

# Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana

*Seeking the Spirit, Building Community, Changing the World*



## Congregational Meeting Minutes

June 7, 2026

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Submitted by Regina DiLamore, Secretary

### ATTACHMENTS

A. 2026 Annual Report

## **Call to Order and Welcome**

President Jane McLeod called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Regina DiLamore, Secretary of the Board, lit the chalice and Jane introduced the Parliamentarian Steve Dillon.

## **Staff Reports**

### **Lead Minister's Report**

Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray reflected on a strong and successful year for UUCB, noting that the congregation has expanded to 501 current members, including 31 new members welcomed this past year. A formal membership roll review is scheduled to take place this summer. Worship attendance remained consistently robust throughout the year. In response to congregational feedback, the successful two-service format will return in early August to better align with the start of the school year. UUCB will return to one service in December 2026 due to extra holiday services and the Bazaar.

Currently, Reverend Susan's time is split relatively evenly among worship, programming, and administration. A comprehensive review of the church's financial and administrative practices was conducted alongside the Treasurer and the Personnel Advisory Committee. This report is being finalized, and recommendations will soon be shared with the Board for implementation.

In community outreach, the Homelessness Committee successfully placed crucial issues on the agenda of local elected officials, the Indiana UU Church Network was developed, and a new "Showing Up Together" email list was recently launched. Reverend Susan concluded by announcing a new three-quarter-time intern starting this September, celebrating improved support for the pledge drive, and expressing her deep gratitude for the staff and congregation. See the full report in Attachment A.

### **Director of Lifespan Education's Report**

Stephanie Kimball began her remarks by introducing a shift in vocabulary and approach to religious education, transitioning to a model of "Religious Explorers" led by volunteers acting as "Guides." Stephanie noted that last January Beth Kaylor was hired as the Childcare Coordinator. This year UUCB has experienced significant growth across all lifespan religious exploration, engaging 159 adults and 184 children. However, of the 184 children participating, only 52 are formally registered. The Our Whole Lives (OWL) program is also seeing remarkable growth and is actively seeking more facilitators. The deadline for submitting new RE offerings is June 30th.

Despite these positive numbers, critical volunteer shortages persist, and nine volunteer positions remain vacant. These shortages directly impact the children's experience, often forcing classes to combine, which places children in unfamiliar groups with unfamiliar peers and adults.

## **Board of Direct Reports**

### **President's Report**

Jane opened her remarks by reviewing the Board's mandatory annual planning document and goals for the 2025–26 fiscal year. While the Board made strong progress across its seven areas of responsibility, she noted that their agenda was overly ambitious. Specifically, the Board was unable to advance the proposed congregational name change or the mission/vision discernment process. Jane summarized the committee's efforts to initiate this conversation, explaining that due to low attendance at the discussion sessions, the name change discernment working group could not make a formal recommendation. Consequently, the goal to address the church name before updating the mission and vision was not achieved. The Board is currently determining how to approach this work next year.

More successfully, the Board hosted an "Imagining Our Future" event on May 2, 2026, with nearly 40 congregants participating. Attendees identified community strengths, future aspirations, and concrete actions for growth. Key themes from the event included a strong desire to increase connections within the congregation, among other UU churches, and with the broader interfaith community. Participants also noted the diverse needs of our various sub-communities and shared thoughts on managing growth. The Board looks forward to building on these insights as they plan for the future.

## **Business**

### **Quorum Report**

Quorum was reported at 150 members, exceeding the requirement of 75 members to conduct business.

### **Motion to allow the Board to approve the June 2026 Congregational Meeting Minutes**

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

### **Vote to Select the 25% Recipient Plate**

Sarah Kopper introduced the vote for the 25% Sunday Plate Recipient, and the Board members collected the ballots.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Leadership Cultivation Committee**

Glenda Breeden, Chair of the LCC, offered her gratitude for her time on the committee. She also thanked those members who said they would consider a leadership position in the future and especially thanked the members who said yes to leadership positions.

### **Motion to Elect Nominees**

- Special Purposes Fund (SPF), three-year term: Carl Deitchman.
- Leadership Cultivation Committee (LCC), three-year term: Steven Gilbert; Kathleen Sideli.
- Board of Directors, two-year terms: Corrin Clarkson, President; Mary Craig, Vice-President; Sarah Kopper, Secretary; and Regina DiLavore, at-large board member.
- Board of Directors, Doug Anderson, One Year Interim at-large Board Member.

Motions to elect the nominees and approve the interim Board appointment were raised, the motions were seconded, and the motions carried.

### **Special purposes fund (SPF) committee Andrew Appel**

Andrew Appel, Chair of the SPF Committee presented the committee's report, thanking the committee members and explaining that the fund's primary purpose is to look outward and invest in community building.

For fiscal year 2026, the SPF funded several vital UUCB capital improvements, including new sanctuary doors, kitchen upgrades, and new windows, as well as providing a MUUSA scholarship. Additionally, the fund received a generous \$72,000 anonymous bequest this year. Andrew concluded his report with an overview of the fund's current investments. For more details see the full report in Attachment A.

## **Treasurers Report and vote to approve fiscal year 2027 budget**

Bill Lonnberg, Treasurer, opened his remarks by acknowledging Ruth Sanders of the Finance Committee for her dedicated work. He then summarized the current year-to-date budget (as of May 31, 2026).

Bill then presented the budget highlights for the upcoming 2026–2027 fiscal year. The proposed budget is balanced and requires zero operational reserves, thanks in part to a \$52,000 increase in pledges over last year. Additionally, UUCB will fully fund its contribution to the UUA Annual Program Fund. After discussing specific increases across budget categories, Bill moved to approve the budget. The motion was seconded, and following congregational discussion, the motion carried.

See Attachment A for the Annual Report, which includes the full Treasurer's report.

## **Ministerial seed fund working group**

Jackie Hall and Charlie Pickle presented an update on the initiative to raise funds to hire a new minister. Following the Board's previous approval of a Ministerial Seed Fund, the primary objective is to fast-track the hiring timeline, allowing UUCB to bring a new minister on board by the Fall of 2027. This strategy bypasses the traditional reliance on gradual pledge growth, allowing for an earlier hire.

The fundraising goal for this seed fund is set at \$350,000, structured as a one-time gift opportunity for those willing and able to contribute. The leadership team aims to secure full commitments for this \$350,000 by the end of June 2026. Momentum is already strong, with \$250,000 of the target amount already committed. The working group has organized two upcoming events scheduled for June 20th and June 27th.

Financially, the \$350,000 fund is projected to sustain the new position over a five-year period. It is designed to initially cover 90% of the minister's salary, with the fund's contribution decreasing incrementally each year as general operations and annual pledges gradually rise to fully absorb the ongoing salary.

## **Announcement of 25% plate recipient**

Linda Pickle, Vice President, announced that Farm to Family was selected as the recipient.

## **Introduction of Right Relations Committee**

Jane introduced the members of the reestablished Right Relations Committee (RRC), which consists of Denise Breeden-Ost, Mary Mahern, Charlie Pickle, and Drew Schrader.

Building upon the foundational work laid by the previous year's committee, the RRC collaborated closely with the Board to develop a new Congregational Covenant. Jane motioned that the proposed Congregational Covenant be adopted. The motion was seconded, and following discussion, it was officially approved by the Congregation.

## **Granting Emerita Status to Reverend Mary Ann Macklin**

Jane invited the Congregation into a discussion regarding what granting Emerita status to Reverend Macklin would entail. As part of this transition, a formal covenant will be established with Reverend Macklin. Following the discussion, a motion was put forth to grant Reverend Macklin Emerita status. The motion was seconded and officially approved by the Congregation. Jane noted that a special reception to honor the occasion will be held on June 21st immediately following the service.

## **Celebrating our beloved community**

### **Beacon Light the Way Contribution**

Jane celebrated the success of the *Beacon Light the Way* campaign, highlighting that UUCB raised over \$29,000 within its first nine months. She then extended her appreciation to Beacon's Executive Director Reverend Forrest Gilmore, acknowledging his dedicated leadership.

### **Service Awards**

Special recognition was awarded to Dick Stumpner and Steve Krahne for their dedicated efforts on building improvements over the past year. Charlotte Appel was also recognized for her service during community hour, the annual auction, the bazaar, and the Golden Elephant. Additionally, Steve Mascari received recognition for his initiative in starting the all-ages rock band.

### **Appreciation of Board Members Completing Their Terms**

On behalf of the remaining members of the Board, Pam MacLaughlin thanked the Board representatives (Steve Mascari, Linda Pickle, and Jane McLeod) who have completed their terms and will be moving on next year.

## **Ministers closing words**

Reverend Susan provided the closing words.

## **Motion to Adjourn**

Steve Mascari, Board Member-at-Large moved to adjourn the meeting, and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:07 p.m.

## ATTACHMENT A

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# Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana, Inc.

## Annual Report to the Congregation Sunday, June 7, 2026

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Current Membership: 501

### Board of Directors, 2025-2026

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](http://uubloomington.org/about-us/board-of-directors)

Full minutes of previous Congregational Meetings, with attachments, are on the church website:

[Congregational Meeting Minutes](#)

### Minister

The Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray, Lead Minister

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# GOVERNANCE

## Board of Directors

This was another busy and exciting year for the Board, as we grew into our shared ministry with Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, continued to refine our policies and practices, and initiated conversations about our name and our vision for the future.

The 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 2025-26, organized according to the seven areas of Board responsibility as articulated by David Pyle, Regional Lead and Congregational Life Consultant with the MidAmerica Regional Staff of the UUA.

Mission/vision discernment:

- Adopt a new mission statement
- Reach clarity about whether to change our name and what to change it to

Fiduciary responsibility and oversight:

- Develop a plan to clarify our financial goals and practices to ensure that they support the congregation's mission optimally

Policy development and promulgation:

- Keep policies up to date
- Adopt a new mission statement

Congregational assessment:

- Assess leadership and minister
- Develop a plan for more intentional assessment of the health and performance of the Congregation, to implement when new mission statement in place

Long-term and strategic planning:

- Clarify plans to address physical plant needs

Relationships:

- Deepen our engagement with congregation members and friends
- Strengthen connections with the UUA

Transforming the congregational culture:

- Advance our understanding of our congregational culture (culture around disagreement, change, etc.)

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

- Established a Name Change Discernment Working Group
- Established a Mission-Vision Discernment Working Group
- Revised our Articles of Incorporation to clarify our purposes and to ensure that they are consistent with our status as a religious and charitable organization with the state of Indiana
- Authorized a review of financial practices and administrative procedures. The results of the review will be shared with the Board by the end of May, 2026.
- Continued regular Cookies and Conversation events with the Board.
- Prepared monthly Perspectives articles on the Board's activities.
- Participated in monthly MidAmerica region Zoom meetings.
- Maintained 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. These include Bylaws sections regarding the Leadership Cultivation Committee and the Special Purposes Fund. Good progress was made but that work was not completed in time to bring it for vote at the annual meeting.

The Board assessed its progress toward meeting these goals at its May meeting, and agreed that the processes we initiated for discerning the Congregation's wishes regarding the name change and the mission-vision did not yield the outcomes we had hoped for. Based on the listening sessions it held, the Name

Change Discernment Working Group felt that it could not make a recommendation regarding the name change. We are reluctant to bring a motion regarding a name change to the Congregation in the absence of energy and excitement about the change. The Mission-Vision Discernment Working Group had waited to begin its work in earnest until the name change had been decided. We are in the process of deciding how to continue this work next year.

