concerns candle table, and beginning the development of written maintenance procedures to ensure a smooth handoff.

- *Committee Growth and Sustainability*

The committee has operated this year with a smaller core than in past years. Recruitment of new members remains a priority as we head into spring. The committee's preferred approach is "whisper recruitment" — personal invitations that emphasize the genuine value of being involved in deep, meaningful conversations about worship — rather than broadcast announcements. Several promising prospects have been identified, and the end-of-year gathering remains a key recruitment moment.

- *Appreciation* The Worship and Arts Committee extends its deep appreciation to the many people whose contributions made this year's worship possible. We are grateful to:
 - Donia Prince, for her musical leadership and artistry, and for the grace and generosity with which she is approaching her retirement.
 - Dr. Sara Huff, whose playing brought repeated moments of transcendence to the sanctuary.
 - Bryce Douglas and the entire production team, who make our worship accessible every week to those joining by livestream.
 - Carolyn Shapiro, for curating a year's worth of visual art that enriched our sanctuary and deepened our engagement with worship themes.
 - Our worship associates, whose preparation and care for each service supports our congregation's experience.
 - The musicians, poets, storytellers, artists, readers, chalice lighters, and candle watchers who gave their time and hearts to our common worship.
 - Caitlin Fauton, whose leadership of all-ages services and Family Ministry programming has brought new vitality and intergenerational warmth to our Sunday mornings.
 - Beth Damon, for her creativity in making the flowers budget go the distance, and for the beauty she brings to the chancel week after week.

We look forward to deepening our commitment to inclusive, creative, and spirit-filled worship in the year to come — and to welcoming new voices into both the services we offer and the committee that shapes them.

Submitted by Jim Phinney

Administration, Building, and Rentals Report

This has been a wonderful, busy year in the UCM Office, as always! I continue to juggle many different responsibilities and tasks while working a part-time schedule (24 hours/week during the church year, and 18 hours/week in July & August). It's always a pleasure for me to interact with and assist our lovely congregants, lay leaders, staff, renters and visitors.

Administration

If you have called UCM recently, you may have noticed that we have a new phone system! After experiencing issues with our WiFi in late Fall 2025, I hired North Branch Tech of Montpelier to assess our network, and they recommended replacement of our aging equipment. Simultaneously, we worked with Bevins Cable Integrations of Cabot to replace ethernet cables that were damaged in the 2023 flood, install new cables to the offices, replace our 2008 landline call routing equipment with Voice over IP phones, and switch from Comcast to Fidium, thus saving UCM over \$200 per month on our telecommunications bill. We now have strong WiFi throughout the building, a phone system with a modern user interface, and a labeled map of the network cables.

Elaine Ball and I will be putting the final touches on our 2026 Directory of Members and Friends this month. It will include photos! Please contact me if you want access to Breeze, our church database, where you can view the online Directory at any time.

Building

We are very fortunate to have two part-time Sextons with complimentary skills and expertise handling building upkeep. I appreciate them both for their willingness to handle whatever comes their way.

Jason Kass is our go-to person for hiring contractors and managing mechanical systems, including electrical, heating, fire alarm, platform lift, and more. Jason managed the recent project to repair and reseal the concrete front steps, which had been deteriorating and cracking. He also responds to building emergencies, including an overnight heat outage during a very cold spell in January. Jason's efforts to repair and keep the grandfather clock in the Fireplace Room reliably running are ongoing.

Longtime UCM member Brian Prendergast joined the staff as our second Sexton in May 2025 with a focus on the weekly maintenance and housekeeping that keeps our building functioning, as well as seasonal tasks such as interior painting, installing air conditioners, changing air filters,

testing sump pumps, and so much more. Brian's carpentry and handyman skills are very valuable in this large, old building! He also vacuumed and mopped the first floor countless times this winter...a seemingly endless task when it is snowy and salty outside. Thank you!

In November we hired Bourne's Energy to retrofit our boiler with a "tigerloop" to allow us to begin using B99 biofuel, and received our first delivery on December 19, 2025. Early January's weather was particularly frigid, and we unfortunately had repeated issues with the B99 fuel being too cold and causing the boiler to stop working. Bourne's switched us to B20, a blend with more regular oil that performs better in colder temperatures. This summer we will explore modifications to our oil tank and basement insulation in hopes of returning to B99 next winter.

Rentals

We continue to rent out our beautiful Sanctuary for concerts and to provide affordable event & meeting space throughout the building for a wide variety of organizations. We have one-time and recurring space rentals throughout the year to both new and returning renters. This year I offered discounted or free space to grassroots community groups aligned with our mission and values, including Central VT Showing Up for Racial and Economic Justice, Third Act Vermont, Families Rise Up, Central VT Nonviolent Resistance, Solidarity Singers, Indivisible Calais, PoemCity, and local support & mutual aid groups.

We also made our Vestry available this winter to shelter our unhoused neighbors, first through the volunteer-run, "pop-up" Montpelier Emergency Cold Weather Shelter in December and early January, then through the nightly Overflow Shelter staffed by Capstone Community Action, January 12 through May 31, 2026. We did not charge rent for use of our space, but Capstone received grant funding from the State of Vermont that allows them to reimburse UCM for our additional expenses incurred as a result of hosting the Overflow Shelter (heating oil, utilities, cleaning supplies, etc.). I'm so glad that we were able to partner with Capstone to offer a safe and warm space for folks to sleep this winter and spring.

