

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana

Seeking the Spirit, Building Community, Changing the World



Congregational Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2025

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Submitted by Regina DiLavore, Secretary

ATTACHMENT

- A. Annual Report to the Congregation

Opening

President Jane McLeod called the meeting to order at 12:13 p.m.

Mary Craig, Board Member-at large lit the chalice and Jane introduced the Parliamentarian Steve Dillon.

Staff Reports

Lead Minister Report

Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray highlighted her first year as Lead Minister and outlined the successful foundational period focused on building trust and enhancing congregational engagement.

Reverend Susan described her primary goal for her first year was to build trust within the congregation, viewing it as crucial for a strong settled ministry. Trust was cultivated through showing up, listening, learning, vulnerability, honesty, and navigating shared experiences, including significant losses within the community.

Reverend Susan explained that her thematic ministry approach was implemented, with monthly themes explored in worship, Chalice Circles, and some religious education programs. This contributed to a tremendous increase in Sunday attendance, averaging over 60%, and often reaching 80% growth on some Sundays. This growth necessitated the transition to two Sunday morning services in February, which was noted as smooth with balanced attendance. A temporary shift to one service for the summer (Memorial Day to Labor Day) is planned to provide staff a break. The Installation service on March 30th was a particularly moving highlight, symbolizing a formal covenant of shared ministry and a call to broader work in Indiana and the Midwest.

Reverend Susan described her collaboration with various program committees and teams, including the Social Justice Coordinating Team, Pastoral Associates Care Team (PACT), Caring Committee, and the Settled Ministry Planning Team. The Settled Ministry Planning Team, through initiatives like house parties, helped her meet over 100 members and provided valuable historical and community insights,

Reverend Susan shared the administrative achievements from the year which included the Pledge Drive Campaign, which exceeded its "super-audacious stretch goal," eliminating the need to draw on operational reserves for the FY 24-25 budget. The success was attributed to the year-round Pledge Drive Committee and strategic planning, including establishing the budget before the campaign. The congregation's new partnership governance model with the Board, guided by "Governance and Ministry," was highly valued, clarifying roles and fostering trust and collaboration between the Minister and the Board. A new collaborative budget process was also

implemented with the Treasurer and Finance Committee. Reverend Susan announced the new Justice Advocacy Corner created in collaboration with Jo Bowman.

Reverend Susan explained her personal challenge of taking time off and self-care and that she looks forward to addressing capacity limitations and hopes to introduce additional ministry support, guided by upcoming discussions on the congregation's mission and vision. She also announced that Jo Bowman will move to full-time status and that UUCB is making headway towards fair compensation. Reverend Susan announced that she will be taking off six weeks in June and July and will be back on August 3.

She expressed profound gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington and its community. The full report is provided in Attachment A.

Director of Lifespan Religion Education Support

Stephanie Kimball, The Director of Lifespan Religious Education reported a year of constant change and adaptation, notably with children and youth registration and regular attendance doubling. This growth, coupled with the move to two services, prompted a quick January Intersession. New teacher and youth advisor training were implemented. Adult religious education offered ten classes, with input sought for future topics, questions to explore, dates and formats. Stephanie also reported that Our Whole Lives (OWL) began in January and new high school programming began in March. Stephanie also announced that to be fully staffed, the RE program needs 16 volunteers per week. The August Perspectives will highlight the RE program.

The childcare request process was refined and the best way to request childcare is to use the form on the website at least two weeks in advance. Stephanie closed her remarks by thanking the congregation for the opportunity to serve and saying that it is an honor to work with the members and friends of UUCB. The full report is provided in Attachment A.

President's Report

Jane thanked Reverend Susan and Stephanie. She reported that the Board has implemented new policies for the partnership governance model, including a monitoring schedule shared with the congregation at Cookies and Conversation events.

The Board also implements monthly Perspectives articles and conducted assessments in May. Discussions on potentially changing the church's name, reviewing the congregational covenant, and reconsidering the mission statement, will be a focus for the next year.

Jane recognized the work of the Right Relations Committee, Personnel Advisory Committee, the Finance Committee and the Pledge Drive Committee. The Board is currently recruiting for the Right Relations Committee, Personnel Advisory Committee, and the Pledge Drive Committee.

Jane closed her remarks in deep appreciation for the Board and Reverend Susan as ex officio member of the Board. The full report is provided in Attachment A.

Quorum Report

Quorum was reported at 37%, exceeding the 15% of the total membership required to conduct business.

Motion to allow the Board to approve the June 2025 Congregational Meeting Minutes

Jane moved to allow the Board to approve the June Congregational Meeting minutes. Multiple congregants seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Vote to Select the 25% Sunday Plate Recipient

Denise Ogren introduced the vote for the 25% Sunday Plate Recipient and the Board members collected the ballots.

Leadership Cultivation Committee (LCC) Report and Votes on Elected Offices (Board and Special Purposes Fund [SPF])

Carol McCord, stepping in for Glenda Breeden, Chair of the LCC, outlined the LCC's goals and objectives, which focus on developing leadership capacity for UUCB. The LCC is revisiting goals and strategies in coordination with Reverend Susan and considering new pathways to engagement.

Motion to Elect Nominees

- Leadership Cultivation Committee: Von Welch
- Treasurer of the Board: Bill Lonngberg
- Board Member At-Large: Mary Craig

A motion to elect the nominees was raised, the motion was seconded, and the motion carried.

SPF Committee Report

Andrew Appel, Chair of the SPC Committee acknowledged and thanked the SPF Committee for their hard work. He then explained the committee's purpose. He clarified that the SPF Committee is responsible for identifying and recommending worthy donations to organizations and causes outside the operational scope and budget of UUCB. A new SPF committee member will be needed next fiscal year. The committee must meet four times per year but typically meets six to eight times per year.

Congregants may request funds from the SPF by using the form on the website stewardship tab.

This year funds were approved for Rev. Susan's installation service and a \$25,000 request was approved to support the new Beacon Center was submitted with endorsements from the Homelessness Task Force, Board of Directors, Rev. Susan, and Rev. Forrest Gilmore.

As of the start of the current fiscal year, SPF's assets totaled \$505,643, comprising \$181,740 in endowment funds and \$323,903 in available funds, marking an increase from \$458,657 at the beginning of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, and rising further to \$507,597 by May 27, 2025, prior to the Beacon Center donation. The full report is provided in Attachment A.

Treasurer's Report and Motion to Approve FY 2026 Budget

Bill Lonnberg, Treasurer, thanked the finance committee for their excellent work. Bill reported a net positive gain of \$38,320 for Fiscal Year 2025. He also noted that it is very likely that the \$27,000 budgeted from operational reserves will not be needed, and extended thanks to all donors for their generosity.

Bill then explained the FY2026 budget is \$785K, up \$155K from last year. The increase includes \$75K for personnel costs; \$23K for ministry support and \$19K for full funding contribution to the UUA annual program.

Bill moved to approve the budget. The motion was seconded, and following discussion, the motion carried.

See Attachment A for the full Treasurer's report.

Resolution regarding gift to Beacon

Jane led a discussion regarding the Beacon Center donation and the initiative's history, noting its connection to several UUCB task forces. The SPF Committee approved a \$25,000 donation to Beacon. The Board subsequently reviewed and approved a resolution for UUCB to match this donation over five years. This resolution will be voted on at the June 2025 Congregational Meeting.

Von Welch, Co-Chair of the Light the Way Beacon campaign, and Rev. Forrest Gilmore provided an update on Beacon, the largest local non-profit provider of housing for individuals experiencing homelessness, noting their 25th anniversary. They highlighted Beacon's commitment to finding compassionate solutions, including emergency isolation shelters during COVID-19 and increased support for women. Over the years, Beacon has served 1.5 million meals, provided 130,000 nights of shelter, and prevented homelessness for 14,329 adults and children.

Von Welch then described the proposed 45,000 square foot Beacon Center on West Third Street in Bloomington. This center is designed to offer work-to-live housing with semi-private spaces, a kitchen, a chapel, and room for collaborating agencies. Approximately \$20 million has been raised for the project, with \$15 million in grants and another \$11 million committed. Beacon anticipates breaking ground in the fall of 2025 and becoming operational in the fall of 2026.

Following the presentation, discussion clarified that UUCB's \$25,000 matching congregational donation to Beacon will be distributed over five years. Rev. Susan further explained that UUCB has critical health and safety needs (e.g., upgrades to the kitchen) that may be combined in fundraising efforts with the Beacon commitment.

Jane formally introduced the motion to pass the resolution; it was seconded and the motion carried.

Vision-Mission-Name Change Process

Jane led a discussion about the Vision-Mission-Name Change process for FY 2025-2026. Two separate working groups will be established. The Board anticipates that a name change recommendation will be presented by October.

The Mission-Vision working group is expected to start working later in the fall to assess UUCB's 10-year-old vision mission. A draft vision-mission is expected by late February/March. The results of the Mission-Vision working group will be brought to the June 2026 Congregational meeting.

Youth Representative to the Board

Jane announced that the Board is discussing adding a youth representative to the Board. Please contact Jane with any questions.

Announcement of the 25% Sunday Plate Recipient

Linda Pickle, Vice President, announced that Tandem Community Birth Center and Postpartum House was selected as the recipient.

Special Services Awards Recipients

Jane presented the Special Services Award to the following recipients:

- Melinda Swenson, Pastoral Associates Care Team
- Ruellen Fessenbecker, Pastoral Associates Care Team
- Allison Tomusk, Pastoral Associates Care Team
- Kathy Sideli, Chair, Caring Committee
- Sandy Churchill, Caring Committee, Soup Train
- Doris Wittenburg, Caring Committee, Memorial Service Receptions
- Martha Dogan, Caring Committee, Transportation
- Corrin Clarkson, Chair, Pledge Drive Committee
- JaneAnn Gifford, Pledge Drive Committee
- Joan Caulton, Pledge Drive Committee
- Pat Slabach, Pledge Drive Committee
- Judy Witt, Pledge Drive Committee
- Beth Henkel, Pledge Drive Committee

Closing Words

Reverend Susan provided the closing words.

Adjournment

Steve Mascari, Board Member-at-Large moved to adjourn the meeting, and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 1:33 p.m.



Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana, Inc.

Annual Report to the Congregation Sunday, June 8, 2025

Current Membership: 482

Board of Directors, 2024-2025

- Jane McLeod, President
- Linda Pickle, Vice President
- Regina DiLavore, Secretary
- Bill Lonnberg, Treasurer
- Mary Craig, At-large
- Steve Mascari, At-large
- Pam MacLaughlin, At-large

Monthly Board meeting minutes are posted here: uubloomington.org/about-us/board-of-directors

Minister

The Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray, Lead Minister

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington Board of Directors

This was a busy and exciting year for the Board, as we welcomed our new minister, Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray and implemented the Board policies, adopted in June 2024, associated with our new partnership governance model.

The new Board policies require that the Board develop an annual planning document with its goals for the year. We set ourselves the following goals (and subgoals) for 2024-25:

Nurture the congregation as we grow and change

- Move forward with courage and a willingness to take risks
- Bring a joyful, welcoming, and open-hearted spirit to our work as a Board
- Identify key hopes of where and how the congregation wants to grow, foster a sense of common purpose

Support Rev. Susan, the congregation, and ourselves as we build trusting relationships around the settled ministry

- Build relationships of love, trust, and care among the Lead Minister, Board, and congregants
- Facilitate greater communication between the Board and congregants
- Support the Settled Ministry Planning Team as needed

Implement partnership governance

- Practice our policies and consider revision as needed
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of Lead Minister, Board, Staff, and church groups (e.g., Task Forces, Teams, etc.) within the new governance model

Some of the specific actions we took toward meeting these goals were:

- Scheduled Cookies and Conversation events with the Board
- Prepared monthly Perspectives articles on the Board's activities
- Participated in the Start-Up weekend that was facilitated by our UUA representatives, Rev. David Pyle and Lauren Wyeth
- Participated in Rev. Susan's joyous Installation service
- Added a regular Board meeting agenda item to share what we have been hearing from congregants
- Maintained an ongoing list of policies that require revision and began work on those revisions

The Board assessed its progress toward meeting these goals at its April meeting, and agreed that we have not yet devoted sufficient time or energy to identifying the congregation's hopes and dreams for the future. We will devote much of next year to this work, which will include opportunities to discuss whether to change our name from "church" to something else ("congregation"? "community"?), a review of our congregational covenant, and reconsideration of our mission statement. We will share details of these processes at the annual meeting (June 8, 2025, noon, Meeting Room).

Amidst this other work,

We received news that an offer had been made on the Belcher property (just south of our property). After discussing the matter amongst ourselves and with congregants, we concluded that we will not purchase the property but that we will pursue the possibility of purchasing the unused land at the back of the parking lot to expand our parking area.

We reviewed a Five-Year Capital Projects plan prepared by the Facilities team and began discussion of how to address these needs.

We also took steps to revive the Right Relations Committee. We established a Working Group to review the committee charge and the congregational covenant, and to draft a disruptive behavior policy. Many thanks to

Libby Devoe, Carol McCord, Scott Sanders, and Rich Slabach for taking on this expansive and challenging work. The disruptive behavior policy clarifies the steps that would be taken to address disruptive/destructive behavior by congregants and the circumstances under which the Board would consider revoking membership (a process referenced, but not described, in the UUCB Bylaws). We expect to share and adopt the policy before the end of the current fiscal year.

The Board could not do its work without the trust of the congregation and the efforts of the many committees, working groups, and task forces that live UUCB's mission through action. We encourage you to read their annual reports to learn more about the good work our congregation is doing.

We welcome questions and comments on our work and on the governance of UUCB more generally. You can reach us by email at pres@uubloomington.org or by checking in with one or more of us at community hour.

Respectfully submitted by Jane McLeod, President, on behalf of Mary Craig, Regina DiLavore, Bill Lonnerberg, Pam MacLaughlin, Steve Mascari, Linda Pickle, and Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray.