Amidst our work toward these goals,

- We began to implement the Five-Year Capital Projects plan prepared by the Facilities team with funding from the Special Purposes Fund, Operational Reserves, annual budgeted funds, and dedicated fundraising. This included new exit doors for the Meeting Room and significant renovations to the kitchen, both of which make our facilities safer.
- We fulfilled our pledge to the Beacon Light the Way campaign, raising \$29,035.52 to match the \$25,000 contribution from the Special Purposes Fund. Thanks to Joan Caulton for overseeing this effort and to all who contributed.
- We proposed Bylaws revisions to allow a non-voting youth representative on the Board and to clarify procedures for confirming interim Board appointments which were discussed and adopted by members at the lively mid-year meeting.
- We reestablished the Right Relations Committee (RRC). That committee (Denise Breeden-Ost, Mary Mahern, Charlie Pickle, Drew Schrader) spent the first part of the year clarifying how they will approach their work and preparing an introduction for the Congregation. Building on the work of last year's committee, the RRC also worked with the Board to develop a new Congregational Covenant, which we will bring to vote at the annual meeting.
- We decided to bring a motion to confer the title of Minister Emerita on Rev. Mary Ann Macklin to the annual meeting and provided opportunities for discussion and feedback.
- We authorized a successful search for a ministerial intern, who will join us in August, 2026. Many thanks to the Ministerial Intern Team (Allison Tomusk, Christine Bannister, Mike McGregor, Linda Pickle) for their work.
- We authorized the establishment of a Ministerial Seed Fund to support hiring a second minister to begin in fall 2027.
- We held an Imagining Our Future event on May 2, 2026 in which almost 40 congregants participated. At the event, we identified our many strengths as a community, areas of aspiration, and concrete actions we might take to realize these aspirations. Among other themes, we heard a desire to increase connection within the congregation, among UU congregations, and between the congregation and other faith communities; recognition that we are made of many individuals and subcommunities who have different needs and interests; and thoughts (and some concerns) about how to manage growth. The Board looks forward to building on these ideas as we plan for the future.

In retrospect, the Board feels that its goals for the year may have been overly ambitious. Although we did not complete the name change and mission-vision processes, we nevertheless feel that we have led the congregation well, been fiscally responsible, and established a strong path toward the future.

The Board is grateful for the trust of the congregation and the efforts of the many committees, working groups, and task forces that bring UUCB's mission to life 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](mailto: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 Lonnberg, Pam MacLaughlin, Steve Mascari, Linda Pickle, and Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray.

## Finance Committee Report and Proposed Budget

The members of the Finance Committee appreciate the opportunity to serve the Church during this fiscal year. We have appreciated working with Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray and Director of Administration Amanda Waye. Committee members are:

- Bill Lonnberg (Treasurer)
- Ruth Sanders

We appreciate Kathy Gilbert and Greg Weaver who also served on the committee in the past fiscal year. We especially remember Beth Henkel, who was a committee member prior to her untimely passing in January.

Notable accomplishments during the current fiscal year include the following.

- Completing an internal audit, which resulted in improved internal control procedures.
- Transferring funds from the church checking account to interest-bearing certificates, earning approximately \$2,100 in dividends through April 30.

The following table depicts FY25-26 budget versus actual as of April 30, 2026. (The 304-day period of July 1, 2025 through April 30, 2026 comprises 83% of the fiscal year.)

|            | Actual    | Budget    | % of Budget |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Income     | \$827,143 | \$884,645 | 93.5%       |
| Expense    | \$724,872 | \$884,645 | 81.9%       |
| Net income | \$102,271 | \$0       |             |

Through April 30, 2026, actual income is ahead of expectations, while actual expenses are just below expectations.

The committee worked with church staff to assemble the proposed FY26-27 Budget, which is summarized on the following page. The Finance Committee recommends that the proposed budget be approved at the congregational meeting.

Submitted by Bill Lonnberg, Treasurer

### Treasurer's Report

6/7/2026 Congregational Meeting

#### FY26-27 Proposed Budget

|                               | Approved<br>FY25-26 Budget | Proposed<br>FY26-27 Budget | Change              |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Income</b>                 |                            |                            |                     |
| Current FY Pledges, Committed | \$ 785,445.00              | \$ 852,000.00              | \$ 66,555.00        |
| Current FY Pledges, Mid Year  | \$ 15,000.00               | \$ 8,000.00                | \$ (7,000.00)       |
| Auction                       | \$ 10,000.00               | \$ 10,000.00               | \$ -                |
| Bazaar                        | \$ 13,000.00               | \$ 15,000.00               | \$ 2,000.00         |
| Facilities Use Fees           | \$ 3,700.00                | \$ 3,700.00                | \$ -                |
| Miscellaneous                 | \$ 5,000.00                | \$ 6,000.00                | \$ 1,000.00         |
| Non-pledge gifts              | \$ 15,000.00               | \$ 16,000.00               | \$ 1,000.00         |
| RE Income                     | \$ 500.00                  | \$ 500.00                  | \$ -                |
| Operational Reserve           | \$ -                       | \$ -                       | \$ -                |
| Prior FY Pledges              | \$ 7,000.00                | \$ 1,000.00                | \$ (6,000.00)       |
| Sunday Plate Offering         | \$ 30,000.00               | \$ 35,000.00               | \$ 5,000.00         |
| <b>Total Income</b>           | <b>\$ 884,645.00</b>       | <b>\$ 947,200.00</b>       | <b>\$ 62,555.00</b> |
| <b>Expenses</b>               |                            |                            |                     |
| Committees                    | \$ 3,150.00                | \$ 4,900.00                | \$ 1,750.00         |
| Outreach                      | \$ 53,311.00               | \$ 53,691.00               | \$ 380.00           |
| Ministry (A)-Lead Minister    | \$ 168,529.24              | \$ 178,750.51              | \$ 10,221.27        |
| Ministry (D)-Other            | \$ 38,565.14               | \$ 59,368.93               | \$ 20,803.79        |
| Religious Education           | \$ 134,392.65              | \$ 147,679.86              | \$ 13,287.21        |
| Music                         | \$ 55,449.60               | \$ 57,781.82               | \$ 2,332.22         |
| Office                        | \$ 179,025.67              | \$ 187,759.24              | \$ 8,733.57         |
| Technology                    | \$ 75,189.91               | \$ 75,951.84               | \$ 761.93           |
| Membership                    | \$ 51,921.80               | \$ 54,226.80               | \$ 2,305.00         |
| Plant                         | \$ 125,110.00              | \$ 127,090.00              | \$ 1,980.00         |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>         | <b>\$ 884,645.00</b>       | <b>\$ 947,200.00</b>       | <b>\$ 62,554.99</b> |
| <b>Net income</b>             | <b>\$ -</b>                | <b>\$ -</b>                |                     |

## Leadership Cultivation Committee

Members: Glenda Breeden (chair), Kathleen (Kathy) Sideli, secretary, Daniel Reed, and Von Welch; Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, *ex officio*; Linda Pickle, board liaison; and Anabel Watson, staff liaison.

We welcomed Von Welch as our newest LCC member; his history with UUCB and his governance savvy have been invaluable.

As part of our commitment to develop leadership capacity in our congregation, LCC members tabled at the Getting Involved Fair in August to talk with folks interested in future leadership.

LCC faced the monumental task this year of finding candidates for Board President, Vice President, and Secretary; a Special Purposes Fund member; and an LCC member. We made a plea at the December Congregational Meeting for members who were interested in leadership roles, or if they had recommendations for individuals who might serve in those roles, to contact us. We are pleased and grateful to present the following slate of nominees to be voted on at our Congregational Meeting, June 7th:

- Board of Directors, two-year terms: **Corrin Clarkson**, President; **Mary Craig**, Vice-President; **Sarah Kopper**, Secretary; **Regina DiLavore**, at-large board member; **Pam McLaughlin**, at-large board member (continuing).
- Special Purposes Fund (SPF), three-year term: **Carl Deitchman**.
- Leadership Cultivation Committee (LCC), three-year term: **Steven Gilbert**; **Kathleen Sideli** (continuing).
- 

We invited five UUCB leaders to be on our Pathways to Engagement Panel on April 11th. Even though attendance was small, the panelists' unique stories, and the commentaries, questions, and lively discussions by the participants afterwards were inspiring to all of us.

I look forward to serving elsewhere at UUCB now that I've completed my three-year term on the Leadership Cultivation Committee. It's been a learning experience, for sure, and a joy to work with everyone on the committee.

Submitted by: Glenda Breeden, Chair

## Special Purpose Fund

The Special Purposes Fund (SPF) Committee for the 2025-2026 fiscal year was comprised of Andrew Appel (Chair), Bill Lonnberg (UUCB Treasurer), Licia Weber, Ruth Aydt, and Steve Mascari (Board At-Large).

This fiscal year the church received one bequest totaling \$72,009 from a donor who prefers to remain anonymous. There was also a gift that was directed to the Swaney Composition Fund. Funds were approved for several compositions as well as for capital improvements including the new Meeting Room exterior doors, windows and kitchen upgrades. The cost of the capital improvements was shared with operational funds. In April, up to \$2,000 was approved for MUUSA scholarships but the funds had not yet been dispersed as of the creation of this report.

The committee worked with Board members to update the SPF-related Bylaws this year, and this effort is still underway.

SPF started this fiscal year with \$499,624 in assets. This included \$195,130 in the SPF Endowment and \$304,994 in SPF available funds. This was down from \$505,643 at the start of the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Annual reports are due before the end of the fiscal year but as of March 31, 2025, total SPF assets were \$521,955. Investment performance for the Wellington Fund was solid being up 9% for this fiscal year through March. The Parnassus fund (PARNX) was strong, increasing 22% fiscal year to date. The Clean Edge Green Energy Fund (QCLN) broke out of its prolonged slump and is up 37% so far this year.

Submitted by Andrew Appel.

# MINISTER and STAFF

## Lead Minister

### **General Reflections**

This has been a strong congregational year. I continue to be impressed with the generosity and care our congregation offers to members and organizations and efforts beyond our congregation.

We've continued to experience strong participation and attendance in programs and worship. There is a palpable feeling of needing one another and strong investment of time, care, and generosity to the congregation. This congregation has buoyed my spirit on many occasions.

This has also been a very challenging year in our country and state. As a historical document, it bears naming some of the realities we are living in. The rise of fascism and far-right authoritarianism in our country is clear and undeniable. I can't list everything, but it feels important to name the context in which we are trying to minister to people, to community, and to defend the values of love, equity, pluralism and the practice of democracy.

We've had federal militarized police and national guard deployed to cities across the country in massive raids targeting immigrants, refugees, people of color and protestors, with at least 46 deaths of people at the hands of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or in ICE custody and detention. We've seen a rise in political violence including the murder and attempted murder of elected officials. We've also experienced mass shootings, including at schools and at multiple religious communities, throughout the country.

Major victories born from decades of progressive work have been gutted – including efforts toward equal rights and non-discrimination for transgender and non-binary people; protections for reproductive care and the availability of trans affirming care, the protection of minority representation through the Voting Rights Act, and serious cuts to the healthcare and anti-hunger social safety net. Attacks against voting rights and the integrity of our elections are ongoing as is the overt and staggering corruption of the president's administration, using public dollars and institutions to enrich himself and his friends and loyal allies.