Please contact me anytime by email, phone, or in person if you have questions or needs relating to any of the above. I enjoy hearing from you!
Submitted by Emily G. Seifert, Office and Rental Manager

Stewardship Annual Report submitted by Ansel Ploog

"Love is Stronger" was the theme to this year's pledge drive, from March 15 - April 12. It's a line from Patti Casey's song 'Stronger than That.' It's a song that contains both hope and resolve. On the launch day of the drive, Patti came and sang her song with the choir and I think that set the tone of what we can do when we work together. I saw this theme in the college that congregant and artist Carolyn Shapiro guided folks of all ages to create a vibrant, colorful church. The whole drive was full of these moments of collaboration and creativity.

This year, our Stewardship Team reviewed pledging data from the previous year and worked to create a new Giving Guide to help folks figure out their pledge amount. We also took a chance to host a completely new event: an open party to celebrate the end of the drive and our wider community. We combined this party, the spark of which came from congregant Heather Southwell, with the Board-led Art Auction fundraiser, led by Emily Seiffert. The result was Joy in Motion: A Community Dance and Art Party. On April 17, we gathered up at the Montpelier Performing Arts Hub Chapel and ate food, bid on art and danced to the fantastic VT-based Butterfly Swing Band. In the quieter 'Family Room,' Clara White set up markers and stickers for kids and adults who needed a little break from the activity of the main room. I heard from many excited folks that it was such a unique and fun event.

There were many many people who worked on stewardship this year. In particular, Scott Hess, Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Heather Southwell, Alana Phinney, Brian Prendergast, and Board members Jeremy Beaudry, Steve Gold, Susan Koch, Emily Seiffert, Katie Spring and Jen Matthews. UCM's Office and Rental Manager, Emily Seifert, was critical for both the pledge drive and the art auction. There are also many folks who made phone calls, who worked on the art auction, and who offered up the gifts of their time and talent in many ways that made all of this possible. Thank you to each and every one of you. ♥

Below is part of what I read at service when we launched the drive:

"The pledge drive is a pretty amazing event. Every year we start at zero. No pledges. And then, over the course of weeks, we raise hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of pledges. This is something that all of us should feel incredibly proud of. There is no single pledge that can get us to our goal. There aren't twenty pledges that can get us there. It truly is a collective effort. It is also an act of trust in our community, knowing that each contribution is *not* alone and it *does* matter...

UCM and its mission are really needed right now. I think this moment is asking us to be unapologetic about what we value and what we can offer. For everyone who has been pledging to support this work, thank you. And for newcomers to UCM or newcomers to pledging, welcome. Thank you all."

At the end of the drive, we had 155 pledges totaling \$339,797. By the end of April we raised \$372,492 from 169 pledges.

Thank you to our pledgers this year (*used the Giving Guide):

Ted Allen, Sally Armstrong*, Elaine Ball*, Liz Benjamin, Mary Alice Bisbee, Ken Brown and Shasta Fowler*, Lisa Brucken*, Pam Cameron and Ron Cameron, Pat Carstensen*, Sandal Cate and Paul Cate*, Amy Cavanagh, Rhoda Chickering, Nancy Chickering and Kris Hammer*, Claudia Clark and Allen Clark, Barbara Conrey*, Joanne Crowley, Becky Davin*, Frances Dodd, Bill Doelger and Linda Normandeau, Bryce Douglass*, Amy Emler-Shaffer, Dawn Evans and Michael Evans*, Stephen Finner*, Priscilla Fox, Sarah Franklin, Danner Friend and Marianne Mullen*, Bronwyn Fryer*, Danette Fuller*, Paula Gills*, Kristin Glaser*, Steve Gold and Irina Markova*, Dan Groberg and Mary Margaret Groberg, Steve Grunewald*, Georgina Haase and Numa Haase, Amy Handy*, Scott Hess and Amy Willis, Judith Hinds*, Eliza Homick, Rachel Hopkins and Margaret McGraw*, Sara Huff*, Ed Hutchinson and Sasha Thayer*, Joan Javier-Duval and Jared Duval*, Ryan Kane and Kristina Kane*, Kim Kite and Kiley Donlan-Kite, Kenric Kite*, Susan Koch and Barry Koch*, Hugo Liepmann, Joe Loga*, Carole MacIntyre and Tom Schersten, Mazi Diane Marie*, Jen Matthews and Bill Neuburger*, Betty McKinnell, Jen Miller-Arsenault and Dan Miller-Arsenault, Phil Morse and Brenda Bean, Kate Nicolet, Leslie Parr*, Elizabeth Peebles*, Bill Pelton, Dave Peters and Ellie Peters*, Alana Phinney and Jim Phinney*, Ansel Ploog*, Juliana Plummer, Katherine Plummer, Janet Poeton and John Poeton*, Brian Prendergast and Margot Prendergast*, Nancy Read and Michael Read, Betsy Reid*, Jennifer Roberts, Anne Sarcka*, Lani Seifert and Glen Seifert*, Emily G. Seifert and Paul Smith, Emily A. Seiffert*, Cecile Sherburn*, Nancy Snow*, Katie Spring and Edge Fuentes*, Linda Sproul*, Susan Stuke*, Barbara Thompson*, Deborah Van Ness and Carl Witke*, Lindsay Wade*, Pamela Walker*, Paul Wallace-Brodeur and Ruth Wallace-Brodeur, Dell Waterhouse*, Susan Weber, Gregory Wells, Cate Wirth and Elizabeth Wirth*, Tony Witte and Ruth Witte*, Frank Woods, Marj Zunder*

And the 82 additional pledgers who wish to remain anonymous. **Thank you all!**