UUCB Leadership Cultivation Committee

Members: Glenda Breeden (chair), Carol McCord, Daniel Reed, Kathleen (Kathy) Sideli; Linda Pickle, board liaison; Anabel Watson, staff liaison; and Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

- The LCC tabled at the Building Community/Engagement Fair in November as we continue to develop leadership capacity in our congregation. Visibility and one-on-one connections seem important.
- At our UUCB December Congregational Meeting, LCC corrected the oversight of Regina DiLamore's role as Secretary of the Board being omitted from the June slate of nominees. She received unanimous confirmation.
- We took the opportunity afforded by the arrival of our new lead minister Reverend Susan to rethink our goals and strategies for accomplishing our mission of cultivating involvement and leadership in our congregational community. Reverend Susan contributed to this process by sharing ideas and processes from her past experience ministering to UU communities, and we worked as a committee to adapt these ideas and procedures into our congregational culture. One result of this rethink was the **Pathways to Engagement** workshop, held on April 19, 2025, at which five members of our congregation shared their stories of becoming involved in UUCB, followed by questions and general discussion. We plan to use this model again because we feel like all who were involved—panelists, registrants, and LCC members—benefited from the stories and lively conversation.
- Both **Mary Craig** (Board Member at-Large) and **Bill Lonnerberg** (Treasurer) have agreed to be nominated for another two-year term on the Board. **Von Welch** has agreed to be nominated to LCC to replace Carol McCord as her three-year term ends this year. (Thank you so much, Carol!) We will seek Mary's, Bill's, and Von's nominations at the June 8th Congregational Meeting.
- As LCC's secretary, Kathy has kept us on track with her comprehensive, meticulous minutes. Daniel stepped into this leadership position wholeheartedly—a very welcome, egalitarian male voice. Anabel's insight and assistance in providing LCC with names, contact info, and potential leaders have been invaluable. Linda's connection to the board has made our work so much easier. And Rev. Susan's history in the UU church, her fresh perspective and wisdom, her presence—wow! We are indeed grateful! - Glenda Breeden, Chair

Bios:

Mary Craig grew up in Oberlin, Ohio. She met her husband, Markus Vodosek, at an opera festival in Germany, and the two have lived across the U.S. and Germany. Previously a UU member in Portland (OR), Ann Arbor, and Salt Lake City, Mary is active in church music. She also sings with Voces Novae and serves on the group's board, where her background in arts administration is an asset. Before arriving here (six months ahead of the pandemic), Mary and Markus lived with their daughter Miriam for nine years in Germany's southwestern wine country. Mary's current work as an editor/translator/poet/educator continues in Bloomington. At UUCB, Mary has served as a Worship Associate. She's been an At-large Board member since 2023.

A lifelong Hoosier, **Bill Lonnerberg** has lived in Bloomington with his wife, Cindy, for 36 years; he and Cindy have two adult children. Bill's involvement at UUCB has included Choir, Green Grounds, RE, and Exploring UUCB. He has served as the Treasurer of UUCB since 2023. Bill is an engineer by profession, and managed large projects and project portfolio budgets during his 41-year career; he also served as a church trustee in another congregation. He enjoys nature, travel, basketball, and music.

Von Welch grew up in the UU Church of Bloomington. After high school he left Bloomington for the University of Illinois and returned to Bloomington and UUCB in 2011. He served on the UUCB board of directors from 2012 to 2018 as Secretary, Vice President, and President. During this time, the board oversaw the hiring of an interim minister, the calling of an associate minister, and the recognition of the congregation's first affiliate community minister. His most recent role at UUCB was serving on the Ministerial Search Committee which resulted in the calling of Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray. Von has been married to Ruth Aydt since 2004 and he retired from Indiana University in 2022 as associate vice president for information security. He currently serves as a co-lead of the Beacon Inc. Light the Way capital campaign, as co-president of the board for Constellation Stage and Screen, a board member at the IU Credit Union, and Secretary for the Monroe County Branch of the NAACP.

Finance Committee Report with Proposed Fiscal Year 24-25 Budget

Thanks to the members of the Finance Committee for their service to the Church. We have appreciated working with Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray in the first year of her ministry at UUCB. Committee members are:

- Bill Lonnberg (Treasurer)
- Kathy Gilbert
- Beth Henkel
- Ruth Sanders
- Greg Weaver

One notable accomplishment was facilitating the 2024 external audit. An outside firm, Blue & Co, audited the church's financial statements and found that the statements fairly represent the church's cash receipts and disbursements. These audits occur every four years, so the next one will be performed in 2028.

The following table depicts FY24-25 budget versus actual as of April 30, 2025. (The 304-day period of July 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025 comprises 83% of the fiscal year.)

	Actual	Budget	% of Budget
Income	\$683,307	\$767,742	89%
Expense	\$632,356	\$767,742	82%
Net income	\$50,951	\$0	

Through April 20, 2024, actual income is ahead of expectations, while actual actual expenses are very slightly below expectations. Budgeted income included pulling \$27,342 from Operational Reserves. At this point it is anticipated that \$0 in Operational Reserves will be needed to fund the FY24-25 budget.

The committee worked with church staff to assemble the proposed FY25-26 Budget, which is summarized on the following page. The Finance Committee recommends that the proposed budget be approved at the congregational meeting.

Bill Lonnberg, Treasurer

FY25-26 Proposed Budget

	Proposed FY25-26 Budget	Approved FY24-25 Budget	Change	Notes
Income				
Current FY Pledges, Committed	\$ 785,445.00	\$ 630,000.00	\$ 155,445.00	
Current FY Pledges, Mid Year	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	
Auction	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	
Bazaar	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	
Facilities Use Fees	\$ 3,700.00	\$ 3,400.00	\$ 300.00	
Miscellaneous	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ (5,000.00)	
Non-pledge gifts	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	\$ 15,000.00	
RE Income	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00	
Prior FY Pledges	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ (28,000.00)	
Sunday Plate Offering	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	
Operational Reserve	\$ -	\$ <u>27,342.29</u>	\$ <u>(27,342.29)</u>	
Total Income	\$ 884,645.00	\$ 767,742.29	\$ 116,902.71	
Expenses				
Committees	\$ 3,150.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ (3,850.00)	
Outreach	\$ 53,311.00	\$ 28,565.35	\$ 24,745.65	FY24-25 amount is for Denominational category
Ministry (a)-lead minister	\$ 168,529.24	\$ 182,864.67	\$ (14,335.43)	FY24-25 amount includes relocation
Ministry (d)-other	\$ 38,565.14	\$ 15,400.00	\$ 23,165.14	
Religious education	\$ 134,392.65	\$ 125,651.18	\$ 8,741.47	
Music	\$ 55,449.60	\$ 45,867.00	\$ 9,582.60	
Office	\$ 179,025.67	\$ 257,081.69	\$ (78,056.02)	
Technology	\$ 75,189.91	\$ -	\$ 75,189.91	FY24-25 costs were included in Office
Membership	\$ 51,921.80	\$ -	\$ 51,921.80	FY24-25 costs were included in Office
Plant	\$ <u>125,110.00</u>	\$ <u>105,312.41</u>	\$ <u>19,797.59</u>	
Total Expenses	\$ 884,645.00	\$ 767,742.29	\$ 116,902.71	
Net income	\$ (0.00)	\$ -	\$ (0.00)	

Special Purposes Fund

The Special Purposes Fund (SPF) Committee for the 2024-2025 fiscal year was comprised of Andrew Appel (Chair), Bill Lonnberg (UUCB Treasurer), Licia Weber, Ruth Aydt and Steve Mascari (Board At-Large).

There were no bequests this fiscal year. Funds were approved to support Rev. Susan's installation service, including a professional photographer, accommodations, travel expenses & refreshments for visiting clergy, meeting room decorations and printing costs. A request for \$25,000 to support the new Beacon Center was made with accompanying endorsements from the Homelessness Task Force, the Board of Directors, lead minister Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray and associate minister Rev. Forrest Gilmore who is also the Executive Director of Beacon. This request was approved. For details, please see the minutes of the May 28, 2025, SFP Committee meeting in the church Google docs at SPF>Public>Minutes.

SPF started this fiscal year with \$505,643 in assets. This included \$181,740 in the SPF Endowment and \$323,903 in SPF available funds. This was up from \$458,657 at the start of the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Annual reports are due before the end of the fiscal year but as of May 27, 2025, total SPF assets were \$507,597. This is before the Beacon Center donation. Investment performance for the Wellington Fund was solid being up 7% for this fiscal year to date. Parnassus was flat and bond returns were modest. The Clean Edge Green Energy Fund (QCLN) continues to underperform this fiscal year and the committee has started discussions to divest this fund.

MINISTER and STAFF

Lead Minister's Report

The Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray

It is hard to believe we are finishing our first year of shared ministry. For me, it has been a wonderful year full of getting to know this congregation, its gifts and strengths, its traditions and culture, and most of all – YOU – its people! With over 470 members, I know that I haven't had the chance to meet all of you, but I look forward to growing in our knowledge and care for each other in the coming years. I continue to be grateful for this ministry, for the trust you have placed in me, and for the opportunities ahead.

When I began as your minister in August, I had one overarching goal for this year – to build trust. This feels like the most important step in the beginning of any relationship, but certainly in a relationship of shared ministry, and as the first step in creating a foundation for a strong settled ministry.

How do we build trust? Trust grows through showing up, listening, learning about each other, being vulnerable and honest, navigating loss and change, conflict and opportunity together. Sadly, we had too many opportunities to navigate loss together, as we mourned and celebrated the lives of more than a dozen members who died over this last year.

Alongside our grief, we also had so many opportunities for celebration, to share long held traditions and create some new ones. We have had many moments of joy, of beauty, of meaning, and community. There is so much to share from this year, and I know I will miss some things, but here is my attempt to summarize the year in ministry:

Worship

I brought a practice of **thematic ministry** to worship this year. Thematic ministry involves setting an overarching topic to explore and approaching it through monthly themes. Not only did we use the themes in worship, but our Chalice Circles followed these themes, as did some of our religious education programming for children.

One of the ways I hoped to bring intentionality to the goal of building trust was through our monthly worship themes. I chose themes that are all a part of creating trust in a relationship. We began in September with Beginnings and explored how to start well and the opportunities and challenges that come with new beginnings. Throughout the year, we moved through the themes of Belonging (October), Vulnerability (November); Ritual and Celebrations (December); Intention (January); Compassion (February); Commitment (March); Generosity (April); Growth and Wisdom (May) and in June, we end with Trust.

It has been a true joy to create worship with Sue Swaney and Stephanie Kimball. The creativity, storytelling, music, the Choir, Ray Fellman's inspired playing – it has all made Sunday morning services one of the most fulfilling aspects of my job.

I am grateful to work with talent **Worship Associates (WA)**. This year, we added a few more responsibilities to the WA role and in the Spring, we added a few more volunteers to the team. Thank you to Erica Whichello for chairing our group and keeping us organized. With time, I am hoping to deepen the collaborative work we do shaping worship. Thank you to Erica W, Sarah Barnett, Jason Michálek, Sarah Montgomery, Avram Primack, Dinorah Sapp, and new WAs Olaya Fernández Gayol, Mary Beth O'Brien, Matt Stonecipher, and MJ Wallaker.

We saw tremendous growth in attendance on Sunday, averaging more than a 60% increase, with many Sundays having an 80% increase. This led to our move to 2 Sunday morning services in February. The transition to two services went smoothly and remarkably, we've had a balance in attendance across both

services with room for new people. Beginning on Memorial Day weekend, we experiment with moving to one service through Labor Day. My hope is this pattern will work and we won't be too crowded. With our current staff and ministerial capacity, it is important that the staff get a break from the extra strain of two services.

One last memory from worship: **the Installation service on March 30th**, where we formally and publicly made a covenant of shared ministry, was stunning! I still feel so moved when I remember the service. The service was both a celebration of our ministry, and also a call to the work we can do in Indiana and in the Midwest in partnership with our sibling UU congregations across the state.

Ministry and Program

It has been wonderful getting to know and work with several program committees and teams this year: the Social Justice Coordinating Team, the Pastoral Associates Care Team (PACT), the Caring committee, the Settled Ministry planning team.

The Settled Ministry Planning Team was a one-year ministry team to help me get settled at the church and in the Bloomington community. As part of this, Andrew Appel helped organize several house parties – opportunities for me to meet small groups of church members at someone's home. I was able to meet more than 100 members this way and it was helpful in learning more of your names and some of your histories with the congregation. The team also helped advise me on the history of the congregation, to find resources in the community, to connect to interfaith colleagues, and planned and executed the most beautiful Installation service. Their extra support to me in this first year was incredibly helpful. Thank you to Mary Beth O'Brien (chair), Andrew Appel, Denise Breeden-Ost, Olaya Fernández Gayol, Ann Kamman, Mike McGregor, Sarah Montgomery.

The pastoral care that this congregation organizes with a small but dedicated group of volunteers is truly amazing. With all honesty, this has been a year with significant pastoral needs and I could not have made it through the year without these leaders who offer so much pastoral care, dedicated support and tangible caring services to our community. The work these groups do is truly remarkable. Their reports have more detail, but the seven volunteers who lead this work are a part of the life-saving ministry that this church provides. Thank you to Ruellen Fessenbecker, Melinda Swenson, Allison Tomusk, Kathy Sidel, Sandy Churchill, Martha Dogan, and Doris Wittenburg – and all the volunteers they work with to carry out these vital ministries.

In addition to the ministries of the **Caring Team and PACT**, Stephanie Kimball and I recognized the growing pastoral needs that might arise given the caustic political climate and the dismantling of public services and institutions. In response, we created a weekly Pastoral Conversations drop-in group that invites folks who may need some more community, caring and group support to show up and be held in the caring circle of this group.

With staff, we've also implemented a practice of sending occasional cards to members when we are aware they are experiencing a death in the family or health issue. Working with Jo Bowman, our Communication's Coordinator, we have also created a **Community Care and Connection** section in the Friday Update and on our webpage to share news from our members that helps us better care and connect.