On the global stage, the administration has shredded the post-World War II alliances and stability through many acts of aggression against allies and foes. The dismantling of USAID has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths worldwide. Through cozying up to dictators around the world, the silence on the human rights abuses in Gaza, the war of choice with Israel against Iran, the embargo on Cuba have caused untold suffering, global economic damage, and has undermined human rights work across the world.

I name all of this to reflect and honor the context of fear, anxiety, anger, that all of our members, staff, and many in our wider community are navigating. In the midst of this, we remain committed to courageously defend our loved ones and community, our faith and our values, to nurture courageous resistance to fascism, to create sanctuary and care for each other and our own spirits within and beyond our walls, and still to imagine something beyond the present horrors, a world that is more loving and just, where all people can thrive.

Last year, in the spring, at the beginning of the authoritarian breakthrough, the core of our mission seemed centered on this work of growing courage, creating sanctuary, and nurturing imagination. This focus continues and this year it was woven into our monthly themes, our pledge drive, and our overall ministry and programs.

## Courage - Sanctuary - Imagination

### **Worship**

Is it surprising to know that about 1/3 of my time is spent on the planning, creating, writing, and leading of worship services? Sometimes this surprises me. Sunday is the biggest day in the life of the congregation, and it is the primary place where we create a sense of identity and purpose as a community. It has also been a time to be together in hope and courage to strengthen and buoy our spirits to go back out into the world living our values.

This year, I continued to use thematic ministry - creating an overarching theme for the year with eleven monthly sub-themes that we explored in worship, in children's religious education and in our Chalice Circles program. My hope is that thematic ministry helps draw a through line during the year, go deep with certain theological ideas, and helps us have a related conversation across multiple generations and programs. Even our pledge drive wove in the themes.

This year, the overall theme was Nurturing the Beloved Community, and each month we explored different kinds of qualities needed for the beloved community. Our themes this year were: Community of Possibility and Imagination (August); Community of Welcome and Inclusion (September); Community of Memory and History (October); Community of Gratitude and Service (November); Community of Sanctuary (December); Community of Courage (January); Community of Truth (February); Community of Hope (March); Community of Interdependence (April); Community of Joy and Resilience (May); and Beloved Community (June). Worship attendance remained strong throughout the year and our move to two Sunday morning services continued to be successful. One piece of consistent feedback I heard early in the year was the need to move to two services in early August when school returns to session. We will incorporate this change for this August.

I continue to be so grateful for the music leadership of Susan Swaney. Her leadership with the choir and the music program, along with Ray Fellman's extraordinary piano playing brings a spirit to worship that creates moving, rich and meaningful worship. I am also grateful for the wisdom and insights of Stephanie Kimball who helped enormously on the setting of worship themes and does so much to weave the themes into the Time for Ages during the service and throughout the Religious Education (RE) program.

I am also grateful for the Worship Associates (WA), including new members who came on last Spring. Thank you to Erica Whichello for chairing the WA team. I am hopeful that with a bit more capacity next year, we can meet as a team more regularly and increase collaboration with the services. Thank you to Erica W, Sarah Barnett, Olaya Fernández Gayol, Jason Michálek, Sarah Montgomery, Mary Beth O'Brien, Avram Primack, Dinorah Sapp, Matt Stonecipher, and MJ Wallaker.

### **Ministry and Program**

The main program and ministry committees that I work most closely are: Pastoral Associates Care Team (PACT); Caring Committee, Social Justice Coordinating Team, and the Democracy Task Force. Each of these teams has submitted a report.

I continue to be grateful for the caring ministry that is led by members of the PACT and Caring Committee. There is unbelievable and generous ministry offered by our lay volunteers to so many members in this congregation. In addition, I lead a Pastoral Conversations drop-in group every Wednesday at 12:15pm. I run it like a small group with opening readings and a time for silence. This is a time for anyone who needs some community support or is struggling and wants a touchpoint in their week to share how they are and to be held in care by others. It has grown to be a bit of a community, and I am grateful for others in the group who share facilitation when I am unavailable.

Within religious education, I am delighted that we were able to add a position midyear of Childcare Coordinator with better pay and more hours. This allowed us to hire Beth Kaylor who is providing a consistent and engaged presence to our youngest children and families. I think this is a strong addition to this year's staff team and for our ministry to children and families. Another highlight for the year was the Sunday Youth service in May. I am hopeful that we can return to a regular tradition of youth led services at least once a year and this was a great start after a hiatus with the pandemic and rebuilding the youth program (which continues).

With respect to Social Justice, some highlights for the year include the Social Justice Coordinating team's work on the holiday gift drives for partner organizations and their work to coordinate informational sessions for Social Justice Task Force leaders that help them know more about office and safety procedures. Additionally, organizing an annual planning meeting helps avoid conflicts and balance out activities and fundraisers throughout the year.

In March we fulfilled our \$50,000 to pledge to Beacon's Light the Way Campaign that we made at last year's Annual Meeting. This campaign is Beacon, Inc. effort to build Beacon Center – with an overnight shelter, wrap-around services, job training, and some transitional apartments. We successfully raised \$29,035.52 to match our Special Purposes Fund contribution of \$25,000, making our total donation to the fund \$54,032.52.

The Democracy Task Force is a new Social Justice Task Force organized last Spring. I helped organize this group to help strategize and coordinate the many opportunities there are to resist the dismantling of democracy and to increase the participation and impact of our members in resisting authoritarianism and defending and promoting our UU values. This year, the Democracy Task Force created the ShowingUpTogether email list to help members share with other members time-sensitive justice actions. This list was used to help turn some of our members out to oppose the hurried redistricting effort in Indiana, which was thankfully defeated. We are just now beginning to look at the UU the Vote efforts for summer and fall.

Finally, with respect to Social Justice, it was great to see the leadership of the Homelessness Task force this year organize meetings with elected federal, state, and local leaders. They also collaborated on some visits with the Hunger Task Force and Democracy Task Force.

Beyond the congregation, a few new initiatives began. I was a keynote speaker and our congregation showed up in force to a new initiative in Indiana called Faith Voices for Justice. While this group is just beginning, the hope is to bring together religious voices across faith traditions who are united for justice, human rights, and democracy in our state. Additionally, working with other UU ministers in Indiana, we have organized an Indiana UU Religious Professionals gathering. This gathering met three times this year, bringing together core staff members of the UU churches in Indiana as well as other UU religious professionals living in the state to help build relationships, share resources, and hopefully strengthen our congregations across Indiana.

## **Administration**

The second largest area of work for me this year has been administration. I am hopeful that with time, I will be able to reduce this administrative load that I hold. I know that I have gifts in this area and want to continue to use them, but also know that when it is too much, it takes away my time for pastoral care, worship, and ministry programs.

The main administrative committees and teams I work with are: Finance Committee, Pledge Drive committee, Personnel Advisory Committee, Leadership Cultivation Committee, Board of Directors, and the staff. In addition, this year, I also helped form and lead the Ministerial Seed Fund team and was part of the Ministerial Internship Committee.

Some of the highlights from these areas of work include:

- The successful hire of a ministerial intern, Maria Renner, for a 75% time, 10 month internship beginning in

September 2026.

- A strongly improved plan for staff support for the annual pledge drive. This began with an early planning meeting with Pledge Drive chair, Corrin Clarkson, and office staff Amanda Waye, Jo Bowman, and myself. We mapped out the tasks and timeline of many of the pledge drive needs and were able to set a clear plan with deadlines and clarify roles and responsibility between staff members and the committee. This made the process much smoother and less stressful for office staff and I think that was helpful in the overall campaign.
- The successful 2026-2027 Pledge Drive campaign. We met and even exceeded by a small amount our goal of raising \$845,000 in pledges to fund our ministry next year. Another success was the weaving of the Winter and Spring themes of Courage, Hope, and Interdependence into our Pledge Drive theme of *Together in Hope and Courage*

In addition to these highlights, I offer a bit more depth in a few of these areas.

### **Ministerial Seed Fund Campaign**

With nearly 500 adult members, we are in great need of a second minister. The Board approved a plan in March 2026 to fundraise for a Ministerial Seed Fund. This fund - if successful - will allow the congregation to hire a minister in the Fall of 2027. The fund would guarantee the costs of the second minister for the first year and allow us to slowly grow our budget over 5 years to fully incorporate the costs of a second minister into the regular operating budget. This is a great idea because the cost of an additional minister, inclusive of salary and benefits is approximately \$125,000 per year. This is a significant jump in one year. Additionally, a congregation must begin the hiring process for a minister before the pledge drive, so it is important to know you have the funds in place in advance. And this plan also gives additional time for pledges and the budget to increase to accommodate the full costs of a second minister. With the goal of \$350,000, the Ministerial seed fund does all of these things.

In April, as the Pledge Drive was coming to an end, I called a meeting with Charlie Pickle and Jackie Hall who both volunteered to help with the fundraising. We have begun some initial asks and will expand the campaign in June with two gatherings to explain the fund and ask for contributions from the members and friends of the congregation. As of May 19th, we have raised half of our goal of \$350,000 and are hopeful to reach our goal in commitments by the end of June 2026, with people making their contributions as soon as they are able, but no later than June 30, 2027. The financial plan for the Ministerial Seed Fund that Bill Lonnberg, Treasurer, created also included earning a modest amount of interest on the fund.

### **Administration and Financial Practices**

In a partnership with Treasurer, Bill Lonnberg, and Carl Deitchman, of the Personnel Advisory Committee, we put together a plan to review the overall financial and administrative practices of the congregation. I needed help understanding where gaps in our practices might exist and also a plan that would relieve me of some administrative work. Carl Deitchman created the methodology for the review and interviewed all core staff to understand our practices and where improvements can be made. We are just finalizing that report now and I will be sharing it with the Board and staff to create a plan to implement many of the recommendations.

### **Ongoing Efforts and Hopes for the Future**

This year, the Board and I had two big goals that weren't completed. They were to have the Name Change conversation and a Vision for our Future conversation. Two teams were set up to do this work with the plan for the Name Change work to go first with a decision at the December mid-year congregational meeting, and the Vision conversation to begin in the New Year. Unfortunately, we could not successfully move the name change conversation to completion this year. One learning for me is that it is helpful for me to be more involved in these congregation wide conversations. I wanted to learn from the name change process and tried in the beginning to intentionally be more of an observer than participant, but by virtue of my role I have a lot of knowledge about the congregational calendar, communication and can be a helpful cheerleader for key initiatives. By not being on the team, particularly in the beginning, I don't think I was as helpful as I might have been. I also think the damage, chaos, and tragedy of what is happening in our country has made organizing

and holding attention to these larger congregational conversations more difficult. I am curious to hear from members about how they hope we might move forward.

I know we have an important ministry ahead of us and I am so glad to be doing it with all of you. I am hopeful about the addition of a ministerial intern next year and the hiring process for a second minister to begin the fall of 2027.

With the addition of the second minister, I am hopeful that we can expand the leadership (including justice leadership) that I and our congregation provide in the wider community, strengthen leadership development in the congregation and have more adequate staffing to help meet the pastoral needs of our congregation.

I continue to be so grateful and delighted to be your minister.

Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, Lead Minister

[revsfg@uubloomington.org](mailto:revsfg@uubloomington.org)

## Connections Coordinator

In the four years that I have been UUCB's part-time Connections Coordinator, I have felt full of gratitude for the wholehearted welcome of this community. Though I arrived with prior participation in Unitarian Universalism, what I did not bring with me was a connection to this town or its people. The care and warmth of this congregation have immensely aided in my plugging into this larger region.

It is meaningful to participate in this welcome to others as they arrive here. I have seen the life-changing effects of this affirming, safe, and pluralistic religious tradition on this community so diverse in gender identity, economic status, religious background and personal understanding of the universe, and in many other ways. Whether connecting via phone call with potential visitors or getting to know those who attend monthly *New to UU* sessions and new members in *Exploring UUCB*, I witness the joy that fills so many who envision and live into their involvement within our community. Thank you for being a part of this welcome!

I am grateful for the immense efforts made by volunteers that make so many of our activities possible. I spend time each week reaching out to volunteers who generously arrive early on Sundays to greet at the doors and stay late to help with coffee and tea during Community Hour. These folks set the tone on Sundays. Thank you to anyone who has helped with these impactful roles.

Thank you, too, to those on the Leadership Cultivation Committee, who have put in many hours of time to offer members of our community awareness of, skills toward, and opportunities to serve in leadership roles and committees. It has been inspiring to learn from and collaborate with you all as a staff member on this committee. I have so much gratitude for each person I have worked with on one-time events, such as through organizing our visibility at the 4th of July Parade and IU Involvement Fair and through congregational committee and task force representatives at our UUCB Getting Involved Fair and New to UU classes.

Volunteer efforts are also vital to the work of guiding community members choosing the path of membership here. With the Exploring UUCB membership classes being a focal point of my work as your membership professional, close collaboration with volunteer facilitators and guest presenters means so much to me. Thank you to those who have enriched the welcome of new members in this and other ways. As is often emphasized in membership work, each of you, simply by being here and participating in the life and conversations of this community, changes who we are collectively.

I look forward to the future collaboration and conversations to come!

And now, a bit about what my work has involved in the past year:

### Overview of 2025-26 Connections Activities

- Facilitated and organized three sessions of Exploring UUCB; 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 coordinated the joining of **31 new members**
- Compiled Sunday spoken Announcements weekly and delivered them along with a general Welcome and Land Acknowledgement during many worship services
- 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

- Coordinated Young Adult Ministry: six “Pizza and Hike” events, including communication and promotion; registered UUCB for the IU Involvement Fair and communicated with volunteer coordinator for our group
- Acted as ex-officio staff member on the Leadership Cultivation Committee
- Recruited and maintained weekly registrations for Java Crew and Greeters
  - Coordinated and recruited Parking Volunteers when needed
  - Recruited for seven greeters per worship service
- 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
- Formed a Membership Team
- Coordinated the Getting Involved: Activities and Committees Fair (social and other church groups, committees, and teams)
- Coordinated 4th of July Parade involvement, including communication with Bloomington Parks and Recreation; initiated planning for 4th of July, 2026
- Coordinated a luncheon at Bell Trace for UU residents and UUCB staff
- Coordinated a luncheon at Meadowood for UU residents and UUCB staff to be held mid-June
- Utilized Planning Center to maintain registrations, groups, membership and congregant data, and generally facilitate the items above
  - Began review of database records of people not attending recently
- Attended the UUA's annual multi-day Finding Our Way Home conference for religious professionals of color
- Attended the annual UU Association of Membership Professionals Pro Day conference
- Registered for in-person attendance of GA in Louisville
- Attended meetings of Indiana UU Religious Professionals
- Outside of my staff role, I have enjoyed continued involvement with the UUCB-affiliated Cloud 7 choral ensemble, Open Mind Zen Indiana, and other groups and participation in church activities such as Fellowship Dinners and clothing swaps.

## **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, coordinates a new Membership Team, 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 many newcomers and new members. Our total membership is currently 501.

## **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](http://uucb.churchcenter.com/registrations)) and/or reach out to me at [connect@uubloomington.org](mailto: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 you all for the beautiful community and conversations,

Anabel Watson, Connections Coordinator ([connect@uubloomington.org](mailto:connect@uubloomington.org))

## Director of Administration

The days pass by, full of events, schedules, time crunches, last minute details, organized frenzies, chaotic freefalls, welcoming hellos, planned goodbyes, unexpected encounters, long lasting memories, and so many other unrecounted moments lost in the forward march of time. I'm always blown away when this time of year approaches. How did another year already pass by so quickly? Let's recap how this past fiscal year has gone:

### **Pledge Drive**

We started this year on a very strong note. During our 2025-26 pledge drive, our theme was: Love Blooms Here. Our pledge goal was \$755K, with an aspirational goal of \$780K. We are currently sitting at 93% fulfillment, with 2 months remaining, on a goal that you all set through your pledging of \$791K! Wow! I'm astonished by these numbers as well as by your willingness to be so generous and supportive of the growth and changes that arrived alongside it.

### **Beacon Campaign**

Not only did the congregation have a tremendously successful pledge drive, you also made a pledge to Beacon to help support the founding and erection of a new, future home for many struggling in our community. The goal was set at \$25K to be raised in a 5 year span, and our very own SPF committee matched our donation of \$25K! Overall totaling a \$50K pledge from UUCB to Beacon.

We fulfilled this pledge. Not only did we fulfill it, we fulfilled it in 9 months! Not only did we fulfill it in 9 months, we exceeded it! Our total donation to Beacon after SPF's match was \$29,035.52!

### **Share the Plate Offering**

To date our current sponsored nominee, Tandem, has received \$7,703.11! We still have one more quarter to complete before we have our final number for this fiscal year, but here is the breakdown:

Quarter one: \$2,598.81

Quarter two: \$2,367.55

Quarter three: \$2,736.75

Quarter four ends June 30

### **Building/Grounds**

This area has seen many (and much needed) improvements this year! Here is a recap of those items:

-Rooms 103/105 have updated egress windows that now function properly. They have also been equipped with new interior ladders and wall mounted grip bars to assist the climb out through them. Once outside the new windows, you will see there has also been a new escape route and stairs added that leads you to safety at the portico entrance. The rotten windows prompted more changes in this area than a simple window replacement. We restructured an entire emergency exit plan, making it functional, and safe for all ages! A big thank you to Steve Krahne for your dedication to this project.

-Kitchen Upgrades: Most of you have seen the many upgrades made to the main kitchen. There are so many items to be listed here. I will not list them all but encourage you to explore on your own when possible. Some of these upgrades include freezer, coffee machines, air pots, shelving, stoves, washer/dryer combo, organizational materials/carts, ease of flow (hopefully).

-Meeting Room Doors have been replaced with crash bar doors. Far from our loved but troubled glass sliding doors. Though the wood from our old doors looked lovely in the Meeting Room, the time and wear on them left us with little choice but to replace them. The new doors give it a fresh and functional look, just my opinion on them.

-AV Booth in Meeting Room has been widened, recarpeted and looks fantastic

-Future Projects-

In the coming year you can expect to see other changes still occurring. We have plans to repave, seal, and paint the parking lot. Possibly revamping the stage/risers. There is a committee looking at the near and distant future needs of building upkeep, equipment replacement, and general maintenance of the grounds and functionality of our space.

Love Blooms Here. Upon greater reflection, this is undoubtedly a proper and true statement. It blooms here. It lives here. It grows here. It spreads into the greater community from here. Love is the answer and this congregation is its vessel. Thank you for another year together. Thank you for the continued opportunities and kinship this passing year has brought along with it.

Amanda Waye, Director of Administration ([admin@uubloomington.org](mailto:admin@uubloomington.org))

## Lifespan Religious Education

### Childcare Coordinator

In January this year, we hired Beth Kaylor to fill our newly created Childcare Coordinator position. Beth brings years of experience operating her own childcare business, plus a calm presence and a knack for making spaces inviting and putting people of all ages at ease. Beth also oversees our staff of five additional childcare providers who enthusiastically engage with our growing cohort of young children.

### Program Growth

This year saw significant increases in religious education engagement across all ages:

- ❖ We had **184 children and youth** participate in our Sunday morning programming this year. That number includes some visitors who came once or twice as well as those who attended regularly throughout the year. Fifty two of those children were registered for religious education.
- ❖ We offered Our Whole Lives sexuality education programs for elementary children. There were **19 children in our kindergarten/first grade class**, and **18 in our fourth/fifth grade class**.
- ❖ We also offered twelve adult religious education programs which were **attended by 112 people** for a total of **159 registrations**. These numbers do not include people who attended large events with no registration requirement, such as the Trans 101 presentation in November, 2025, or the Potluck and Presentation by Shawnee scholar and farmer Ryan Conway in February, 2026, so actual engagement in Adult Religious Education exceeded 112 people.

### Challenges with Children & Youth Religious Education (CYRE)

It is wonderful to see so many children on Sunday mornings! We love to see new faces and we love getting to know the folks who come back, whether regularly or sporadically.

With so many children, and the possibility of newcomers in any class on any given Sunday, it is more important than ever to have a full religious education program ready to welcome and engage each individual and group.

Here are some of our challenges:

- ❖ Our numbers of religious education volunteers remains low compared to pre-pandemic years, and those who do volunteer are generally available 1-2 Sundays/month rather than 10 Sundays per semester. This year we have had teacher vacancies in at least one class on most weeks, and often in 3-6 classes on a given Sunday. When we are short of teachers, children's experiences are affected, especially if their class is combined with another where they may not know the other children or adults, routines and expectations may vary, and the room may be unfamiliar. Newcomers find it confusing when their children are in different places each week.
- ❖ The chronic shortage of religious education volunteers has ripple effects, such as:
  - A great deal of staff time is spent each week trying to find people to fill gaps in the next week's schedule, leaving less time for program development and communications;
  - Staff are typically working in classrooms each week, leaving no one available to "float" and provide assistance in other classes;
  - Recruitment is ongoing throughout the year, which means additional teacher trainings need to be offered, taking extra staff time (a total of 7 teacher trainings were held for the 2025-26 year!), further reducing the time available for things like program development and communication;
  - System-wide stress levels increase when volunteers and staff are constantly asked to do more and to make large and small adjustments to plans and processes throughout the year, and when there is simply not enough time to do all that ought to be done as a result.
- ❖ Many children and families typically attend 1-2 Sundays/month, so it can be difficult to build community among children and to build on content from week to week. This is exacerbated when adults teach infrequently or classes are combined.

- ❖ Our elementary OWL classes are now too big. It is great that so many parents recognize the value and importance of our OWL program, but 18-20 people in each class makes participation and classroom management difficult. Whether we opt to reduce class sizes by offering these classes every year instead of on alternating years or simply add facilitators to help manage larger numbers, the issue is the same: we need more trained OWL facilitators.