Social Justice Coordinating Team: I am grateful for the structure that interim minister, Rev. Connie Grant, created with Jackie Hall, Christine Banister, Barb Berggoetz and Jenny Vessels. Having a SJ coordinating team that is not doing the direct work of the Task Forces, but trying to have a higher-level view of our SJ work helped foster some important things this year. First, they were able to take up the work of UU the Vote and help our congregation reach thousands of voters who might not otherwise have been contacted to help know how important their votes were and have accurate information about voting locations and dates. Second, they helped strategize better ways to organize and share opportunities for taking action. This led to Jo Bowman creating the **Justice and Advocacy corner** of our Friday Update and website. This go-to place to amplify actions

for justice that come from all of our Task Forces and partners in one place is a helpful organizing tool. Second, they worked with me to brainstorm how we were going to respond more effectively to the rise of authoritarians in our country and the direct attacks against the constitution and our constitutional rights. This led to the creation of the newest SJ Task Force – the Democracy Task Force, which is working to help grow the power and impact of our congregation in defending democracy and resisting authoritarianism.

Administration

Administration is the category I use to talk about the often behind the scenes governance, operational and financial work that is critical to the congregation and a good portion of my portfolio too. This includes my work with the staff, the Board, the Pledge Drive Committee, the Personnel Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Leadership Cultivation Committee.

I am grateful to work with such an excellent, talented and **dedicated staff team**. Thank you to Stephanie Kimball, Sue Swaney, Amanda Waye, Jo Bowman, Anabel Watson, Hans Kelson. It is a pleasure to work with you as the core administrative and program staff team at UUCB. I also want to thank Eric Branigin, our RE Assistant, Dylan Marks, our Sexton and CJ Waye who provides custodial services.

Over this year, we have increased the hours for our Office Assistant/Communications Coordinator Jo Bowman and they have created some new communication tools that are strengthening our ministry. This includes the Sunday morning announcements slides, the order of service Announcement flyer, the Justice/Advocacy corner and Community Care and Connection pages on our website. They also provided a lot of support to the Pledge Drive Committee through the publication and preparation of pledge drive materials and weekly communication to members with reminders to pledge. This support strengthened our campaign overall and supported our success.

Speaking of the **Pledge Drive Campaign!!** Wow! Wow! Wow! One of the most exciting things about this year was to blow past our super-audacious stretch goal! We not only were extremely successful in raising money to fund our ministry for next year, and not have to budget drawing on reserves to fund our operations, we also did much better with members making their pledges during the campaign itself. This made the clean-up work that the committee does to call all members who have not yet pledged much more manageable. Thank you to all our members and friends for their generosity and timeliness in responding to the campaign. Thank you for believing in this ministry and investing to help it be strong in the midst of tremendous national, political and economic uncertainty. It is another testament to the strength and courage of this congregation.

I appreciate that the congregation created a year-round pledge drive committee a couple years ago. This is something new to me, but I was blown away by the benefits of working with a team that is thinking about the pledge drive all year round. While the actual public campaign is always a lot of work and a busy time – the pre-planning, the opportunity to brainstorm and think of ways to strengthen the campaign were vital. I think it was helpful to shift our process and create a budget in advance of the campaign so we could be specific about our goals and our financial target. This necessarily shifted our campaign timeline later, but I think the clarity that the early budget process brought was helpful. Thank you to Corrin Clarkson, our strong and organized chair and the incredible volunteers who brought a variety of skills – from event planning, to communications, to data and spreadsheets. It was fantastic to work with Corrin, Joan Caulton, JaneAnn Gifford, Beth Henkel, Pat Slabach and Judy Witt. I also want to offer a special thank you to Abby Henkel Roman who did all the design work for our pledge drive materials.

In addition to the year-round pledge committee, I have also appreciated the new governance model the Board is using guided by the book *Governance and Ministry* by UU minister and congregational consultant, Dan Hochkiss. This model is built on both clarifying roles and practicing partnership between the minister and Board. I have enjoyed operating under this model and find value in the practices of setting annual goals at the beginning of the year (both for the minister and the Board), reviewing them mid-year and evaluating ourselves

against them in the late Spring. One of the goals we set for ourselves was building relationship and growing trust in the partnership between the minister and Board and I think we have done a good job of this. We still have work to do with the congregation to engage questions of mission and vision which is planned for next year. I believe this governance model will invite us to stay focused on mission and strategic ends, as well as the present and future strengths and needs of the congregation. More than anything, I am impressed with the maturity, leadership skills, thoughtfulness and commitment to partnership, listening, and supporting the congregation that the Board members bring to the work. It continues to be a privilege to work with congregation President, Jane McLeod and with Linda Pickle (Vice President), Regina DiLavore (Secretary), Bill Lonnberg (Treasurer), and at-large members Mary Craig, Pam MacLaughlin, Steve Mascari.

I am also grateful for the work of congregation Treasurer, Bill Lonnberg, and the Finance Committee. Bill and I created a new budget process this year, working with staff to create a draft budget in February to present to the Board. This budget then helped set the goal for the pledge drive. It was a more collaborative process, inviting staff to have more input into the budgets for the programs they lead and it helped to have this strong draft budget in place when it came to finalizing the budget for the May Board meeting and the June congregational meeting. Both Bill and I, along with Director of Administration Amanda Waye, recognize the need for some improvements in how we track our finances and have made some progress this year and are hopeful to continue this work next year.

Future Challenges and Opportunities

As I contemplate the year(s) ahead, I know that capacity may continue to be a limiting factor in growing our ministry. I am hopeful to put a little more ministry support in place this year, but I am less sure what form this might take. I am hopeful that our conversations around mission and vision will help guide my and the Board's thinking about where we need additional staff and volunteer capacity.

Truly, I cannot say enough of how impressed I am by the ministry, the community, and the spirit of this church. I feel so fortunate that your Search Committee invited me to be your candidate and that you all called me as your minister. This is just the kind of ministry I wanted to be doing, with just the kind of community I've wanted to be a part of.

I know we will experience challenges, as all communities and ministries do, but my hope is that the good work we put in this year to get to know one another, to build trust – to *seek the spirit, build community and work to make positive change in our community and the world* – will be a foundation of strength that we can lean on and lean into no matter the challenges that come.

Yours in love and gratitude,
Rev. Susan

Music Director's Annual Report

Musical highlights of the 2024-25 year include:

The Installation Service of Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray. (And on a personal note, working with Reverend Susan has been a joy!)

"Big Music" Sundays:

- Bach's Mass in A Major "Gloria" and Mendelssohn's "Verleih Uns Frieden" in December and a Malcolm Dalglish Hymnody of Earth extravaganza for Earth Day.
- Musical giant Mary Goetze's memorial service

We have made a concerted effort this year to include youth and children in the music-making.

- All-Ages string orchestra for Christmas Eve
- All-Ages orchestra playing a multi-level arrangement of Ode to Joy for Easter Sunday, conducted by Maestro Jeffrey Meyer (We enjoyed that so much, we have commissioned a similar version of the Hallelujah Chorus!)
- An All-Ages Rock Band, organized by Steve Mascari
- Family Choir, performing with the All-Ages Rock Band and on the Hymnody of Earth Sunday
- High school students played instrumental parts with the choir (beautifully!) on several occasions.
- Steve Mascari is leading singalongs in the courtyard between or after services, weather permitting
- The Heartland String Band is still going strong, for any who are interested.

As always, Ray Fellman enlivens our worship and rehearsals from the piano bench, and we have a terrific group of substitutes for when he is elsewhere music-directing shows.

Our in-house percussionists, Colleen Haas and Angela Gabriel, have added a lot of flair to our services.

Hans and Jo have been particularly helpful posting resource videos for our hard-working choir.

The choir has grown (which is especially good, now that we divide for the two services), and Eve Loftman Cusack organizes very fun parties throughout the year!

And next year, we will sing Beethoven's 9th with the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra in May!

On a personal note, I am so grateful to this music-loving community, to the beautiful choir, to the inspiring and helpful staff, and for everything we do together.

Susan Swaney, Music Director

Director of Administration's Annual Report

My oh my how time does fly! Here we are, once again, with another year under our belts! As we continue to move forward through life and its unpredictable outcomes, there is always one thing that will forever remain the same: Everything Changes.

This past year we have seen many losses within our church family. The congregation has lost a number of wonderful individuals and I'd like to take a moment to honor them and those (their families and all of us) who have been left behind. We have loved together. We have cried together. We have supported each other and though we can never replace a single soul, this community has impacted those affected the hardest by these losses by showing up, helping when and however they can, and most importantly, by giving love openly and without resistance. This place is a safe haven. You all are the ones that make that sentence true. Thank you for allowing me to speak on your love, generosity, and kindness as a whole.

Change doesn't have to be looked at as bad, though! This past year has brought many changes to UUCB, one of them being our lovely, settled minister, Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray. It was a long process to get her here. She is just what we had been waiting for and needing. She has brought rejuvenation and a positive change to our inner community, our personal lives, and impacted our outer community already in her short time as our leader! Thank you for settling in Bloomington Susan, we are glad to finally have you here!

Building/Grounds- Here are some things this fiscal year has brought us...

- New crash bars on the Main exterior entry doors. These are like the others throughout the building and look great too!
- New Dishwasher in the main kitchen. YAY!
- New Shed, also a big yay!
- Updated Service times on the main sign outside of the Meeting Room.
- Main bathrooms outside of the Meeting Room have updated painted stalls. The upstairs bathrooms are to follow suit soon!
- Updating Rotten Windows. This too, is coming soon! We have been accepted for a SEEL grant (thank you Steve Krahnke, Molly O'Donnell, Dick Stumpner and anyone else who has adamantly worked on or provided information to make this happen!) which will cover the majority of the windows cost. The windows that will be replaced are: Room 103 and 105, and the high windows in Rev. Susan's office and the Office where you can find Jo!

I'm looking forward to seeing what this coming year has in store for this community because I know whatever it is, it will not shake us. It will not stop us. It will only draw us closer and we will show it love, hope, and a solid foundation that can only support one thing: Growth.

Thank you for allowing me to grow with you, learn from you, love with you, and laugh with you. I'm positive about the future and thankful for the past.

Amanda Waye
Director of Administration

Connections Coordinator's Annual Report

It has been a pleasure deeply participating in the intricate web of life that connects the community at UUCB since my start date of over three years ago. It is rewarding to know that my work strives to strengthen this community. Building thriving connections and helping to nurture welcoming and diverse environments where individuals, from long-time congregants to visitors, feel inspired and affirmed are pursuits that bring me much fulfillment. I know, too, that the connections built at UUCB lead to lasting friendships and partnerships that become the impetus for social justice-based, growth-oriented, and creative endeavors that nourish the broader community of Bloomington. It is truly a joy to go about life, whether at the grocery store, the gym, or at social gatherings, and to cross paths with congregants of UUCB in seemingly every corner of our beautiful town. I am incredibly grateful to this community for welcoming me with such kindheartedness, openness, trust, and collaboration.

I have watched this community likewise welcome with care so many others—visitors, new ministers, congregants who have spent years away. I have watched this community celebrate all of these people and support them in times of sorrow. It is such a gift to inhabit the profession of celebrating and supporting this community. Though there is conflict in any community, I feel that the congregants of UUCB, as a whole, approach one another with open mindedness, positive intentions, and care. This is special.

The work of this position would not be possible without the collective participation of this community's congregants. I am continuously inspired by the dedicated leaders of our Board, social justice task forces, congregational activity and volunteer groups, and committees with whom I work to help newcomers plug in and to ensure thriving social networks within our community. I am grateful for the time and energy of the Membership Anniversary Call Team and those volunteers who step in last-minute to add their knowledge and commitment to lengthy tasks. Connections classes, *New to UU* and *Exploring UUCB*, are made vastly richer and more engaging with the generous time and energy of volunteer facilitators and guest presenters; a social justice task force representative speaks monthly in *New to UU* while the Pledge Drive Committee is represented during each session of *Exploring UUCB*, which occurs 3-4 times a year. As well, community connections are deeply nurtured by those volunteers rising early week after week to greet at the door, direct parking on busy Sundays, and brew the coffee that brings such joy to the sleep-deprived and those seeking social connection. A big Thank You to All for working with me on these endeavors and contributing to a beautiful synergy within our community.

Overview of 2024-25 Connections Activities

- Facilitated and organized three sessions of Exploring UUCB this fiscal year and four since publication of the last Annual Report; Exploring UUCB is a 4 hour two-part course offering participants the opportunity to join official membership
- Facilitated and organized New to UU monthly class, including coordination of Social Justice Task Force guest presenters
- Held membership book signings and “Covenanting Ceremonies” and, including those who joined in June 2024 after publication of the last Annual Report, coordinated the joining of **58 new members**
 - This includes six youth who completed the Coming of Age program
- Compiled Sunday spoken Announcements and delivered them along with the general Welcome and the Land Acknowledgement during Sunday worship
- Staffed the Welcome Table on Sunday mornings
- Communicated regularly in-person and via email, Zoom, and phone call with the larger congregation regarding involvement, membership, and related matters

- Assisted newcomers and new members in cultivating meaningful engagement
- Maintained membership records in UUCB's database, the MyUUA database, the Membership Book, and general files
- Hosted and organized a Longtime Members Gathering and name tag review for members of 40+ years in October '24
- Worked on a summer roll review in July (follow-up to larger review earlier in 2024) as instructed by Rev. Connie Grant
- Coordinated UUCB's Young Adult Ministry activities including lunches, general communications and promotion, projects/activities, and assisted with the IU Involvement Fair group
- Acted as ex-officio staff member on the Leadership Cultivation Committee
- Coordinated and maintained weekly registrations for Java Crew, Greeters, and, until Nov., the Flame Keepers groups; assisted volunteers on Sunday mornings
 - Began coordinating and recruiting for the new Parking Team in late 2024
 - Recruited additional roles of Portico Greeter and Ushers starting September '24
- Led the Membership Anniversary Call Team
- Maintained and updated documents on involvement opportunities (groups, committees, volunteer roles, task forces, teams, etc.), membership, and general information on the community
- Held individual appointments with congregants to discuss involvement, programming, and membership
- Coordinated the Getting Involved: Activities and Committees Fair (social and other church groups, committees, and teams)
- Though canceled by City of Bloomington due to weather, coordinated 4th of July Parade involvement including communication with Bloomington Parks and Recreation; initiated planning for 4th of July, 2025
- Utilized Planning Center to maintain registrations, groups, membership and congregant data, and generally facilitate the items above
- Regularly submitted Connections Coordinator columns to *Perspectives* and blurbs to the *Friday Update*
- Attended the annual multi-day Finding Our Way Home conference (a UUA event) for religious professionals of color
- Registered to attend General Assembly in-person later in June
- Registered to attend the annual UU Association of Membership Professionals Pro Day conference later in June
- Outside of my staff role, I have enjoyed continued involvement with the UUCB-affiliated Cloud 7 choral ensemble and Open Mind Zen Indiana, completion of a training for facilitators of the Adult OWL programs, and participation in church activities such as Fellowship Dinners and Chalice Circles.