Many of these challenges are related to larger societal shifts, many of which began before 2020 and were accelerated by the Covid-19 Pandemic. We are constantly looking for ways to adapt to current conditions and needs rather than trying to replicate a system that was made by and for a different world. Here are some of the ways we are changing for 2026-27:

1. **Streamlining volunteer commitments.** When you sign up to help with CYRE, we only ask that you sign up for 12 Sunday time slots per year, and only 1 hour per month outside of those times for group discussion in preparation for the following month. Teachers are not asked to come up with any lesson plans, activities, or materials (though they may bring their ideas if they like!)
2. **Thematic approach rather than lesson plans.** Each month, we explore the congregational theme with children and youth, rather than devising a unique lesson plan for every class meeting. Materials and activities remain in the classrooms for the entire month, so that children and youth can explore them at their own pace, and according to their interests, on the days when they are present. This streamlines preparation, and also helps ensure that kids don't miss out on particular activities if other commitments keep them from attending on a given day.
3. **Creating clarity around roles and responsibilities.** As the "unknowns" that have characterized our congregation's operations over the past few years are resolved, we have increasing clarity around our needs and plans. This is why, at this point, it's possible to establish and communicate clear needs, expectations, schedules and deadlines, which should help make things easier for everyone involved.
4. **Name changes.** To me, "religious education" has always meant the search for answers to life's biggest questions, but I think for a lot of people the word "education" implies an emphasis is on the *answers* instead of the *search*. Perhaps this is because so many of us come from traditions that claim to have answers, and religious education of our childhood was all about transmitting those answers to the next generation. In this sense, "religious exploration" better describes what we do in our programs: we explore what it means to be in religious community together. And our volunteers function more like guides than teachers, to the extent that teachers are seen as people who transmit knowledge and information. Guides walk alongside, pointing out things that might otherwise be easily missed, providing the comfort of companionship and sharing the delight of seeing the path and surroundings with fresh eyes.
5. **Improved communication.** For years, I have aspired to send monthly emails to parents with updates about their children's religious education programs. I am optimistic that this year, with the support of the congregation in the form of adequate numbers of volunteers, coupled with the changes described above, I will finally be able to make this and other improvements to religious education communications.

### How the congregation can help:

1. **Sign up to help with children/youth religious education by June 15.** We need 38 adult volunteers each year in order to offer our full Sunday morning program plus high school youth group. If each of those volunteers commits to an average of 1.5 Sundays per month, that amounts to 18 Sundays – out of 52 – per year. In a congregation with nearly 500 members, it should be easy to support a religious education program requiring 38 volunteers! If you know you cannot help this year, let me know which year between now and 2031 you will teach.
2. **Register your child(ren) for 2026-27 by the end of June.** It is necessary to re-register each year, because information changes and our ability to keep children and youth safe and serve them well depends on up-to-date information. Registering by the end of June helps us plan by letting us know how many children to expect in each class. This is especially important if we need to cancel or combine classes due to shortages of volunteers. Registering is also how you ensure that you will receive timely

information and invitations so that your child does not miss out on opportunities for their age group.

3. **Consider becoming an OWL facilitator.** Please contact Stephanie ([kimball@uubloomington.org](mailto:kimball@uubloomington.org)) for more information.
4. **Donate to our OWL travel fund** to support volunteers attending in-person OWL trainings. (Our budget currently covers registration costs, but we rely on donations to help with travel and lodging.)
5. **Attend Adult Religious Exploration programs!** Tend to your own spiritual growth. If you have ideas for programs you would like to lead, submit a proposal by May 1, 2027 to be considered for the following year.
6. **Stay informed** about religious exploration opportunities and all the church's offerings by reading the Friday Update and Perspectives.

In a society that increasingly values profits over people we're going to continue to see more overload; more stress; more busy-ness; less availability for human connection, for volunteering. This takes a toll on the children and youth of our community, who are increasingly surrounded by stressed out adults – not just their parents, but their teachers, the adults they run into, their neighbors. Showing up for kids and their parents is an act of resistance. If you are not overloaded, if you have edges that aren't frayed and frazzled, now is a great time to step up and be present for our beloved young people.

Dr. Stephanie Kimball, Director of Lifespan Religious Education ([kimball@uubloomington.org](mailto:kimball@uubloomington.org))

## Music Director

I would like to thank the following folks for their contributions to our music program this year:

**Steve Mascari** has taken on the **All-Ages Band** and really created something special. Everybody loves it. He also leads sing-alongs in the courtyard after church sometimes. So great!

**The All-Ages Orchestra** is also on a roll. This year we performed Maggie Olivo's arrangement of Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*, commissioned by Sylvia McNair and conducted by Maestro Jeffery Meyer. Participants ranged from age 7 to age 90! Sylvia vows to commission a new arrangement every year!

Song leader **Angela Gabriel** has provided lots of opportunities for the congregation to sing participatory, infectious, social justice music in services and at rallies and song circles. We are building a communal repertoire of songs and becoming leaders in the Singing Resistance.

We also added a great song by **Daniel Reed** to our congregational repertoire.

**Our commissioning project** this year has produced some fine pieces:

- A choral arrangement of Carrie Newcomer's "Lifeline," in memory of Julie Lawson.
- A setting by composer Catherine Dalton of Bill Breeden's text, "Grief cannot go where love has never been. It runs only in the channels made by love," which is dedicated to John Woodcock.
- The All-Ages Orchestra Hallelujah Chorus

**Our dedicated and hard-working choir** had a great year – fun music at Christmas, some Family Choir opportunities, and as always, showing up week after week for every possible musical challenge a choir can have. Our biggest project this year was a performance of Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony, collaborating with choral singers from many different choirs and the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra. I was particularly pleased that our singers had the opportunity to work with Dr. Betsy Burleigh, chair of the IU Choral Department and an expert at preparing symphonic choruses. We sold out the Musical Arts Center, and it was a very special community event and a musical triumph!

As always, we are grateful for our **Ray of Sunshine**, whose magic touch, unerring tact, and command of multiple styles graces our services every week. He is a blessing for which I am grateful every day.

When Ray couldn't be there, **Kim Carballo** usually jumped in, but **Doug Anderson, Joni Chan, Beverly McGahey, Alissa Guntren, and Keaton Springfield** have also stepped in to substitute. We are very lucky to have such a deep bench!

Sincerely, Susan Swaney, Music Director ([music@uubloomington.org](mailto:music@uubloomington.org))

## Technology Coordinator

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 support Sunday services by running audio/visual systems, service and upgrade the livestream system, maintain the website, keep staff computers/networking up to date, and generally improve the usefulness of technology to the congregation.

### Year in Review

It's been a year of many, many, many small projects. I've been really working on the fine details this year. There are some bigger things in the works as well, but they're not ready for publication yet.

### Website Updates

Now in its third year (I'll quit counting someday!), the website is going strong! I've made improvements myself, and the Wagtail project (which is the backend of the website) has been rock-solid and receiving frequent new features and fixes. Though there's always more to do, I'm extremely happy with how this project has turned out so far. Here are some of the high points from this past year:

- Completely revamped search. One of the pain points since the new website was first set up has been how terrible the search function was. This year, I completely reworked it using a very modern and advanced search engine system, coupled with a new interface on the website. I hope you've noticed the improvement!
- I added a new kiosk page type, which is the basis for a social justice informational kiosk in the commons. Check it out if you haven't already!

I've also worked on a whole ton of smaller improvements which I won't bore you with! The website has really matured at this point, and needs less attention than it used to. This is a very good thing!

### Meeting Room Tech

In general, I am still very pleased with how the Meeting Room A/V system is performing. It's reliable and all-around nice to use. Here's a list of updates:

- The rechargeable battery system I mentioned last year has continued to be absolutely fantastic. I haven't purchased a single new disposable battery for the meeting room in the past year, which feels great. The only minor issue is that currently, if all microphones are in use, a couple of batteries need to be recharged and used again between services, which isn't ideal. I plan to add on to this system in the next year to more easily deal with two-service days.
- Steve Krahnke and I replaced both projectors at the front of the room. The one on the left had started to fail, and these things really need to be replaced in pairs so that the brightness matches.
- After months of chasing an audio distortion problem around, I finally figured out that one of the main speakers (the big ones hung from the ceiling in the center of the room) is blown. As a temporary solution, Steve Krahnke has allowed the use of his speakers and helped me to wall mount them. I have a source for the part that failed, so the main speaker in question can be repaired the next time we have a scissor lift in the building.
- HUGE thanks to Steve Krahnke (again!) for helping design and build an extensive expansion and renovation of the A/V platform. The new structure is safer, more stable, quieter, and all around easier to deal with. I have more space everywhere (without taking up a noticeable amount of space in the room), and everything about it looks far more professional. The A/V area has also received one of the disused cabinets from the kitchen remodel, which is now being used to store microphone stands in a more convenient location.
- Katherine Liu and Brady Egan are doing a great job covering tech duties when I go out of town. It's great to be able to go away and know that the A/V system is in such capable hands.

## Miscellaneous

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

- I've finally got all staff computers moved off of the old, very rickety on-premises active directory server. This has freed up space in Jo's office and removed a significant maintenance burden from my list of responsibilities.
- Following months of unreliability and general corporate malfeasance on the part of Microsoft, I've moved many of the code repositories for my work here from Github to Codeberg. Codeberg is a non-profit organization providing a storage location for open source software projects which aligns much better with my values, and with our shared values. Check out the new home of UUCB software development here: <https://codeberg.org/UUCB>. This transition is still a work in progress, but I'm really liking it so far. It's easier to use, faster, and doesn't contribute to the soul-sucking AI machine!
- With Rev. Susan's approval, I purchased a 3D printer for the church. It lives in my office, and has been a huge boon. I've created paper organizers, cable management parts, wall mounts for devices which really should have come with them from the factory, safety whistles... the list goes on. The ability to create small parts in-house has drastically reduced my reliance on e-commerce, and has saved tons of money (particularly on some new cable management systems in the meeting room). In the spirit of open source, I'm going to be publishing my designs in the coming year as well. Keep an eye out for a tech talks article in Perspectives on this subject!

## Next Year

As we move into the 2026-27 church year, I look forward to continuing the work of improving the use of technology to further UUCB's mission. I'm particularly looking forward to modernizing network wiring in Jo's office, continuing OpenShow development, and planned microphone upgrades in the meeting room. 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 ([hkelson@uubloomington.org](mailto:hkelson@uubloomington.org))

# COMMITTEES, TEAMS, and GROUPS

## Book Table

The Book Table Crew runs the Book Table during the Fellowship Hour every Sunday to (1) greet newcomers and provide information about introductory Unitarian Universalist books and CDs; (2) offer books which promote UU Principles and Purposes, are recommended by the ministers, reflect current congregational interests, and support congregational or local authors and musicians; (3) offer books for UU Adult Religious Education courses. The Book Table also supports the book sale at the annual UU Holiday Bazaar by providing used book donations and assistance with set-up, sales, and tear-down. Proceeds from sales and donations are used for purchasing new materials for the Book Table and the UUCB Fuchs Library. The Book Table is self-sustaining. Between June 2025 and June 2026 these were the working members: Anne Clark, Mike and Rita Drescher, Yasuko Watt, Sandra Hernshaw and Steve Pock.

Submitted by Glee Noble, Chair.

## Caring Committee

The Caring Committee supports the congregation by coordinating its services with the [Pastoral Associates Care Team](#). The PACT works closely with the Lead Minister, Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray, 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.

In January we expressed our deep gratitude to Sandy Churchill who stepped down from the committee after chairing the Soup Train for the past decade. Our current members are: Martha Dogan, *Transportation*; Dee Morris, *Soup Train*; Doris Wittenburg, *Memorial Receptions* and myself, Kathleen Sideli, as *Convener*.

Submitted by Kathleen Sideli.

## Chalice Circles

This year's Chalice Circle program started in October, 2025 and ended in May, 2026. There were 9 groups of 6-10 people for a total of 74 participants. The groups followed session plans based on Reverend Susan's monthly themes. Groups that met twice a month added another session plan for their second meeting of the month. Each group performed one service project during the year, ranging from cooking and serving food at church and non-church functions to teaching about Parkinson's disease.

Circle participants evaluate the program positively, citing an increase in feelings of connection to their circles, and to the church community in general. The program objectives of increasing connection among participants, developing listening skills, service to the community, and self-knowledge are being met.

We are grateful for the input of our ministerial consultant, Reverend Barbara Child. The Executive committee for the Chalice Circle program consists of Steve Pock, Debbie Fish, Bob Appelman, Janeth Welch, Rich Slabach, Emily Phelps, and Ruellen Fessenbecker.

Submitted by Ruellen Fessenbecker.

## Facilities Team

The facilities team does an annual walk through, typically in the Spring, making note of all issues we've seen or been directed to. We discuss which are the most urgent needs and which needs can be addressed more casually. We have one document that we add to every year, that all committee members have access to and can edit.

The primary focuses this year have been window replacements (sashes as well as entire window units) and replacing the sliding meeting room doors. The doors have been completed, and the more pressing windows have been replaced (Room 103/105). We are still awaiting some sashes for the less problematic windows and preparing for full window replacement on the remaining windows we found rot in.

There have been many hours of labor on the roof sealing cracks and holes in the siding around/beneath the large, high windows in Reverend Susan's office and Room 204 (Jo's Office). I give a loud thank you to everyone who has been working on this project. All your hard work and efforts are starting to pay off. If you had not been so diligent in locating every flaw in the siding in these areas, we would find ourselves in the exact same predicament sooner down the road than we'd like.

Many of the items on our list are small things that will only stand out to a few, but each item we cross off puts us in a better position for safety or overall functionality! I am pleased with the facilities team's progress and accomplishments.

We could always use more volunteers, too. If you're interested, please reach out to me!

Amanda Wayne, Director of Administration ([admin@uubloomington.org](mailto:admin@uubloomington.org)).

## Fiber Arts Group

### Description

The Fiber Artists Group gathers at 2:00 PM in Room 112 every first and third Saturday of each month to share in community while working on our current projects. The group is led by MJ Wallaker and does not require membership to join in this shared time. All are welcome, from those who have been crafting for decades to those who have never picked up a hook or needle.

### Major Activities

MJ had the opportunity to write an article for the April Perspectives, titled "On Interdependence: Look to the Crafters", which can be read [here](#).

### Challenges

The Fiber Artists Group was initially led by Alex Porter and MJ Wallaker, but Alex had to step down for personal reasons, leaving MJ to run the group on their own. Alex took the lead on publicity and engagement, such as creating event posters and scheduling email reminders. MJ primarily relies on word-of-mouth and personal invitation, which has not been as effective. Because of this, the Fiber Artists Group has faced the challenge of continued engagement and participation. There have been a few gatherings in recent months where MJ is the only one who has attended (For those who have not engaged recently, don't fret; MJ still uses this time to listen to a podcast or music while working on low-stakes projects to take a much-needed break. MJ is ready to welcome you back when you can join them again!).

### Looking Forward

MJ is creating new fliers to be posted around the church and added to the Sunday slideshow in the Meeting Room. MJ may open up the group to general crafting, so all creative minds can join.

## **How to Engage with the Fiber Artists Group**

Come to Room 112 at 2:00 PM on the first and third Saturday of the month! Please join the Fiber Artists Group through Church Center to receive email reminders and updates about meetings. If you have any feedback about how to make this gathering more accessible, or are interested in co-leading the group, please reach out to MJ at [monotropauniflora@proton.me](mailto:monotropauniflora@proton.me).

Submitted by MJ Wallaker.

## **Grounds Committee**

What does it take to maintain our grounds? If you've been to a congregational meeting where the budget was discussed, you may have noticed the grounds committee doesn't have a budget - we mostly count on volunteers. I've never heard of a committee here that has too many volunteers! We pull weeds, distribute mulch, pick up litter, clear the parking area before it gets re paved. Occasionally we plant new things, and we monitor what has been planted. Lately our emphasis has been on increasing the native plants and getting rid of any invasive species. We consider overhanging branches, safety in the parking areas, accessibility on the sidewalks, blockage of air conditioning units. We water during droughts. One of our goals is the easiest possible maintenance. Our greatest challenges are the aging population of our volunteers as well as the very effective huge mowers that chop down everything in sight without super protection. This year (again) the Green Sanctuary Task Force provided us with 3 new trees and cages for them.

We have two new sheds for storage of wheelbarrows, hoses, shovels, etc. Occasionally we get donations of miscellaneous items like gloves so new volunteers can help. Our new sheds took much planning by dedicated volunteers and were paid for with a bequest from the Special Purposes Fund, which was donated through the will of a congregation member.

We would love for you to join us in taking care of our grounds. You don't have to be an expert. It's a great way to learn, to get to know someone else you're working with, and learn a little history of the church grounds and our "ancestors" who created special areas.

Submitted by Ann Kamman.

## **Holiday Art Fair and Bazaar**

Bazaar was a record breaking success!

The 2025 Bazaar was a success in many ways. When all the sales and expenses were tallied, the total raised at last year's Bazaar was \$29,776. Of that amount, \$7419 went to the task forces and \$4200 went to the Women's Alliance. These are record breaking amounts.

Thanks goes to all the people who worked to make the Bazaar a success. Over 150 volunteer spots were filled by our membership. Many people also volunteered to make cookies, soup, persimmon pulp and lasagna. Many others donated books, white elephants, and golden elephants. Special thanks goes to the teen group that decorated dozens of cookies, the YA's who planned and ran the wine/cheese event in the artisan room, and the High School string quartet who enlivened the atmosphere in the artisan room.

We can all be proud of our efforts that led to reaching our three goals of raising money, providing opportunities for members to be involved in new ways, and putting a friendly, enthusiastic face to the public.

Submitted by Ruellen Fessenbecker.

## Humanists and Freethinkers

*Since 2009 • Open to All • In-Person & Zoom*

**Meeting Times:** Every Sunday in Room 208

- Two-service Sundays: 1:00–2:00 p.m.
- Single-service Sundays: 12:00–1:00 p.m.

We alternate weekly between the Humanist Forum and the Freethinkers Forum. Our email list includes about 100 members, with attendance typically ranging from 10–25 participants, including some on Zoom.

### Humanist Forum

The Humanist Forum explores human experience, ethics, science, and the transcendent without supernaturalism. Short presentations (10–15 minutes) launch each discussion, with topics selected by group vote several times a year.

Topics include morality, ethics, evolution, free will, cosmology, scientific discoveries, folklore, and culture.

Everyone is welcome — including humanists, agnostics, atheists, freethinkers, religious naturalists, interested theists, and the simply curious.

### Spring/Summer 2026 Topics

- Apr. 26 — Citizens United — Carolyn
- May 10 — Handel as a Baroque Rockstar — Sandy
- May 24 — How Elections Are/Were Hacked — Jason
- June 7 — History of Humanism in the UUA — Kevin
- June 21 — Optimism vs. Pessimism — Mary
- July 5 — Sources of the U.S. Constitution — Carolyn
- July 19 — Juggling as Spiritual Practice — Miles
- Aug. 2 — Why I Became a UU — Richard

### Freethinkers Forum

On alternating Sundays, the Freethinkers Forum features open discussion on current topics suggested by participants, usually with little or no formal presentation. Conversations often explore UU principles, spirituality, politics, education, AI, science, culture, personal experiences, and current events.

The Freethinkers Forum encourages respectful dialogue, diverse viewpoints, and thoughtful exchange.

### Find Us

Current schedules and topics are available on the UUCB website under:

*Connections → Join a Group → Humanist & Freethinkers*

or in the Church Center Portal under:

*Groups → Building Community*

**Join us after services for lively, thoughtful conversation and community.**

Submitted by Kevin Craig.

## Jewish Connections Group

This year, the Jewish Connections Group met monthly for two hours on the fourth Wednesday of each month, with a hiatus during several months. Each meeting has included a check-in by those attending and either a discussion of a topic of interest or community viewing of a relevant movie or media with a Jewish theme. The discussion has generally been led by Barry Rubin and Earon Davis.

Attendance has been low this year and we are thinking about focusing more on social activities.

Our next meeting will be a dinner for the group at a local restaurant. At this meeting, we will be discussing the future of the Group and, if we do want to continue, what topics will be of interest.

Submitted by Barry Rubin.

## Men's Group

The men's group has been functioning for more than 25 years. We have a core group of 5-7 people. We welcome visitors and drop in folks. The group has adopted a rotating leadership process. We discuss a wide range of topics meaningful to our members. We also have a lot of fun and give each other emotional support in times of stress. If you are interested contact Dan Wiseman 847-902-9034.

Submitted by Dan Wiseman.

## Ministerial Internship Committee

Allison Tomusk (chair); Christine Bannister, Michael McGregor, Linda Pickle, Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray  
The current charge of this committee, which began meeting in March of 2026, is to hire a ministerial intern to serve UUCB September 2026 to June 2027. To this end, we have:

- identified desirable qualities/skills we were seeking in an intern,
- reviewed the official UUA internship process,
- solicited and reviewed applications via the UUA Internship Clearinghouse

Following a successful interview and reference checks, the job was offered to Maria Renner, an outstanding candidate, who gladly accepted our offer. An Internship Agreement, a covenantal agreement between Ms Renner and UUCB, setting forth each party's full intentions has been signed by both parties. We look forward to an exciting and mutually beneficial relationship.

Submitted by Allison Tomusk.

## Name Change Discernment Working Group

Members: Kathy Gilbert (chair), Carolyn Lantz, Steve Pock, Gladys Devane, Nola Cusack, and Steve Mascari, with Susan Frederick-Gray offering support.

This group was formed in response to a request from members to consider dropping the word "church" from our name. We conducted a survey in Fall 2025 and two in-person listening sessions in January and February 2026. A Zoom listening session was also offered. We received 295 responses to the survey. Twenty-five individuals participated in the first listening session and eight participated in the second. There were no participants in the Zoom session.

Based on findings from the survey and listening sessions:

- 49.2% of survey respondents were in agreement, 28.5% were undecided and 22.4% disagreed.
- There is strong support and desire for changing the name among the congregation, with half of the survey supporting the change and some in the middle, once informed of why this was proposed, having shifted to positive.
- Additional information needs to be provided to the congregation to better inform them about the issue.
- This is a question of *collective* identity and it is important for the congregation to be engaged in deciding what makes sense for the entire group while remaining sensitive to individuals.
- We are not comfortable proposing a name change at this time. This is a decision for the community.

- We recommend that a town hall meeting be held, modeled on the World Café model. This would be a meeting that encourages conversation among those present as well as opportunities to hear others' thoughts and feelings on the topic.

Submitted by Kathy Gilbert.

## Pastoral Associates Care Team

Members: Ruellen Fessenbecker, Melinda Swenson, Allison Tomusk, Thomas Kuhn, Timothy Slota, 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 those 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, email and in person visits. 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 75 members, friends, and families in our congregation. We keep confidential records of our visits, phone calls, and referrals.

Submitted by Allison Tomusk and Melinda Swenson.

## Personnel Committee

UUCB Personnel Committee members in 2025-2026 include JaneAnn Gifford (Chair), Pam MacLaughlin (Board Liaison), Carl Deichtman, and Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray.