Position Overview

The Connections Coordinator position is a part-time 24 hour per week commitment that grows connections within the UUCB community through connecting congregants with activities, resources, and each other. The Connections Coordinator, among other endeavors, also discusses with, accompanies, and orients folks through journeys of meaningful self-discovery as they seek to embrace the UU tradition through membership and exploratory courses.

Serving Committees, Groups, and Teams

This position consistently supports the Greeters, Java Crew, and when needed, the Parking Team, with assistance to additional groups as needed. The position also leads the Membership Anniversary Call Team, regularly serves on the Leadership Cultivation Committee, and, with assistance from Hans Kelson, coordinates activities for UUCB's Young Adults (18-35 years).

Membership

Throughout the year our congregation has continued to welcome newcomers and new members. We have welcomed a total of 58 new members, an increase of 42 from last year, since publication of the last Annual Report. Our total membership is currently 482.

It is meaningful and impactful to recognize that, in the face of current and consistent challenges to equity and pluralism, our congregation draws many resonating with our UU values and seeking affirming and supportive spaces. We are likewise a refuge for those who may have experienced prior religious homes that did not align with these values. Since August, our new settled minister, Reverend Susan, has likewise inspired and moved the many who have joined our congregation as new members and visitors.

General Engagement

It is the sharing of ownership in our activities that creates a thriving, welcoming, and increasingly interconnected community. Participating in the church groups and registrations located on UUCB's Church Center platform allows all active congregants to be notified of upcoming events, classes, volunteer opportunities, and ensure inclusion in desired mailing lists. This is also where the online directory for official Members and Friends—with profiles maintained individually by members—is housed. Those looking for deepened connection to and engagement within our community are invited to browse our registrations page (uucb.churchcenter.com/registrations) and/or reach out to me at connect@uubloomington.org to schedule a Connections Chat and/or request resources and information on church engagement, membership, and/or volunteer opportunities.

I am truly grateful to be sharing and growing in community with you all. I look forward to staying connected.
Anabel Watson, Connections Coordinator

Director of Lifespan Religious Education Report

This has been another fun year for religious education at UUCB. For our children and youth program, it's been a year of constant change and adaptation!

We started off the year with newly revamped volunteer teacher trainings, as well as a Parent Orientation to supplement our Religious Education Fair in September. Things hummed along smoothly, with kids divided into Spirit Play and Kids' Club classes, with occasional Middle School offerings, while most of our high schoolers participated in Coming of Age. After the election in November, we added weekly breakfasts for teachers and parents, to share ideas about how to talk with children about the changes in our political landscape. Then, in December it became clear that we were going to need to move to a two-service schedule in February, rather than next fall, to accommodate our growing numbers. So we quickly put together a January Intersession to address the large numbers in Kids' Club. I am very grateful to all of the people who came up with a special activity to do with kids, enabling us to offer a total of twelve options for exploring that month's theme of Intention. At the same time, we hastily scheduled additional teacher trainings for new volunteers who stepped up to ensure that we could offer religious education classes at both service times. OWL for 7th and 8th graders also got under way at that time.

In March, we held a Youth Advisor training in partnership with UUA Lifespan Engagement staff, preparing ourselves for an exciting fresh start to high school youth programming. Our youth enjoyed a trip to Bradford Woods in April, and to Holiday World in May, paid for by our Mental Health Initiative grant from the Center for Congregations. We are in the process of refurbishing our youth room, and looking forward to several more outings, events and activities as that grant program continues.

In addition, three of our worship services this year have highlighted religious education programs: in August, our OWL facilitators talked about the importance of Our Whole Lives sexuality education; a service in March highlighted our commitment to youth, and in April our Coming of Age participants shared their credos.

By the way, this year we doubled the number of children and youth registered for religious education, as well as the number attending regularly. And our number of volunteers increased significantly, especially when we started a two-service schedule. However, while some choose to keep teaching year after year, it's not really reasonable to expect everyone to continue indefinitely. In order to fully staff our Sunday children & youth programs, we need 16 people per week when we have two services. And of course we can't, and don't, expect anyone to be available to teach every week, so we need about 32 volunteers per semester to ensure the burden isn't too great for anyone. So please consider signing up for a semester, or a year, or in the summertime, for as little as one Sunday. It's not hard. It *is* rewarding. And it's a way that you can make a difference in the lives of our young people.

Meanwhile, our adult religious education program is also thriving, with ten classes taking place from September to May covering a wide range of topics. As we plan for next year, I would really appreciate your input. This past year, we offered two classes that ended up being canceled due to low enrollment. There were also two others that we wanted to offer, but needed facilitators – especially young adult facilitators. It could be that these were just not topics of interest right now, or that there were schedule conflicts, or that people simply did not know they were being offered. I want to build an adult religious ed program that meets the current needs of this congregation, so please share your thoughts with me. What topics would you like to address in the coming year? What questions would you like to explore? What formats, dates, and times are best for you?

Please watch for a special edition of Perspectives in August that will highlight Religious Education opportunities for the coming church year.

Finally, a word about childcare, which also falls under the religious education umbrella. The best way to request childcare, either as a parent or as someone planning an event, is to use the [form available on our website](#), at least two weeks in advance. You can also email me directly, but that adds another step in the communication process that might slow down your request.

Technology Coordinator's Annual Report

Friends,

It has been another wonderful year here at UUCB, and I am still honored to serve as your Technology Coordinator. For anyone who doesn't already know, my main responsibilities are to maintain the website, service and upgrade the livestream system, keep staff computers/networking up to date, and generally improve the usefulness of technology to the congregation.

Year in Review

This past year has been a year of changes and adjustments in many ways. There's one big one, of course: It has been an absolute delight to work with Rev. Susan as our new minister, and I'm looking forward to what the future holds for this congregation under her leadership. More closely focused on my role, though, this year has been spent mostly on putting the finishing touches on previous projects, rather than starting anything new.

In my report last year, I referenced the old software developer's joke that "in this field, the first 90% of the work takes 90% of the project's time, and the last 10% of the work takes the last 90% of the project's time". I would extend that sentiment to all technical fields. I've been working on a lot of that last 10% this year, and while it can be less exciting to watch, it's no less important. It's quite satisfying to see some of these projects finally getting finished. So, in no particular order, here are some accomplishments that come to mind.

Website Updates

I suppose that after two years, I can't really call it "the new website" anymore, but it still feels that way to me. I can't list everything here, of course, but many refinements have been made. Here are some of the highlights:

- More of the Sunday service archive is now available easily, back to the start of Rev. Susan's ministry here. Previously, the "Past Services" section only showed 6-10 past services at a time.
- Event descriptions (for events which have descriptions) are now visible directly on the front page of the website, rather than only by going to Church Center. The code behind event listings has also been made far more robust.
- The website's home page is now edited in a way which is much more consistent with the rest of the website. This simplifies the work of content editors, as well as making the code easier to maintain.

Meeting Room Tech Improvements

The new software I mentioned in last year's annual report continues to have an excellent track record, and has received too many improvements to mention here. I've released four new versions since last year, and new development continues. If you're interested in more of the technical software details, check out [the project's public presence on GitHub](#).

Going beyond software development, I've also made important physical upgrades to the livestream and sound system. These include:

- A new pulpit microphone, which is longer and can more easily accommodate the wide range of speakers' heights.
- Mounting the front-of-the-room camera on a specially-made shelf rather than a tripod (thanks to Steve Krahnke for creating the shelf). This removes a tripping hazard, saves space, and also looks far better.
- Ongoing cable management and cleanup. Each time we change the window insert to a new season, I have a list of other maintenance tasks to add while we have the scissor lift. Steve Krahnke and I have removed old banner-hanging fixtures which were tangled and jammed, fixed lights, improved choir microphone mounting, replaced overcomplicated projector power wiring, and more.
- New microphone stands! We were long, long overdue for replacing our aging and broken fleet of microphone stands.

- After much research, I made the decision to switch to rechargeable AA batteries for wireless microphones on a trial basis. This has been a huge success so far, dramatically reducing environmentally harmful waste. I have protocols in place to periodically test batteries to ensure they are retaining their capacity over time, and to detect failing batteries before they cause issues during a service. It's too early to tell whether or not this system will be trouble-free and effective enough to remain in place in the long term, but estimates and early information are promising. I have used less than 10 single-use batteries for microphones since early November, down from approximately 4-6 per service previously. Especially given our return to two services, this is quite a considerable decrease in environmental impact.

Fellowship Hall

This past year, I worked with Steve Krahnke to dramatically improve the tech system in Fellowship Hall. This project included:

- Mounting speakers on the walls, making setup much easier.
- Installing system controls into a refurbished cabinet, providing a central spot for cable management and equipment storage.
- Installing a ceiling-mounted pull-down projector screen.

Taken together, all of these improvements have greatly increased the system's availability and usage by groups using the room, while also drastically reducing the amount of tech setup time per event.

Miscellaneous

Finally, here are some things I think are worth mentioning, but don't have enough detail to get their own category:

- Our new internet setup has been excellent! It's important to acknowledge that, for a while, we were experiencing periodic disconnections. This turned out to be a very hard-to-track-down issue on GigabitNow's end, affecting only a very small portion of their customer base. That's fixed now, and I've been extremely happy with their support and service overall.
- As mentioned last year, we replaced our old phone system with a new Voice over IP setup. This is more flexible and modern, as well as being far cheaper than the old system.
- In consultation with Anabel and Jo, I set up two digital guest card kiosks in the foyer and near the courtyard entrance. In addition to offering easy access to the online guest card, these also allow access to other Church Center functions.
- There was an issue with one of the check-in laptops at the December 2024 congregational meeting which caused a difficulty in establishing quorum. I diagnosed and fixed that issue, and have established better protocols to make sure it can't happen again.

Next Year

As we move into the 2025-26 church year, I look forward to continuing the work of improving the use of technology to further UUCB's mission. As I said in my introduction, I am honored and excited to continue as part of the staff here. Thank you for your trust and your support.

In gratitude,

Hans Kelson

Technology Coordinator

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana

COMMITTEES, TEAMS, GROUPS, and TASK FORCES

Caring Committee

The Caring Committee bid farewell last summer to its longtime and much valued chair, Sharon Yarber, when she moved away after three decades of dedicated service. The reconvened committee has continued to support the congregation by coordinating its services with the [Pastoral Associates Care Team](#). The PACT works closely with the Lead Minister to support those who are experiencing illness, loss, isolation or life changes while the Caring Committee provides practical assistance with meals for congregants following surgery, a death in the family, or the birth or adoption of a child; occasional rides to medical appointments; or refreshments for a reception in conjunction with a memorial service. Referrals to the Caring Committee come from the PACT. This past year we convened our committee on a quarterly basis while offering our support regularly as needed. Our members are: Martha Dogan, Transportation; Sandy Churchill, Soup Train; Doris Wittenburg, Memorial Receptions; and myself, Kathleen Sideli, as Convener. We are grateful to everyone in the congregation who volunteer to provide these essential and much appreciated services throughout the year.

Kathleen Sideli, Convener of the UUCB Caring Committee

Chalice Circles

It has been a successful year for the Chalice Circle program. 10 Circles that included over 70 members met once or twice a month. This is an increase of approximately 15 people over last year's participants. The circle members practiced listening to each other as each participant took a turn speaking about their experiences with the monthly topic. Monthly topics coordinated with Reverend Susan's monthly themes, which gave the circle members an opportunity to explore the monthly theme and its personal relevance more deeply.

A secondary activity that Chalice Circles perform is a group service project. Service projects this year included cooking and/or serving meals for the bazaar and fundraisers in the church, making soup for the caring committee, and working with the grounds committee to remove invasive plants from the property. One group made a meal for "Thriving Connections," which is a human development program of Monroe County's South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP).

We were saddened this year to lose one of our facilitators, Alan Backler. In addition to being a facilitator, Alan has been a champion of the Chalice Circle program and was, in fact, one of the founding members of the organizing committee. We are grateful for his long years of involvement in the Chalice Circle program. We are also grateful to Amy Wolf who stepped up to take on the facilitation of Alan's group.

We are also grateful for the advice and support of Reverend Barbara Child, our ministerial consultant.

Ruellen Fessenbecker, Janeth Welch, Steve Pock, Bob Appelman - Chalice Circle Executive Team

Facilities Team

We have started crossing small things off our list generated from last March's walk through. We are planning to meet again on May 13th for another walk through to reassess, review, and plan an attack on the more pressing issues we find/know about.

Many minor cosmetic things have been updated around the grounds with no plans on stopping. We are currently evaluating the removal of a few dead trees, removing certain plants' current locations to better suited areas on the property, as well as adding more protection from our critter friends around the foundation of the new shed.

We will be replacing many rotten windows very soon, as UUCB has been accepted for a SEEL grant and this will pay for the majority of this project. There are still other windows in the building that do not function properly but are less urgent at this time.

We hope to have some larger changes/updates occur to the interior of the building as well in the coming fiscal year.

Amanda Wayne, Director of Administration

Fellowship Dinners

Fellowship dinners are a chance for members and friends of the congregation to get together with a different group of people each month to share a meal and get to know each other. Each participant is expected to contribute to the meal and to host once a year. Some meals are fancy affairs, and some involve ordering in pizza. Participants do not need to know how to cook, nor do they need to have their own place to host. The goal is to remove as many barriers to participation.