We have continued to focus on assessing employee benefits to ensure that UUCB is a just and equitable employer, analyzing potential changes to understand the financial impact and organizational pros and cons. This year added the benefit of Flexible Spending Accounts for both health care and dependent care as optional for our employees. This benefit became available in February 2026 – slightly later than our planned implementation in the fourth quarter of 2025.

The Personnel Manual is under continual review for opportunities to improve its clarity and ease of administration. The next revision will be submitted to the Board for approval by January, 2027.

Submitted by JaneAnn Gifford.

## Planned Giving Committee

Committee Members: Charlotte Appel, Ann Kamman, Harlan Lewis

Legacy Circle Membership: 90 members

Activities:

The 2026 Legacy Circle Celebration was held November 1, 2025 with 34 members in attendance. It included a reception and a Broadway sing-along with performances by Broadway veterans Richard Roland and Sylvia McNair. They were fabulous!

While attendance was low, it included many of our most precious, elderly members who are more comfortable coming to a less crowded environment.

Submitted by Charlotte Appel.

## Pledge Drive Committee

### Committee Membership

- Corrin Clarkson (chair)
- JaneAnn Gifford
- Renate Kasak (started March 17th, 2026)
- Charlie Pickle (started November 4th, 2025)
- Don Richards
- Pat Slabach
- Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray (ex officio)

The committee is looking for 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](mailto: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 2025 - 2026 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 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.

### Pledge Drive for Fiscal Year 2026 -2027

The pledge drive goal of \$845,000 was set by the Board of Directors in consultation with Frederick-Gray. This goal included a 5% increase of above the amount pledged for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. That increase included funds for cost of living increases for our excellent staff, investments in our religious education program as well as support for a new ministerial intern.

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. These early pledges allowed us to kick off the pledge drive having already made progress towards that goal.

With graphic design help from Zach Ammerman, we created a 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 22nd, 2026 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.

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 Update emails. We also sent a series of email messages about the campaign to the congregation.

The Celebration Sunday service on April 19th 2025 included an All Ages Orchestra performance of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus as well as a rousing sermon on the pledge drive theme: Together in Hope and Courage.

After the service, we celebrated with a fantastic spread of food. All those who had pledged by noon were entered in a drawing for a gift card to Uptown Cafe.

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 2026-2027 was successful! We exceeded our goal of \$845,000. 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.

Submitted by Corrin Clarkson.

## Poetry Appreciation Gathering

We are a small group that would welcome new members. Our once-a-month Zoom gathering is usually comprised of four of us. We each bring a poem to share: we read our poem and discussion follows. We will soon move our meeting time to the evening, so watch for us and join in. Or simply attend and enjoy!

Submitted by Linda Pickle.

## Quilt Project

When Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray arrived in the summer of 2024, a settled ministry planning team met with her to talk about the gifts and challenges of the transition. They also helped with setting up her office. One of the last major charges of the team was to plan her installation service in the spring of 2025. A congregation usually presents a gift as a welcome and an emblem of their shared journey. Personalized stoles are common, but Rev. Susan already had a few of those.

Our congregation overflows with talent, but it did not take much discussion to settle on a gift to represent our commitment to Reverend Susan. The quilts in this meeting room, the library and the hallways are living memories; and so a quilt it was. The planning team approached Ruellen Fessenbecker about the possibility of creating a quilt that would evoke but not necessarily copy the meeting room window and the old farmhouse tree that it represents. The rest, as they say, was history.

A group of quilters, Hilary Cannon Anderson, Ruellen Fessenbecker, Dee Morris, Ruth Sanders and Katha Soens began to plan the quilt, meeting with Rev. Susan to discuss colors, quotations and other details. Design was a joint effort. Katha dyed the fabric in May and sewing started in June. Sections of the quilt, and later, the whole quilt was passed from one quilter to the others. Each step was brought back to the group for approval and planning of the next step.

Katha Soens hand dyed most of the fabric, pieced the inside of the circle and made many leaves. Ruellen Fessenbecker pieced the sun area, embroidered the words around the circle and attached the words to the circle. She also made many leaves and attached them to the quilt. Hilary Cannon Anderson dyed the tree trunk and attached it. She created the hands, attached them and added the embroidered details. She added the flaming chalice on the tree trunk and many of the leaves. She also put on the binding. Ruth Sanders attached the pink circle border. She also made the flowers, birds, butterflies and attached them. Dee Morris quilted the whole quilt, carefully matching the colors of the thread to the various areas of the quilt. It was presented to Reverend Susan on March 29, 2026.

Submitted by Ruellen Fessenbecker.

## Safety Team

The 2025-2026 was a relatively quiet year for the UUCB Safety Team. There were no major security incidents or weather events that required the shelter-in-place or evacuation of the building. Changes to the building itself, including the remodel of the main kitchen and the replacement of the three exit doors in the main meeting room were the two most significant infrastructure changes that had impact on the operation of the safety team. Over the years there were minor medical concerns of congregants but no injuries on premises. There were no specific security threats to the church personnel or property. There was one instance of an unhoused individual on property, but the individual was never a direct threat to staff or congregants, and the situation was resolved amicably.

The highlights of the year:

1. Beginning in Spring of 2025, an unhoused individual began taking residence in the parking lot of the church. The individual was residing in a pickup truck and using an extension cord for power. On Sunday mornings, the individual would leave the parking lot only to return later in the day. After several weeks, and into the summer, the individual would not depart before service and would leave the extension cord plugged in, creating a trip hazard. The individual was approached by staff and offered connection to service. I do not believe the individual ever took up the offer of services. The scenario escalated to the individual plugging in a dorm size refrigerator in the memorial garden. The safety team and church staff began looking for alternative locations for the individual. By the fall of 2025, the individual was asked to relocate due to his presence on property being a long-term insurance liability. I do not have a documented date of the last appearance of the individual.
2. Kitchen remodel offered new opportunities to re-evaluate safety systems of the facility. New ovens allow for easier access to gas shutoff valves for the stove. Warning signs for kitchen users are visible and safety equipment/first aid clearly marked.
3. Weather over the winter created occurrences of delayed or canceled services. Heavy snow and bitter cold were frequent during the December to February timeframe. There were no weather related incidents while the building was occupied, and the staff exercised best practices regarding closures and workdays.
4. In Mid-March 2026, the three sliding doors of the meeting room were replaced with crash bar exit only doors. The doors function well and are well marked. Policy will be that they will remain locked as exit only with no entrance from the outside.
5. The safety team handbook has been re-written to include language concerning new meeting room doors, service scheduling of single service during summer with two services during the balance of the year, and procedures regarding the presence of law enforcement or ICE agents.

Submitted by Matthew Stonecipher.

## Shambhala Meditation Annual Report

S. Leigh Grundhofer, Susan Middlestadt

The Shambhala Meditation group has been meeting weekly throughout the year, fostering a consistent and welcoming space for both newcomers and experienced practitioners. Each session offers one hour of meditation held in the church library. The hour is thoughtfully structured into two 25-minute silent meditation periods, with a gentle samatha yoga sequence in between, followed by a brief walking meditation. This

balanced approach provides a grounding, accessible experience for anyone seeking a peaceful and restorative way to spend time in stillness each week.

## **Going Forward**

The low-pressure, open-minded atmosphere makes this group well-suited for both newcomers and those with prior experience in meditation. The local Shambhala group, Hoosier Heartland, also offers additional opportunities during the week for sitting meditation. With a steady attendance of 8–10 participants, the group provides a neutral and supportive environment where new meditators can begin exploring the practice of sitting meditation. While the Shambhala affiliation offers a Buddhist path of dharma instruction for those who are interested, the practice of meditation itself remains accessible and beneficial on its own. Looking ahead, no changes are anticipated in the coming year regarding the group's format, allowing it to continue as a stable and consistent space for weekly practice.

"Meditation practice is not an exotic or out-of-reach approach. It is immediate and personal, and it involves an intimate relationship with ourselves." Chögyam Trungpa from *Mediation in Action*

Submitted by S. Leigh Grundhofer.

## **Taiji/Qigong Practice Group**

The taiji/qigong practice group continued meeting twice weekly, on Monday afternoons for 45 minutes and Saturday mornings for 1.5 hours. Attendance ranges from approximately 5 to 15 people and includes some who have been coming to virtually every practice for more than a decade and occasional attendees who have never before tried the practice; ages from 20s to 90s; and people actively involved at the UU and community members -- a lovely and diverse group of people. Anyone and everyone is always welcome (no experience necessary)!

The practice continues to be led primarily by Brian Flaherty, but when he was out of the country last summer (2025), some practitioners continued to practice together. As Brian may be leaving Bloomington in the near future (later in 2026 or early 2027), it would be wonderful if the practice could continue under a new lead at that time, since for at least some practitioners, this may be a crucial touchpoint for taking care of their health and well-being.

Respectfully submitted, with gratitude for the UU's wonderful support, Brian

## **Vision Discernment Working Group**

### **Description**

The Mission Discernment Working Group (MDWG) was first convened by Congregational Board President Jane McLeod on Tuesday, September 16, 2025, to create a recommendation to update the mission statement for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington. The group decided to focus, first, on the organization's vision statement, thus changing the name to the Vision Discernment Working Group (VDWG).

The VDWG typically meets on the first Wednesday of the month.

### **Membership**

Membership of the VDWG consists of MJ Wallaker (Chair), Steven Gilbert (Secretary), Cynthia Schultz, Doug Anderson, and Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray.

On October 8, 2025, MJ Wallaker was selected as the VDWG Chair. Steven Gilbert volunteered to be the group's secretary. Cynthia has experience in Project Management, but prefers to participate in a supporting role. Doug was interested in a supporting role, and Rev. Susan wanted primarily to serve as guidance for the VDWG's work.

## Challenges

Early on, the group faced a lack of youth participation. Caden Baird was invited as a youth participant. Caden once responded that he had not been able to attend due to being busy with final exams and would try to attend the next meeting, but was ultimately unable. Thus far, Caden has not yet been able to attend any of the meetings or engage in the work. The VDWG fully supports Caden's decision to prioritize schoolwork and plans to seek other ways to gain insight from young congregants.

Initially, the VDWG was focused on UUCB's mission. On December 3, 2025, the group reviewed our takeaways from the UUA article, "[What are Mission, Vision, and Covenant?](#)" and decided that the best way forward was for the group to tackle vision, rather than mission. The group came to the consensus that "mission" describes the core purpose of the organization and why it exists right now, while "vision" describes what an organization aspires to become in the future. The VDWG felt that the congregation of UUCB already has a strong sense of core purpose, but is lacking a clear path forward. The VDWG felt that we should discern what the congregation aspires to be, which can then inform our organization's mission.

Additionally, the VDWG's timeline has been delayed. Originally, the VDWG planned to inform our Scope of Work using the findings from the Name Change Working Group. The VDWG created this Scope of Work as an outline for our strategy in engaging the congregation. However, the Name Change Working Group faced unforeseen challenges, delaying the completion of their project. Thus, the VDWG was unable to finalize our Scope of Work and create a clear plan to engage the congregation in a discussion about our organization's vision. As a result, on April 1st, 2026, the VDWG decided to pause our work until the UUCB Board of Directors shared their findings from the World Cafe event held to reassess the congregation's perspective on May 2, 2026.

## Activities

VDWG Chair MJ Wallaker has made team building a core focus of each of the VDWG's early meetings. MJ wants to foster a strong sense of open communication, collaboration, trust, and overall morale among VDWG members to prevent interpersonal issues down the line and allow open communication when issues inevitably arise.