Fellowship Dinners ran from October to June this year with 48 people participating. Of those, 14 were new to the program, and many were new to the church. Scheduling started a bit late this year with some modifications from previous years. We tried to schedule fewer guests per table, to encourage hosts to actively invite newcomers to the dinners. We also ran later into the summer. In the upcoming year we hope to involve even more congregants. -Abby Gitlitz, Coordinator

Grounds Committee

A big change to our property came in summer 2024 with the demolition of our two old sheds and replacement with one large shed. Several trees had to be removed (both native and invasive) for the project. We transplanted some Eastern Red Cedar from another piece of the property to the south side of the shed and put in a few pieces of transplanted tall grass after it was all removed from in front of the air conditioning units on the northwest corner of the church. We transplanted some peonies along the walkway to the office door. A member of the congregation is using his fresh cut trees to provide new mulch for the bypass path (this will avoid the invasive jumping worm problem). In April 2025 we got a two hour session of volunteer labor from one of the chalice circles and cut lots of Asian Bush Honeysuckle along the south side of our driveway. We continually cut ABH anywhere on the property and herbicide is used cautiously. We are also on the lookout for poison ivy anywhere people will be congregating. We're always looking for helpers so step up if you have even a few minutes to help tend our grounds.

Ann Kamman

Holiday Art Fair and Bazaar

The Bazaar was held on Dec 6 and 7, 2024. The organizing committee consists of 21 chairs or co-chairs of the various areas of the Bazaar. Over 130 volunteer slots were filled by church members, 4 task forces operated and staffed booths, and other volunteers worked before the bazaar making food and other objects for sale, making this a church-wide, inclusive activity. 25 artisans selected by the Jury Team sold their fine art in the meeting room. Other areas of the bazaar were the Cafe, Gourmet Galaxy, Cookie Walk, Used Book Sale, White Elephant and new this year, "Golden Elephant." Special thanks goes to the Coming of Age group who made an astounding amount of beautifully decorated cookies.

Several improvements were made to our infrastructure such as new book shelves for the book sale and organizers for the new shed.

We are pleased to report that the three goals of the Bazaar were met this year:

1. Many church members had the opportunity to meet new members, work together, and create a sense of comradery in a festive environment.
2. Present a friendly presence to the community.
3. Raise money.

Funds raised:

Task forces (International Outreach, Habitat, Green Sanctuary, Hunger): \$6505.51

Women's Alliance (proceeds from Gourmet Galaxy): \$3783.23

General Fund: \$16905.73

We have already started planning for this year's Bazaar, to be held on Dec 5 and 6. We remind church members that we will not be accepting donations of used books and white elephant goods until the first week of December.

Ruellen Fessenbecker, Steve Krahnke, co-chairs

Humanist Forum and Freethinkers

The Humanist Forum and Freethinkers began in 2009. We have met every Sunday over the past year. Our meetings take place in Room 208, starting at approximately 1 - 2 p.m. on two-service Sundays, and at 12 p.m. after a single-service Sunday, concluding around 1 p.m.. We typically alternate between the Humanist group and the Freethinkers group each week. Currently, our mailing list consists of approximately 100 members, and we would be delighted to include your name. We have an average attendance of 10–25 individuals, with some participating via Zoom.

The Humanist group selects topics about three times a year. These can be found on the UUB webpage under "Connections" → "Join a Group" → "Humanist and Freethinkers." The Freethinkers group engages in more spontaneous discussions, exploring current topics chosen during the meeting itself.

Throughout the past year, the Humanist Forum topic titles and the persons introducing them are listed below:

Throughout the past year, the Humanist topic titles and the persons introducing them are given below.

2024

- July 14 – "What's In a Name?" – Sandy Dolby
- July 28 – "Cops? Bad?" – Jason Michálek
- August 11 – "Free Will?" – Rob Hongen
- August 25 – "Breathing Practices" – Mary Yoke
- September 8 – "Caste System in the US" – Carolyn Craig
- September 22 – Topic Selection Pitch-In Dinner
- October 6 – "Charles Ives Best Feet" presented by Rich Janda
- October 20 – "Spirit Possession in Haitian Vodou" presented by Dexter Edge
- November 3 – "Is AI Catastrophic?" presented by Harold Ogren
- November 17 – "The Powell Memorandum" presented by Carolyn Craig
- December 1 – "The Role of Liberal Arts Colleges" presented by Sandy Dolby
- December 15 – "What Are Your Sources of Truth?" presented by Kevin Craig
- December 29 – "2100 AD" presented by David Keppel

2025

- January 12 – "Music and the Mind" presented by Mary Yoke
- January 26 – "The Eco-Imagery of the Dune" presented by Jason Michálek
- February 9 – "The Built Environment" presented by Nancy Jones
- February 23 – "Non-Religious Look at the Soul" presented by Marcia Hart
- March 9 – "What Is an Urban Legend" presented by Sandy Dolby
- March 23 – "Constructivism" presented by John Crosby
- April 6 – Topic Selection and Pitch-In

- April 20 @ 1:00 PM – "Does Faith Work? Online Skeptics' Challenges from Apologists" presented by Rich Janda
- May 4 @ 1:00 PM – "Constructivism for Unitarian Universalists" presented by John Crosby
- May 18 @ 1:00 PM – "Problems with Meritocracy?" presented by Harold Ogren
- June 1 @ 12:00 PM – "The New Apostolic Reformation" presented by Kevin Craig
- June 15 @ 12:00 PM – "Saving Democracy (book by David Popper)" presented by Carolyn Craig
- June 29 @ 12:00 PM – "From Greenland to Greenland?" presented by Rich Janda

Freethinkers

The Humanist Forum at UU Bloomington began in 2009. After the first year of Humanists, following a proposal by John Crosby, we added the Freethinkers to our schedule. We agreed to alternate our after-church discussion time between the two groups: a prepared and voted-on list of topics called the Humanist Forum, and a Freethinkers group focused on current topics of relevance suggested by a participant with little or no preparation. We typically have at least three substantive topics discussed on Freethinker Sundays.

The topics that attendees have brought up for discussion at Freethinkers this year are wide-ranging: discussions about our UU principles, spirituality, national and local politics, education, scams and computers, AI, the latest science results, folklore, personal histories, current movies and streaming, psychoactive drugs, pedophilia, Braver Angels, and much more!

Please join us after services and take part in this open, wide-ranging discussion.

Jewish Connections Group

The UU Jewish Connections Group has had quite a busy year. We reconstituted the Group this year with a discussion of the purpose and goals, resulting in the following:

The overall purpose of the Group is to build a caring community of UU's who have either a Jewish identity or interest in learning about Judaism. Underlying this purpose are the following goals:

- Provide a safe place where Jewish and non-Jewish people can experience community, express concerns and feelings, ask questions about relevant issues, and learn.
- Sponsor social activities to establish community and celebrate and experience Jewish holidays.
- Learn about the spiritual and religious basis of Judaism.
- Read and discuss Jewish literature, and view and discuss Jewish movies/shows.
- Determine how to make the Jewish principle of *Tikkun Olam* (the obligation to repair or heal the world) part of our everyday lives and the actions we can take to make this so.
- Learn about Hebrew and Yiddish.
- As part of our goal to read and discuss Jewish Literature, we read Earon Davis' book, "Exposing Systems of Anti-Jewishness" over a multi-month period, adding greatly to our members' understanding of antisemitism both present and historical. We also read and discussed "The World to Come," by Dara Horn. We had other monthly sessions focusing on Jewish History, the history of Israel, Yiddish, the Jewish principle of Tikkun Olam, and Jewish Movies ("An American Pickle" and "Between the Temples").

Our biggest activities were planning and presenting UUCB's Hanukkah Service and a Passover Seder for members of UUCB and friends. 43 people attended the Seder.

Our membership has also expanded significantly this year to 19 members.

Submitted by Barry Rubin

Men's Group

The men's group has met for more than 25 years and continues to provide support and inspiration to each of the groups 10 plus members. Dan Wiseman is relinquishing the leadership after more than 8 years in May. Russell Boulding and Will Watt will provide temporary leadership as the group reformulates its mission and platforms. All are welcome. The group meets on the Third Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Library. Hybrid sessions are being explored for next year.

Submitted by Dan Wiseman

The UU Men's Group is currently in transition, and would like to thank Dan Wiseman for his leadership during the past eight years. In May and June we will be talking about the future and format of the group. Anyone interested in the outcome can find more information online at UUCB's website:

<https://uucb.churchcenter.com/my/groups/uu-men-s-group/members>

Submitted by Russell Boulding, Interim Facilitator

Parents of Young Children

Raising healthy, educated, and fulfilled children is at the heart of building a strong future. It benefits all of society. And it is a collective responsibility. Yet, according to a recent Advisory from the U.S. Surgeon General, the well-being of parents and caregivers is a critical and underappreciated public health priority. (*U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Mental Health & Well-Being of Parents:*

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/parents-under-pressure.pdf>)

The Advisory lays out actionable recommendations needed to support the well-being of parents and caregivers, including the reimagining of public spaces such as faith-based organizations to create opportunities that cultivate supportive social connections among parents and caregivers, and to elevate the voices of parents and caregivers to ideate and implement community programs and investments.

The Parents of Young Children Group aims to support the well-being of parents and caregivers, our children, and the larger intergenerational community of which we are a part. In support of this goal, we hold occasional gatherings (mom's night out, playground meet-ups, etc.) to nurture connections with other families. This year, the parents initiated a new event called Fourth Friday Family Fun Night, where we gather informally once a month for food, games, and community. We are grateful that the UUCB Young Adults Group co-hosts this event with us, as it reduces the stress on parents to plan and execute, and bolsters the opportunity for intergenerational connection. We would love to see more support and attendance from other adults in our community!

Our primary goal for this year was to establish a sense of consistency and reliability for families, and to create a space for new families to connect. Attendance has varied from month to month, but we now have about 6-8 families who participate regularly, and we have welcomed several new families to our group through this event. Now that we've established a regular time and place to meet, we are beginning to incorporate other aspects, such as family-friendly social justice activities and deeper discussions about intergenerational relationships, as well as parental stress and mental health needs. We continue to see a need to lift up the voices of parents and children in order to support our families and make UUCB a welcoming place for all ages.

Our group is a support network, and its associated activities are an important part of community-building for the parents and children at UUCB. We appreciate the support of UUCB to hold this space for us. This year, we held 2 mom's nights out, 3 playground meet-ups, and 7 Family Fun Nights. UUCB generously sponsors the pizza for the Family Nights, totalling \$628.55 this year. The pizza is supplemented by snacks and drinks which are donated by attendees. All activities are planned and executed by the parents themselves. Thank you to all who attended our events this year and brought games and snacks to share!

Pastoral Associates Care Team

Members: Ruellen Fessenbecker, Melinda Swenson, Allison Tomusk, Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray
This group meets monthly with Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray. We are active and retired health care professionals, providing a ministry of presence, care, and support for members and friends of the UUCB. We are also a source for connection between these people in need and the minister. Our activities this year have included support for people undergoing health problems and decision-making, (personal or family illness, health care visits, hospitalization), major life changes (birth, death, relocation, other losses), and isolation (because of age, mobility issues, disability). We provide continuing follow-up and connection by phone or email. We work closely with other UUCB groups, including the Caring Committee, especially for help with meals and transportation.

We are very careful to preserve the confidentiality of our contacts. We refer those with major crises to appropriate care or community resources. During the past year, we have provided service to approximately 60 members, friends, and families in our congregation. We keep confidential records of our visits, phone calls, and referrals.

Submitted by Melinda Swenson

Personnel Committee

UUCB Personnel Committee convened for the first time in September 2023. It is quite a “young” committee. Committee members for 2024-2025 included JaneAnn Gifford (Chair), Pam MacLaughlin (Board Liaison), Lisa Amsler, and Rev. Susan.

One of our key goals this year was to reassess employee benefits to ensure that we are a just and equitable employer, as well as hire and retain talented people. We have agreed to subsidize health care insurance for our employees who work at least 28 hours/week (70%). Previously, only full-time employees were provided this benefit. We are also working through the details of a Section 125 plan to offer our staff the opportunity to use flexible spending and health savings accounts. Current implementation is planned for the fourth quarter of 2025.

We view the Personnel Manual (officially adopted by the Board in June 2024) as an evergreen document, so we are carefully reviewing it to ensure the document explicitly reflects our intentions, is easily understood, and allows for efficient administration. As a part of that work, the investigative policy was rewritten to simplify the resolution process.

Submitted by JaneAnn Gifford

Planned Giving Committee

Members: Charlotte Appel, Ann Kamman, Harlan Lewis

The Planned Giving Committee is here to help any member or friend of the Congregation who wishes to include UUCB in their estate planning. Our Legacy Circle, which consists of the people who have chosen to do that, currently has 90 members.

Each year, the Planned Giving Committee holds an exclusive celebration to honor the Legacy Circle. This year's Legacy Circle Celebration will be held on the afternoon of Saturday, September 27th, here at UUCB. If you have made plans in your estate and would like to join the Legacy Circle, or if you would like more information on how to leave a gift to our Congregation, please contact us!

Pledge Drive Committee

Corrin Clarkson (chair), Joan Caulton, JaneAnn Gifford, Beth Henkel (started August 14th, 2024), Pat Slabach, Judy Witt (through March 4th, 2025), Rev. Connie Grant (ex officio, through June 6th, 2024), Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray (ex officio, started August 14th, 2024)

The committee is looking for two new members. If you would like to know more about the work of the committee please reach out to any of the members or email pledgedrive@uubloomington.org. To express interest in joining the committee, please contact the [Board of Directors](#).

Talking About Pledging in the Exploring UUCB Class

A member of the pledge drive committee speaks to prospective members in the quarterly [Exploring UUCB Class](#) about church finances and the importance of pledging. This is especially important now that pledging is a requirement of membership.

FY 2024 - 2025 Pledge Fulfillment Messaging

The committee is monitoring pledge fulfillment rates and is working with office staff on messaging to encourage pledge fulfillment. This includes the quarterly statements that are now sent to all who pledge as well as targeted email campaigns. These efforts will intensify in June as this is the last month of the fiscal year. We jump started the pledge drive with a leadership reception for people serving in leadership positions in the congregation as well as our largest donors. Based on the generous pledges submitted at this event, the initial pledge drive goal was set at \$755,000, a 16% increase over the amount pledged in the current fiscal year. These early pledges also allowed us to kick off the pledge drive having already made progress towards that goal.

Pledge Drive for Fiscal Year 2025 -2026

With graphic design help from Abby Henkel Roman, we created a beautiful pledge drive brochure that outlined our pledge drive goals, church finances, the need for budget increases, and a histogram of pledge amounts from the previous year's pledge drive. The brochures were distributed to members at the Kick Off event on Sunday, March 23rd, 2025 and mailed to those who did not attend. The brochures were available at the sign-up table on Sundays and the information was also posted on the church website: [2025-26 Pledge Drive - Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington](#). We also updated both the paper and digital versions of the [pledge form](#) to add a waiver request option and a question about the intended payment schedule.

During the pledge drive, Sunday services included testimonials from members about why they pledge to support UUCB. Rev. Susan also dedicated two sermons (on the kick-off and on the final Sunday of the pledge drive to the importance of the goals of the campaign and members' support. On these Sundays, the pledge drive committee was available before and after service to answer questions and receive pledge cards. We gave regular updates on our progress both from the pulpit and in the Friday Updates. We also sent a series of email messages about the campaign to the congregation.

After the service on Celebration Sunday, April 20, we celebrated with a fantastic spread of food, a brief pledge-drive-themed sing-along, and a vibrant group of attendees. All those who had pledged by noon were entered in a drawing for a gift card to Uptown Cafe. Cindy Brandes was our lucky winner. This event concluded the most public phase of the pledge drive, but the work continued. We compiled a list of members who had not yet pledged and reached out to each of them to encourage them to renew their memberships by submitting a pledge.

We are thrilled that the Pledge Drive for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 was so successful that we exceeded our stretch goal of \$780,000! Thank you to all who helped make this happen by making generous pledges of financial support to our church community and by contributing to the pledge drive efforts.

Poetry on First Mondays

Our group meets on the first Monday of the month at 10 am. We are appreciators of poetry who enjoy gathering to share published poems that we have found and enjoy. Each of us brings a poem to read (and perhaps distribute in advance via email) to the group, and then we make comments or ask questions as we feel moved. Our meetings are fun, and they also often contain moving moments. Poetry on First Mondays is always open for new members; you would be welcome to join us. (Contact person: Linda Pickle)

Submitted by Linda Pickle

Taiji & Qigong Practice Group

The Taiji & Qigong Practice Group typically meets twice per week, on Saturdays 9–10:30 a.m. (1.5 hours) and Mondays 1:30–2:15 p.m. (45 minutes) as indicated on the church calendar (which participants should check since there are occasional cancellations). People of all ages and abilities are welcome to try the practice and participate as often as they like. No prior experience is needed, and current participants mentioned the openness of the practice to anyone as particularly appreciated.

The group practices a particular style of taiji called the “Wu/Hao” style and a variety of qigong forms usually based on seasonal rhythms, all of which are characterized by slow, smooth movements and breathing that stimulate *qi* (a kind of physical-psycho-spiritual energy) and facilitate its smooth flow throughout the body to provide a variety of benefits to the whole person (body, mind, spirit, etc.). The practices are led by Brian Flaherty, who studied taiji and qigong in China and has been practicing and teaching them for several decades.

Submitted by Brian Flaherty

Shambhala Meditation

S. Leigh Grundhofer, Susan Middlestadt

The Shambhala Meditation has been meeting weekly for the entire year and has created a solid, welcoming environment for both new and experienced meditators. We offer one hour of meditation in the library at the church. The hour is split up into two, twenty five-minute silent meditation periods with a samatha yoga sequence halfway through followed by a short walking meditation. This sequence is both grounding and accessible for people who are looking for a peaceful way to spend some time in stillness each week. Using the Church Zoom technology we also encourage attendance for those who are unable to attend in person, which broadens access.

Going Forward

The low pressure, open-minded atmosphere is good for both newcomers and people joining with some experience in this practice. The Shambhala group, Hoosier Heartland ([https:// hhsmg.shambhala.org/](https://hhsmg.shambhala.org/)) also offers other opportunities for sitting meditation and does plan to host other Shambhala trainings and events. This group has been able to maintain a steady attendance of 5-7 people and is a neutral place for new meditators to begin to learn about the practice of sitting meditation. The Shambhala affiliation provides a buddhist path of dharma instruction for those interested, although the practice of meditation stands on its own. No changes are expected in the coming year with the format or leadership of this group.

Wednesday Walkers

The UU Wednesday Walkers have 41 people on our mailing list. However, we usually have between 4 and 12 people walking on any given Wednesday. Except for the heat in the summer when we walk at 9 a.m., we meet at 10 a.m. at a location which is sent out on Mondays to walk for an hour. Denise Ogren and Kathy Gilbert are the leaders and send out the notices and arrange the walks.

We have been walking regularly since 2009. In bad weather we walk in the College Mall. Most people can walk at their own pace, some walking faster and some slower.

Women's Alliance

The Women's Alliance was founded in 1959 to manage the annual fundraising bazaar, help build fellowship, and give service and financial support to the church and community projects, as voted upon by the Alliance membership. We are mostly women, but welcome male members as well. This year's officers were Doris Wittenburg, President; Kathy Gilbert, Secretary; Judith Kelly, Treasurer; and Ann Kamman, Program Chair. We met the first Thursday of the month at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall, bringing our lunches and sharing desserts provided by Alliance hostesses. A Zoom link was provided for those who weren't able to attend in person. We had quite a variety of very interesting speakers or special activities each month. We had fun and camaraderie, but also addressed serious issues.

Activities ranged from, a summer pitch-in indoor picnic, a festive holiday tea party, sharing our favorite Christmas/holiday ornaments, reminiscing about the past year and wishes for the New Year, and talking about our favorite travel memories.

We had UUCB delegates tell us about what occurred at the UU General Assembly; a presentation on Indiana University Collections; a League of Women Voters representative addressing, "Is My Vote Safe?"; a presentation on Gratitude by Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray; member Mary Blizzard instructing us on how to draw in one- and two-point perspectives; a representative from MC-IRIS telling us how to identify and reduce invasive species in our gardens; and a volunteer at Teacher's Warehouse telling us about her organization. A donation was given to each non-profit speaker for their organization.

Our coordination of the Gourmet Galaxy at the UU Holiday Bazaar allowed us to add to our treasury. These funds in addition to our member dues allowed us to make the donations to community non-profits. We are especially pleased to be able to make financial holiday gifts to the minister and staff and to financially assist our delegates to the UUA.

We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting and that you will join our group!

Respectfully submitted, Doris Wittenburg, President

Young Adult Activities

The 2024-25 church year saw a variety of activities oriented toward the Young Adult (18-35) age range. The successful "Pizza and Hike" events—fellowship time followed by a group outing to trails at Lake Griffy—continued from previous years. Young Adult Game Night, facilitated by David Frew, also continued throughout the year, later changing its title to "UU Game Night" to be inclusive of those outside of the 18-35 age range seeking fellowship through board and other games. This year, staff liaisons representing the Young Adult (YA) group also collaborated with Lifespan Religious Education and facilitator, Andrew Appel, to offer Money Management for Young Adults workshop in October. Finally, UUCB had a table at the IU Student Involvement Fair in August which prompted several IU students to later attend services and/or YA events at UUCB. Congregant, Matt O'Donnell, was key in orienting volunteers and leading in-person logistics at the event. A volunteer team of congregants engaged in postering around town around the same time to promote an upcoming Pizza and Hike event and provide visibility to UUCB as an inclusive and affirming community welcoming to all students. Connections Coordinator, Anabel Watson, is the primary staff person engaged in outreach, promotion, and general coordination of the YA group with assistance from Hans Kelson, Technology Coordinator.

If you are interested in getting involved with Young Adult activities at UUCB please reach out to Connections Coordinator, Anabel Watson, via email at connect@uubloomington.org. If you are between the ages of 18-35 and would like to be notified of upcoming YA events please join the [designated group on Church Center](#).

SOCIAL JUSTICE Annual Report



Social Justice permeates all programming at the UU Church of Bloomington – [worship](#), [religious education](#), [fellowship](#), and special groups like [Chalice Circles](#) and the [choir](#). Social Justice Task Forces are formed when a number of people wish to work together around a specific social justice area.

UUCB is very active in many areas of social justice and all have worked hard, in new ways – leadership in some has changed, a new task force has emerged to tackle democracy and an Advocacy area is on our website and in every Friday Update. With unexpected death we lost wonderful, committed leaders Alan Backler and Mary Goetze. They are and will continue to be missed.

The Social Justice Coordinating Team (SJCT) with Rev Susan, Barb Berggoetz, Jenny Vessels, Christine Banister, and Jackie Hall have met regularly and recently held a SJ planning meeting for next year. There is a new area on our website and in the Friday Update called the [Justice Advocacy Corner](#). In response to the political situation a new Democracy Task Force has been formed and is operating. See their report below.



In fall of 2024, SJCT became aware of and sponsored UU the Vote activities.

- Thanks to Mary Ann Williams who developed training materials and taught a class to assist volunteers in assisting people in Registering and Voting. The project duration was 43 days during which 25 UUCBers hosted at 15 venues for 59 hours. There was quite a spreadsheet of all the contacts and other information required to support this effort in the community.
- Over 3000 cards were written, stamped and mailed to voters in swing states. Barb Berggoetz and Molly O'Donnell enthusiastically coordinated and led this effort. Carrie Newcomer jump started the project by donating \$1000 from here A Gathering of Spirits – Hope in Hard Times Concert. Tabling for Registering and Voting was done at the concert. Donations of dollars and stamps came from task forces, Women's Alliance and individuals. Income was \$1950. Expenses for stamps and supplies totaled about \$1600. There is a balance of about \$460 that can be used before any upcoming elections.

UUCB SJ task forces financial summary from fiscal year 2024-25

UU social justice task forces operating in 2024-25 contributed in many ways to the church, the community at-large, and internationally, in the case of one task force. Task forces, to different degrees, provide community services, educate the public, organize and promote community actions, advocate and raise funds for causes and people in need, and back or oppose laws, policies and public viewpoints.

During 2024-25, task forces sponsored, organized and participated in a variety of activities at UU and in the community to raise funds, as one way to help accomplish their goals. Some task forces focus more on

fundraising to provide services or assistance to the public and non-profit organizations than other task forces that concentrate on education or advocacy.

In total, nine of the 10 task forces raised or received \$40,728 in fiscal year 2024-25. They have already donated or will donate \$57,212, as of June 2025. Some task forces fundraise for one or two years before making a large donation, while others donate on a more regular basis. Information from the Just Peace Task Force is pending.

Nine task forces listed the following financial data in their annual reports for FY 2024-25:

- Green Sanctuary: total raised, \$2,535; total donated, \$1,016; fund balance, \$6,200.
- Habitat: total raised, \$7,901; total donated, \$10,352; fund balance, \$9,858.
- Homelessness: total raised, \$1,880; total donated, \$0; fund balance, \$6,018.
- Hunger: total raised, \$8,296; total donated, \$8,343; fund balance, \$5,070.
- International Outreach: total raised, \$9,600; total to be donated in June, \$20,000; fund balance after donation, \$0.
- Racial Justice: total raised, \$4,112; total donated, \$5,379; fund balance, \$3,288.
- Rainbow Rights: total raised, \$300; total donated, \$0; fund balance, \$5,184.
- Refugee and Immigrant Support and Education (RISE): total raised, \$3,828; total donated, \$6,922; fund balance, \$1,435.
- Reproductive Justice: total raised, \$4,408; total donated, \$5,200; fund balance, \$400.

Other UUCB SJ financial resources into the community fiscal year 2024-25

- SJ Fall Grants from Lenard Lunden Fund - \$2600
- First three quarters of 25% Sunday plate donations to Habitat - \$5499.59

SJ Grand Total donations to the community so far this fiscal year 2024-25: \$65,311.58

Democracy Task Force

Emma Crossen, chair 812.243.1574, emma.crossen@gmail.com

Members: MJ Wallaker, Dennis Davoren, Dee Morris, Peg Hausman, Beth Henkel, Susan Frederick-Gray

The group that became the Democracy Task Force was convened for the first time on March 11, 2024 to help organize the congregation in resisting authoritarianism and defending and expanding democracy. We met biweekly through the end of the year and applied to become a task force in the next fiscal year. Our primary activities in March and April were:

- 1) Mobilized UUCB to participate in two nationwide days of protests, including the April 5 Hands Off Day of Action, for which we organized a UUCB carpool and turnout of 30+ to the protest at the statehouse in Indianapolis; and the April 19 pro-democracy protest at the Monroe County courthouse, for which we informed and supported 40+ congregants and a “Side with Love” banner
- 2) Trained congregants in the use of the Signal app as a tool for communicating safely and effectively during protests
- 3) Promoted other opportunities for resistance, political education, and advocacy through the UUCB Friday Update and Justice & Advocacy Corner
- 4) Started work on the Congregational Asset Map using the template provided by the UUA’s Side with Love
- 5) Clarified our goals and applied to be recognized as a task force in the ‘25-’26 fiscal year.

The task force made no expenditures during the 2024-25 fiscal year and have not yet developed a process for deciding on expenditures going forward.

The task force collaborated indirectly with 50501, Indivisible, and all the organizations that were part of the protests, and we used the resources of Side with Love.

The task force had no financial activity during the fiscal year.

The task force biweekly from March 11 through April 30.

Green Sanctuary Task Force on Global Climate Change

Marcia Veldman and Molly O'Donnell, co-chairs. 812-325-2446, marciaveldman@gmail.com, and 812-345-7399, mollysod@gmail.com

Members signing Off on Annual Report: Barry Rubin, Jo Wilhelm, Sura Tala, Peg Hausman, Eve Loftman Cusack.



The [Green Sanctuary Task Force on Global Climate Change \(GSTF\)](#) promotes mindful, Earth centered living, working to educate and motivate individuals and institutions to take positive steps toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions with the understanding that it is our moral imperative to care for the Earth. To this end the GSTF has been active at various levels in the congregation and the wider community.

1. The GSTF led or participated in the following activities/events in the past fiscal year: Football parking, UU Bazaar, Task of the Month, UU the Vote (Fall of 2024), the City of Bloomington's Zero in Bloomington, which engages Bloomington citizens and groups in activities focused on reducing personal climate change impacts, and keeping a scorecard of their accomplishments (during the month of March), Survey of the Congregation (April 2025), Earth Day Service (April 24), Tree and Shrub Distribution (April 27), Backyard Revival (initial event on April 27), and initiating plans setting up a Social Justice monitor in the foyer.
2. Typically, decisions regarding significant expenditures are made at meetings by voice vote. On rare occasions when a decision needs to be made between meetings, the co-chairs consult the other signatories of this report to reach a consensus.
3. Our Collaborations include the following
 - a. One of us convenes [Earth Care Bloomington](#), an interfaith response to climate change.
 - b. Earth Care members advise area congregations on ways to reduce their carbon footprints.
 - c. Earth Care members are also active in other environmental groups like [Solar For All](#), which has helped 44 lower-income residents add solar panels to their homes, and [SIREN](#), which advises homeowners, businesses and nonprofits that want to add solar.
 - d. In addition, one member is on the board of the Bloomington Multifaith Alliance.
 - e. We helped UUCB members to (1) contact their state representatives to explain and promote [community solar](#) for those who cannot install solar on their own property, and (2) hold meetings with their representatives asking them to retain the 30% tax incentive for homeowners and direct pay for nonprofits.
 - f. Several GSTF members are also engaged with [Citizens' Climate Lobby](#) (CCL), which works to build the political will for significant national legislation to address climate change. Through CCL, we offer GSTF members regular action alerts on issues of importance around climate change.
 - g. Members are also engaged with the City of Bloomington's Adopt a Greenspace, the Center for Sustainable Living, Artists for Climate Awareness, the Sierra Club, and Green Drinks Bloomington.
4. Our estimated revenue through June 30, 2025, is \$2,535. In the fiscal year, we donated \$1,016. Our t-account balance as of May 6, 2025, is \$6,200.
5. The task force met August 2024, October 2024, January 2025, March 2025, and May 2025.

Habitat for Humanity Task Force



[Habitat for Humanity Task Force](#) strives to educate the congregation about housing needs of Monroe County, including the purpose and accomplishments of Habitat for Humanity and other related housing groups. The congregation can contribute in many ways to help provide decent affordable housing in Monroe County.

Barb Berggoetz, chair, barbberg@bluemarble.net; 812-320-8422

Members Signing Off on Annual Report: Licia Weber, Kathy Sideli, Pearl and Brian Springfield

1. Following are the activities/events and fundraisers the task force sponsored or participated in during the 2024-25 fiscal year so far and any planned through this June. Include dates or at least month of the activity.
 - a. Sunday Plate Collection – congregation approved Habitat as 2024-25 recipient in June 2024
 - b. Habitat Women+ Build – UU & Friends 35-member team, Sept. 4, 2024 build day (members raised \$20,000 as individuals)
 - c. Bake sale at UU to help Women+ Build team members – Aug. 2024
 - d. Donated \$10,000 to help sponsor Habitat home construction – Oct. 2024
 - e. IU football parking – 3 members worked a November game
 - f. Holiday Bazaar table – Dec. 3-4, 2024
 - g. Chili & soup take-home sale – February 2025
 - h. Habitat builds – UU groups of 8-12 people volunteered on Nov. 9 and June 29, 2024 and will do so on May 17 & 31, 2025
 - i. Habitat for Humanity's More Than Houses fundraiser dinner – 8 UUsers went, March 11, 2025
 - j. Snack-packing activity after May 4, 2025 services – food for builders
 - k. Habitat Women+ Build Brunch – fundraiser for UU & Friends team members on May 18
2. Task force members vote by voice vote when deciding on donations to Habitat, including \$10,000 donation. For smaller expenditures, such as supplies and sponsoring a holiday basket for Passport (MCUM) in 2023, we decide through consensus. Emails are often sent to task force members before meetings with a preliminary agenda listing any action items and giving members a chance to respond by email.
3. We collaborated with Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County during FY 2024-25.
4. Total amount raised through fundraising/donations through May 18: \$7,901.20
 - a. Total donations: \$10,000 on Oct. 22, 2024, for Habitat build sponsorship; \$239 to Women+ Build 2024 team members, Aug. 2024; \$112.86 in-kind donation for builders' snacks, April 2025 = \$10,351.86.
 - b. Special revenue given to Habitat from Sunday Plate Collection for first three quarters, \$5,499.58. But this revenue does not come from task force funds. Grand total given to: \$15,851.44 (without fourth quarter plate collection).
 - c. Balance in Habitat t-account as of May 18, 2025: \$9,858.
5. The Habitat Task Force met in July, August, September, October and November in 2024, and January, February, March and April in 2025. Active members include Barb Berggoetz, chair, Kathleen Chmelewski, Richard Stumpner, Licia Weber, Brian and Pearl Springfield, Christine Banister, Kathy Sideli, Mary Blizzard, Jackie Hall, Michael Darnell, Jenny Deaton.

Hunger Task Force



Help Feed Our Hungry Neighbors Task Force(HFOHN) engages in projects to reduce hunger in our community.

Dee Morris and Lynn Struve, co-chairs; Dee: 812-361-6513; Ddmorris2@gmail.com; Lynn: 812-334-2590; Lynn.struve@gmail.com

Other task force members signing off on this report: Lynn Struve, Mary Blizzard and Barb Berggoetz

1. The Hunger Task Force fundraising activities for the 2024-25 year include: IU football parking, October; Holiday Art Bazaar, December; Mother's Day Cupcake sale, May; and each Sunday, we sell food cards from Bloomingfoods and Fresh Thyme to friends and members of the congregation; and the Center for Sustainable Living, The Little Free Pantry (LFP) is stocked daily.
2. At each meeting we discuss the current project(s) and agree on any monetary spending. All new projects are voted on by the task force.
3. The Hunger Task Force collaborates with the following groups outside UUCB: the Bloomington Fire Department to place their QR code stickers on some of the food items placed in the Little Free Pantry; Beacon/Shalom food donations for daily breakfasts; Commodity Supplemental Food Program from the Hoosier Hills Food Bank; the Community Kitchen, providing volunteers and food donations; and Pathways/MCUM for the holiday food baskets.
4. The balance as of April 30, 2025 is: \$5070.11.
 - Income from July 2024-June 2025, \$8,296:
 - Activity #1: IU football parking -- \$1,779.00
 - Activity #2: Holiday Art Bazaar -- \$2,200.00
 - Activity #3: Donations -- \$400
 - Activity #4: Social Justice monies -- \$300
 - Activity #5: Selling food cards (estimated) -- \$1,815
 - Activity #6: Mother's Day Cupcake sale -- \$1,302
 - Activity #7: Women's Alliance donation -- \$500
 - Expenses July 2024-June 2025, \$8,343 total:
 - #1 – Holiday Art Bazaar fee -- \$50
 - #2 – Kroger food cards for congregants -- \$200
 - #3 – Little Free Pantry upkeep and signage -- \$150
 - #4 – Community Kitchen food donation -- \$160
 - #5 Shalom breakfasts (daily) -- \$4,316
 - #6 Little Free Pantry food -- \$3,467
5. The Hunger Task Force held meetings in the following months: August, September, October, February, March, April, and June in 2024-25.

Homelessness Task Force



The Homelessness Task Force works with agencies to provide services/support to homeless people, to develop strategies dealing with issues related to homelessness including hunger and unemployment, and to end homelessness.

Jason Michálek, Mary Blizzard co-chairs; michalja@mail.gvsu.edu,

maryblizzard6@gmail.com

Members Signing Off on Annual Report: Christine Bannister, Jana Perea, Barb Backler, Sapphire Ware

1. In 2024, the Homelessness Task Force worked on the following activities:
 - Published an article in UUCB *Perspectives*, December 2024
 - Coordinated volunteers working regularly at Shalom (multiple months for full-year coordination)
 - Conducted on-going clothing and food drives for Shalom and Help Ourselves Mutual Aid (December 2024 - February 2025)
 - Planned with Avalon Community Land Trust (ACLT) to fundraise and promote efforts for their community first housing project.
2. To support our most popular causes but also to decide on practical allocation of funds, we regularly invite members and people who are interested to our planning meetings after service to discuss new and old ideas. In the past, we've been less formal about project selection, holding a discussion and then deliberating amongst officers what seemed to hold the most traction. Thus far, there has been general consensus about project selection, so that process has served the planning and execution of Task Force efforts. Moving forward, we may consider more formal methods—especially as new officers are selected.
3. Groups or organizations outside of UUCB that task force collaborate with in the 2024-25 fiscal year?
 - Working with Shalom (Beacon, Inc.) as they plan and construct their new facility on W. 3rd Street through innovative fundraising in the church and beyond, and participating in the broader *Light The Way* campaign.
 - Working with Jana Perea and the Avalon Community Land Trust (ACLT) on their project(s) of building and operating housing on a property on W. 8th. Street and other locations that offer a cooperative living community that can include people formerly experiencing homelessness where residents have better access to affordable, permanent housing, supportive services, and a sense of belonging
 - Working with efforts in the congregation as well as the broader community that offer housing advocacy and opposition to anti-homeless legislation, including the eviction Prevention Program, the ACLU of Indiana, and the guided advocacy of Beacon's calls for justice.
 - Helping to organize for congregational efforts of protesting and speaking in opposition of such legislation at the Indiana State House, including writing and phone calling.
4. Revenue:\$1,879.74
Donations:\$0
T-account: \$6,018.41
5. Task Force met on the following dates: 04.14.24, 05.15.24, 09.13.24, 09.27.24, 10.18.24, 10.23.24, 11.14.24, 01.12.25, 03.16.25

Hope for Prisoners Task Force



The Hope for Prisoners Task Force (HFPTF) has taken a break and Deb Fish, its leader, has become more involved in CASA. Mary Goetz, creator and facilitator of KAP, Kids with Absent Parents, passed away early in the year. This group is being led by Martha Nord and Laura Jessop. Below is the report from them concerning KAP.

Mary Goetze was inspired to create KAP in 2017, and she led it gracefully and powerfully for 7 years. She gathered together families affected by the incarceration of a parent and created support for both the children and their caregivers. For most of those years, KAP met twice a month. The caregivers met with Mary to talk about common issues they were facing with their incarcerated family member and with the jail and prison system. The support they gave each other was powerful and created a very strong bond among them. The children were nurtured by a group of largely UU volunteers who came to know them well and tailored the caregiving to their needs and interests. In addition to the twice a month gatherings, Mary arranged for summer camps for the kids and for connections with other programs. Over the last year, Mary gradually transferred leadership to the caregivers' group itself, and one of the grandmothers now convenes the group. In March, the caregivers gathered together in the UU library for what turned out to be Mary's last time with them.

There is a core group of about 20 KAP kids, most of whom have been in the group for years. We are currently meeting irregularly, but, like with the caregivers, the bonds that the kids have formed in KAP are strong. We will continue to gather with them several times a year, including for a picnic this summer. If you are interested in learning more or in helping to support KAP, contact Laura Jesseph at ljesseph@aol.com or 812-345-1308 or Martha Nord at marthanord@hotmail.com or 812-606-2221

KAP has \$2576.54 in its taccount and was funded by a volunteer. Last year \$82.06 was spent on food.

International Outreach Task Force



The International Outreach Task Force (IOTF) expand and improve cross-cultural and international understanding through hands on involvement with projects fulfilling local needs in developing countries.

Claire Robertson, Chair

Members signing off on Report: Ed Robertson, Carolyn Craig, Treasurer, Christine Banister, Judy Kelly

1. Our primary function is fundraising for the only international project we support now: Spurgeon's Academy in Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya. About 10 years ago the Task Force made a unanimous decision to drop two other small Kenyan projects due to corruption, and focus on the largest one, serving some 350 to 600 pupils K-9. We felt that we could have a bigger impact by focusing on helping to secure the futures of many children in one project. We have now become the second largest supporter of the school, behind Global Care, a UK charity that provides the main support, checks the books regularly, and whose representatives visit the school annually. We visit every two years, with the next visit scheduled for June 20-July 1, 2025. Our fundraising through the Church involves monthly bake sales (when allowed, none scheduled for April, 2026 so far), and two larger sales, one in the spring or the fall, and at the Bazaar, selling mainly Kenyan handcrafted items, as well as donated items.

From the beginning some 20 years ago we have been having bake sales, and sales of handicrafts, with the understanding that all profits go to international projects, which have varied by nation and content, and increased in substance as we became more successful. We also for the last several years have done a church lunch benefit. We used to do off-church sales at Indiana University and Ohio State University but those stopped for various reasons—IU forbade use of the space and Claire retired. Claire has also done regular African Studies Association Women's Caucus Market sales at ASA's annual conference with most profits to IOTF. Lately, we have not had to make any decisions about fundraising (see 3). Donations from church and non-church folks have been generous. We also collect used children's clothing to take to the schoolchildren.

Unfortunately, due to craft fair rules (all items must be created by the sellers) we have not been able to sell in that kind of venue. However, Claire had a windfall and set up through the Minneapolis Community Foundation a trust fund whose income mainly benefits a non-profit we established, Rise-Kibera, which will fund a new much-needed third floor for the school building at Spurgeon's, whose construction should begin in April, 2024, at a cost of about \$40,000. Much time has been devoted this year to setting up the fund and the non-profit arrangements. For the future, the plan is, after consulting with Spurgeon's folks, to continue Church fundraising in the hopes of achieving \$20,000 over two years, to fund daily needs for food, supplies, books, salaries, etc., and \$20,000 from the Rise-Kibera fund for infrastructural improvements. The Church portion of \$20,000 raised over 2 years is on track to be accomplished with the addition of 2 more bake sale profits in May and June.

2. Total amount of revenue in 2024-5 so far, approximately \$9,600. Last year's \$10,000 raised was transferred into the Rise-Kibera account at the IU Credit Union August, 2024 in order to collect some interest on it. \$20,000 will be donated to Spurgeon's in June, 2025, as well as \$40,000 out of the MCF account.
3. We did not meet formally—I consulted regularly with members by email and in person. There have not been any issues, it seems, requiring votes. In the past when meetings occurred very few attended, despite a large email list of those expressing interest. We need to do consciousness raising activities but lack of volunteers impedes expanding our responsibilities. My hopes of increasing interest in, and volunteerism for, IOTF rested partly on more and more group members having visited Kenya and the school, but few have expressed interest or have the funds to do it. Some previous group visit members have left. For younger folks, family responsibilities have interfered substantially—this year three were planning to go but cancelled. Two people expressed interest, but had never done anything with IOTF, were not on the email list, perhaps thought it was about tourism. Another person cancelled because of business responsibilities. Therefore, the group going this year includes only three Unitarians and three not, but who have essential skills for the trip.

Just Peace Task Force



The [Just Peace Task Force](#) works to promote peace and justice in the world, recognizing the essential role of grassroots organizing in creating a consensus for a new foreign and military policy. David Keppel, chair; keppel@sbcglobal.net

In 2024-25 the Just Peace Task Force addressed the war in Gaza and the threat of nuclear war.

While condemning the October 7th Hamas terrorist attack, we called on the Israeli government to adopt a cease fire and to make desperately needed food, water, and medicine available to the civilian Palestinian population. With our advocacy, on April 3, 2024 the Bloomington City City Council unanimously passed a cease-fire resolution and in May overrode a Mayoral veto. The humanitarian emergency continues.

We want to call attention to the existential threat of nuclear weapons. On March 26, we hosted Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Ira Helfand, founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility, to speak in Bloomington to speak on the nuclear threat.

Today, the United States and Russia deploy 1,419 and 1,549 nuclear warheads. The United States has embarked on a \$2 trillion "modernization" of its nuclear arsenal. Any use of nuclear weapons, for example by India and Pakistan, would be a global disaster killing billions of people around the world and causing starvation through global climate effects. A superpower nuclear war would mean extinction of life on Earth. Dr. Helfand and we are members of a national grassroots movement "Back from the Brink" with specific steps to reduce the risk of war and work toward the global abolition of nuclear weapons. This is a long term campaign that will require our growing involvement. Back from the Brink is urging citizens to contact Congress in support of H. Res. 317 [McGovern and Tokuda Reintroduce Resolution Calling for Renewed U.S. Leadership on Nuclear Disarmament](#)

Racial Justice Task Force

The [Racial Justice Task Force](#) works to dismantle racism in ourselves and our institutions through education and action.

Ruth Aydt, Chair: (217) 979-2721 aydt@icloud.com

Additional Members Signing Off on Annual Report: Connie Loftman, Molly O'Donnell, Georgia Emmert, Doris Parlette, Mary Mahern, Sandy Churchill

1. Activities participated in during the 2024-25 fiscal year

- Our meetings offer opportunities for members to discuss current events related to Racial Justice and to support each other as we learn and work to dismantle racism in ourselves and our institutions. July, Sept, Nov, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, June.
- Our task force provides an organizational home for Resilience Productions, whose mission is to educate, enlighten and engage the public regarding many unknown and un-celebrated contributions of African Americans to Indiana's – and ultimately to our country's – history. Resilience researches, writes, and produces live performances inspired by actual historical events. These productions cultivate awareness and entertain. By recognizing bold and deserving African American men and women, Resilience ensures their legacy will not be forgotten.
 - This fiscal year, Resilience Productions staged *From Truth to Justice: The Price we Paid for the Ballot* in October 2024 and *More Than Your Honor: An Evening with Judge Viola Taliaferro* in March, 2025. The productions are held at the Monroe County History Center.
 - Task force members staff fundraising tables at UUCB prior to each show run, helping fund the performances and informing UUCB members about the work of Resilience. Our task force provides and serves refreshments for the performances. This year, members directly donated supplies and refreshments, so no funds were needed to make the purchases.
- Task Force members distributed books with BIPOC characters and authors to The Project School, Templeton Elementary, and Middle Way House in August. Funds were collected from UUCB members in June 2024 and they were used to purchase books requested by staff at the three organizations.
- Task Force members helped staff Football Parking on August 31 – our major fundraiser each year.
- In conjunction with the Bloomington Multi-Faith Alliance, Faith for Racial Equity (BMA-F4RE) group and SCCAP Thriving Connections, a Poverty Simulation was offered in Bloomington on September 7, 2024. Task Force members helped plan, prepare materials, and staff the event, building community with others from BMA-F4RE and SCCAP TC.
- Task Force members attended the Monroe County NAACP's Freedom Fund Awards Dinner on September 14, 2024. We were a platinum sponsor of this event, which was extra special because Elizabeth Mitchell, who is a member of our task force, received the President's award at the dinner.
- Our Task Force provided promotional support for the NAACP's event "70 Years Post-Brown: Looking to the Past, Transforming the Future" which was held October 13, 2024 at the Monroe County Public Library, with the video recording available via catstv.net.
- In June 2025 we will be distributing "Speak Up" guides and taking sign-ups for our July 26, 2025 trip to the Crispus Attucks museum and the Kountry Kitchen soul food restaurant in Indianapolis. The task force will cover the museum entry fees for up to 50 people.

2. Our preferred method for decision making is discussion followed by voice vote during meeting.

When a decision is needed before the next meeting, Ruth sends the proposal to the Church Center mailing list and asks anyone with an opinion to send her their vote by a certain time. Results are tallied at that point and the majority vote is honored. Occasionally, after the initial decision additional discussion seems wise and that discussion takes place via email with the people who originally voted – again with a time deadline. For example, this happened when we voted at our April meeting to give \$500 to support a Miami Indigenous cause; after the decision we found out there were 2 groups and discussed/decided via to split our donations between them.

3. Groups or organizations outside of UUCB that the task force collaborated with.

- a. Bloomington Multi-Faith Alliance, Faith for Racial Equity (Poverty Simulation)
- b. SCCAP/Thriving Connections (Poverty Simulation)
- c. Monroe County NAACP (Freedom Fund Awards Dinner & 70 Years Post-Brown Event)
- d. Monroe County History Center (for Resilience Production Refreshments)
- e. Templeton Elementary, Middleway House, The Project School (all for book donations)

4. Revenue to date: \$4111.74. \$2332.00 for Resilience Productions and \$1779.74 from Football Parking.

Donated to date:\$4878.90. \$2332.00 to Resilience productions and \$2546.90 to others.
Estimated through June: \$500 additional for a total of \$5378.90

As of April 30, our taccount balance was \$3,287.94. As of June 30, we expect our balance to be \$1937.94

5. The task force met in July, Sept, Nov, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, June

Rainbow Rights Task Force

The [Rainbow Rights Task Force](#) seeks to revive, document, and advance the knowledge, concerns, and rights of the LGBTQIA+ individuals, communities, and causes. Building upon our congregations commitment to the 8th principle's journeying to dismantle racism and other oppressions, this task force acknowledges the spectrum of identities that reside beneath the systemic injustices experienced by marginalized persons, and we commit ourselves to journey in advocating for spiritual wholeness in relation to gender and sexuality

Jason Michálek, Carl Deitchman, co-chairs; michalja@mail.gvsu.edu, carl@deitchman.com

Members Signing Off on Annual Report: Erica Whichello, Chris Hanna, Sally McGuire, Marshall Lynn

Activities/events and fundraisers during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

- Published an article in UUCB “Perspectives” – February 2024
 - Coordinated Pride Festivals – Bloomington and Spencer – September/October 2024
 - Organized OWL Meetup & Bloomington Aces & Allies Planning – February 2025
 - Collaborated on community efforts to track anti-trans legislation – February 2025
1. Up to this point, we’ve reached consensus through planning discussions for pride festivals through discussion with participating members. As we plan to allocate further funds this year regarding the replacement of banners, discussions with the co-leaders and active members may shift our process of allocating funds.
 2. Groups or organizations outside that the task force collaborates with.
 - Organized with pride festival organizers and Spencer Pride Center
 - Collaborated with Councilmember Courtney Daily and other community members in anti-trans legislation tracking
 - Corresponded with organizers of Gay Men’s Fellowship dinners
 3. Revenue: \$300
Donations: \$0
T-account: \$5,184.25
 4. Met: 06.04.24, 07.12.24, 08.29.24, 09.16.24. 11.11.24, 02.23.25, 04.23.25

Refugee and Immigrant Support and Education (RISE)



The Refugee and Immigrant Support and Education (RISE) Task Force welcomes people from other countries and reaches out to support folks new to our community and form friendships.
Jenny Vessels, Chair: Jenny Vessels, 812-797-5231

JURISE Additional Members Signing Off on Annual Report: Mary Blizzard, Debbie Fish, Barb Backler

1. The task force provided transportation and direct financial assistance to two families that we sponsor, provided transportation and collection of household items for an additional 6 families located in Bloomington, and disseminated information relevant to local and federal immigration laws. Our annual speaker event was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts with the keynote speaker (immigration lawyer) so our only fundraising during the 2024-25 fiscal year was football parking.
2. Proposals for expenditures are discussed among TF members and voted on.
3. The task force works with Bloomington Refugee Support Network (RSN)
4. Income: \$3,828.36; Expenses: \$6,922.46; Remaining: \$1,434.55
5. We met every month except July 2024 and December 2024.

Reproductive Justice Task Force



The [Reproductive Justice Task Force \(RJTF\)](#) mobilizes around the concept of reproductive justice as “the right to bodily autonomy, to have children or not have children, and to parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.” ([SisterSong.org](#)) We educate, advocate, and connect within the church and with outside community partners to support and advance reproductive justice for all.

Nan McKinley and Cindy Lonnberg, Co-chairs; Nan: 812-929-4803; fiddlernan@gmail.com; Cindy 812-322-0713; clonnberg@sbcglobal.net

Members Signing Off on Annual Report: Melinda Swensen, Carol McCord, Pat Slabach, Anne Clark

1. Our activities included our annual Diaper Drive in October, participated in football parking in the fall, had our annual Side With Love bake sale on Feb 9th, and during May we are having our annual fundraising for the Hoosier Abortion Fund. **We sponsor the 4th Trimester Team** within the church.
2. We vote with a raise of hands once we reach consensus through discussion. The agendas are sent out ahead of time which alerts members when we will be deciding on donations. If there is a time constrained matter of a small amount, the co-chairs will consult with our core group of regular meeting attendees to get a quorum via a small group email.
3. We have continued to support All Options Pregnancy Resource Center with maintaining personal contact, passing along information and encouraging our members to be involved in their activities. They have been the administrator of the diaper bank and the Hoosier Abortion Fund throughout this year. Cindy and I receive weekly updates from a Planned Parenthood coalition for our area during the legislative session and we share this info with our group. We offered a carpool on Feb 20th to attend Lobby Day at the statehouse on Reproductive issues. We tabled at a film about abortion at the Buskirk Chumley in March, which was put on by Our Choice Coalition. Last June, the co-chairs were also signees on an Amicus brief petitioning the IN Supreme Court to accept the transfer of a case about the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) as it applies to the right to abortion. We were contacted by the Columbia University Law, Rights and Religion Project because we are known in the community as activists on this issue.
4. Total incoming: \$4407.56. Expenses \$24.99. Donations paid out: \$5200.00. Remaining in acct estimate (our donation to the Hoosier Ab Fund in May could involve a processing fee above the \$2500, so TBD): \$400.19
5. We meet Aug to May on a monthly basis except for Nov/Dec are combined = 9 meetings.

4th Trimester Project, a project of the Reproductive Justice Task Force

From the Flyer: “There is a need to help new families experience a realistic and supported transition after childbirth. This is an exhausting period. Even when parents do their best to prepare there can be significant gaps in knowledge and support that can contribute to fear and anxiety. Help is available simply by telling us what you need.”

4th Trimester Home visits this year:

- 2/12/25: Anne and Sally
- 3/5/2025: Anne and Sally
- 4/11/25: Sarah
- 4/17/25: Anne and Sally

“**Tandem Community Birth Center and Postpartum House**” was nominated for the 25% non-pledge funds by the Reproductive Task Force. Upon completion of Tandem’s facility, they will have four post-partum rooms that can be used as “respite care” anytime during the 4th Trimester (first three months postpartum). This is a totally new and revolutionary model of postpartum support. This aligns with the values and goals of UUCB’s own 4th Trimester Project. Whereas, we provide care like grannies, aunties and uncles, Tandem doulas are

trained to watch for problems, like postpartum depression. There are Heroes in the world, and they go out of business without financial support. This is the second time Tandem has been nominated.

To Do: Create platform for 4th Trimester Volunteers Team Notes

For example - Date, Time, note: 'Wrapping up my first shift. I played with the baby while the parent took the dog for a walk, we chatted, and then I looked after the baby while the parent read and napped. I cleaned the toilet and emptied the cat litter. I gave the baby a bottle and she fell asleep on my chest.'

Current thing to be accomplished: Photo Consent

Interested? UUCB members and friends can join the 4th Trimester Team. A background check is required. A two-hour training is required and can be scheduled at convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Clark and Sally McGuire, 4th Trimester co-leads

Thanks to Nan McKinley and Cindy Longberg, RTF chairs, and everyone who believes in reproductive choice and bodily integrity.

Social Justice Funds Committee (SJFC)

2024 Fall Social Justice Fall Grants

Each Fall the Social Justice Funds Committee seeks applications from the UU Social Justice Task Forces and other UU members for grants that further the mission of the Bloomington Unitarian Universalist Church. Funds are available from interest on the Lundin SJ Endowment Fund. The following awards were granted:

- **RISE:** Helping RSN to help refugees to get on their feet. \$1300 to go toward rent and other expenses necessary for Bloomington refugees. Submitted by Barbara Backler.
- **Special Olympics:** \$1300 to help people with Special Needs attend the Special Olympics Summer Games. Submitted by Cindy Brandes.

Spring 25% Plate Fund Campaign

The three nominees for the 25% non pledge plate funds were selected and are:

- Tandem Community Birth Center and Postpartum House, Inc. - nominated by Anne Clark.
- Monroe County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) - nominated by Debbie Fish.
- SCCAP Thriving Connections - nominated by Mary Mahern.

Voting will take place on June 8 at the congregational meeting.

Funds Committee: Denise Ogren, Steve Mascari, Scott Sanders, Sarah Kopper, Sandy Davoren, MJ Wallaker.
Advisor: Jackie Hall

Sunday Social Justice Film Series

Program suspended due to pandemic.