While the VDWG is still defining our Scope of Work, we have come to the consensus to utilize a Trauma-Informed Approach as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The VDWG recognizes that change on any scale can be difficult, especially given the present political circumstances and that our congregation has gone through a lot of change recently. The group aims to follow the [6 Guiding Principles to a Trauma-Informed Approach](#), ensuring, as best within the group's means, a sense of safety, trustworthiness & transparency, peer support, collaboration & mutuality, empowering voice & choice, and being mindful of cultural, historical, & gender issues when engaging in discussion with the congregation.

Submitted by MJ Wallaker.

## Wednesday Walkers

Co-chairs: Kathy Gilbert, Ann Kamman

Wednesday Walkers is an informal group that meets to walk together every Wednesday morning, usually starting at 9:00 in the warmer months and switching to 10:00 in the cooler months. Walks last an hour, give or take. We choose a different location each week for variety and are always open to new recommendations on where to walk. New members are welcome and we encourage anyone who's open to a walk and a chat to come out and check us out. Join the email list to be notified of where we are walking each week.

Submitted by Kathy Gilbert.

## 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; Ann Kamman, Vice-President & Program Chair; Kathy Gilbert, Secretary; Judith Kelly, Treasurer; and (Adjunct to Board) Glee Noble, Birthday Cards.

We met the first Thursday of the month at 11:30 am 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 comradery but also addressed serious issues.

Activities ranged from presentations about the Monroe County Education Association, the Bloomington Fire Department's Mobile Integrated Health, the Bloomington Refugee Support Network, Indigo Birding and birding conservation, TANDEM, a festive holiday tea party, a cruise with The Nation magazine, Dr. Audrey McCluskey's book GIRLCHILD, Friends of Lake Monroe, My Sister's Closet, and Center for Sustainable Living. A very busy year!

Our coordination of the Gourmet Galaxy (chaired by Ann Kamman) 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 send birthday cards to each member having a birthday in a given month. Glee Noble creates beautiful birthday cards with photos she has taken. Everyone is able to sign the cards at the meetings. Everyone loves to receive these greetings from the Alliance!

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 2025-26 church year saw a variety of activities oriented toward the Young Adult (18-35) age range. YA "Pizza and Hike" events—fellowship time followed by a group outing to trails at Lake Griffy—continued from previous years, with the largest attendance occurring in August at 17 participants including staff who are YA's. UUCB had a table at the IU Student Involvement Fair in August, with onsite logistics and volunteer orientation coordinated again by UUCB member, Matt O'Donnell. 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. Lay-led YA activities at UUCB include Tuesday Thing and UU Game Night. Though open to all adults enthusiastic about board, RPG's, and other games, Game Night primarily serves YA's. These activities are on the church calendar and also organized on Discord.

David, the main organizer behind these events, said:

"Overall, Game Night has been a success for our UU young adults. We've built lasting and meaningful friendships that even extend outside the church grounds. Tuesday thing has also proved to be an enjoyable and vital time for our young adults to connect and start off the week with a good mood. Knowing that you have friends waiting to see you every week, not just to have fun but to connect and support each other is essential in these times. We look forward to expanding our circle and encourage more UU young adults to take advantage of this great outlet to bring both joy and connection into their lives."

Ben, a regular attendee of the weekly YA events, had this to add to the report:

"The long and short of it is that game night and Tuesdays are my connection to community here. I try to attend church every Sunday and show up for other events where I feel interested or obligated, but I'm bad at connecting with people in those environments. I have never felt unwelcome but I always feel lonely and I don't know if I would necessarily identify with the community if not for these weekly events."

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](mailto: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



***Social Justice permeates all programming at the UU Church of Bloomington(UUCB) – 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.

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. This year SJCT, at the request of task forces, combined task force annual reports and applications. SJ Circle meetings were helpful with presentations about UUCB communication, technology and safety procedures. We want to thank Jenny Vessels for her service as she has stepped aside and taken on a new job. We're looking for one or two new members. Last year the Democracy task force was formed and will be even more important. We look for them and their knowledge and leadership during the next legislative sessions and elections. The Just Peace Task Force has become inactive due to the health of long time leader David Keppel. Thanks to David for commitment to this issue. We hope to continue to hear from him.

## **UUCB SJ task forces financial summary from fiscal year 2025-26**

UU social justice task forces operating in 2025-26 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 2025-26, 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, 10 task forces raised or received \$46,381 in fiscal year 2025-26. They have already donated or will donate \$41,845, as of June 2026. Some task forces fundraise for one or two years before making a large donation, while others donate on a more regular basis.

Nine task forces listed the following financial data in their annual reports for FY 2025-26:

- Democracy: total raised, \$1914; total donated, \$62; balance \$1852
- Green Sanctuary: total raised, \$2,928; total donated, \$2,245; fund balance, \$6,057.
- Habitat: total raised, \$6,319; total donated, \$10,981; fund balance, \$4,911.
- Homelessness: total raised, \$9604; total donated, \$9098; fund balance, \$2677.
- Hunger: total raised, \$7609 plus sale of \$2000 gift cards; total donated, \$9149; fund balance, \$4400 plus \$2000 in food cards.
- International Outreach: total raised, \$6923; fund balance \$6,873.
- Racial Justice: total raised, \$2,929; total donated, \$ 3,423 (of this, \$715.00 went to Resilience Productions T Account); fund balance, \$1664.

- Rainbow Rights: total raised, \$1,914; total donated, \$823; fund balance, \$6,275.
- Reproductive Justice: total raised, \$3930; total donated, \$3750; fund balance, \$214.
- RISE: total raised, \$2311; total donated, total donated, \$2314; fund balance, \$2211

**Other UUCB SJ financial resources SJ donated to the community  
fiscal year 2025-26**

- SJ Fall Grants from Leonard Lundin Fund - \$1000
- First three quarters of 25% Sunday plate donations to Tandem - \$7703.11

**SJ Grand Total donated to the community so far this fiscal year 2025-26: \$50,548.**

## Democracy Task Force



The Democracy Task Force was established in 2025 to help our congregation become more powerful in the work of resisting authoritarianism and creating a democracy that prioritizes the needs of the people and dismantles systems that prioritize the rich and powerful.

Emma Crossen, chair; [emma.crossen@gmail.com](mailto:emma.crossen@gmail.com), 812.243.1574

Members signing off on annual report and renewal application: (Tentative) Susan Frederick-Gray, Dennis Davoren, Eva Csejtey, Peg Hausman

## Witness

- We mobilized turnout and volunteers from UUCB for the No Kings Protests on June 14, 2025 (to Indianapolis), October 18, 2025, and March 28, 2026, in addition to a few smaller protests throughout the year. This effort was aided by members of Democracy Task Force who are also involved with 50501's planning team and could therefore help to keep us informed of specific volunteer needs at the local protests.

## Community Organizing

- September 2025 - Launched Showing Up Together, a public email group to help UUCB folks keep each other informed about opportunities to act together for democracy. We used this instead of creating an email list on Church Center because the latter would have required that all messages be sent by a list administrator, and we wanted a decentralized communication platform through which any one in the congregation could send a message to the entire list to invite folks to join them in pro -democracy actions. The need for this kind of platform was underscored during the rapid-response mobilizations to push back against the GOP calls for redistricting.
- November 5 - Attended Hoosiers Vote Summit in Indianapolis hosted by ACLU, League of Women Voters, Count Us IN, others (2 reps from UUCB attended)
- February 15 - Hosted UU the Vote kick-off event at UUCB to collect congregational input on UU the Vote programming in 2026 and circulated UU the Vote survey for several weeks.
- Members of the Task Force held numerous conversations with other local organizers to understand the organizing landscape locally and identify how UUCB can show up as a stronger partner.

## Advocacy

- Summer/Fall - Postcard writing after services on various federal and state policy issues.
- September - Mobilized turnout to actions against redistricting at the Statehouse
- October 1 - Hosted meeting with Dianne Powell, West Central Indiana Regional Director for U.S. Senator Todd Young\*
- December 9 - Hosted meeting with State Sen. Shelli Yoder at UUCB\*
- December 16 - Hosted meeting with State Rep. Matt Pierce at UUCB\*

*These meetings aimed to establish a stronger relationship between the congregation and our representatives as a foundation for ongoing advocacy.*

- January 8 - Indiana Faith Voices for Justice - Faith in the Face of Fear Rally and Training Day / UUCB sent about 15 people to this full day of action in Indianapolis as part of an event that helped to launch the Indiana Faith Voices for Justice network
- January 12 - Organized meeting with Forrest Gilmore at Beacon re: how we can help advocate around HUD funding cuts\*
- January 20 - Hoosier Healthcare Day of Action at Statehouse (with Hoosier Action and other groups)
- January and February - Indiana General Assembly advocacy - Numerous calls to action were shared in the Showing Up Together email list to mobilize calls to state legislators about bills and issues before the General Assembly
- May 5 - Hosted meeting with County Commissioner Jody Madeira\*

\*These meetings were organized with Homelessness Task Force and in some cases with additional task forces.

## Education

- September 21 - Peaceful Protesting Training Module 1: Personal Safety
- October 12 - Peaceful Protesting Training Module 2: De-Escalation  
*Both were offered at UUCB following Sunday service and were organized with input from congregants who had expertise in each area.*
- March - Drove turnout to League of Women Voters voter registration trainings, and helped to reserve space at UUCB for one of the trainings.
- April 11 - Turned out UUCB folks to Election Defender Training hosted by Count Us IN
- April 12 - Get Out the Vote Training and Workshop at UUCB
- May 1 - May Day @ UUCB all-ages event featuring lecture, film, and conversation on general strikes

## Collaboration

Nearly everything we did was in collaboration with other groups, or mobilizing UUCB folks to show up for the work of other groups, including: 50501, Hoosier Action, Indiana Faith Voices for Justice, Count us IN, League of Women Voters, and more. Most of the advocacy meetings with elected officials were organized in coordination with the Homelessness Task Force and Hunger Task Force. This year we're especially excited to partner with the other task forces to organize legislative advocacy around policy issues of particular significance to the other task forces.

## Green Sanctuary Task Force on Global Climate Change



The Green Sanctuary Task Force on Global Climate Change (GSTF) helps promote mindful, Earth-centered living, working to educate and motivate individuals and institutions to take positive steps toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Marcia Veldman and Molly O'Donnell, co-chairs; [mollysod@gmail.com](mailto:mollysod@gmail.com)

Active task force members signing off on this annual report and renewal application: Zach Ammerman, Judy Berkshire, Sura Tala, Jo Wilhelm

1. The GSTF led or participated in the following activities/events in the past fiscal year:
  - Service: Held Backyard Revival weed wrangles at member homes, summer/fall
  - Education: Bokashi fermentation demonstration, July 29, 2025 · Education: Held a watch party for author Robin Wall Kimmerer with a vegetarian
  - potluck dinner, attended by 46 people, September 30, 2025 · Service: Promoted

Back2Earth composting, training, October–November 2025

- Education: Tabled for Task of the Month on Sundays, September–December 2025 · Advocacy: Wrote & mailed postcards for the Environmental Voter Project, March 2026
- Advocacy: Tabled at the No Kings rally, March 28, 2026 · Education: Hosted an Electrify Indiana presentation & dinner, March 31, 2026
- Advocacy: Regularly shared action alerts with members to call or write to legislators.
- Education: Helped plan and participated in the annual Earth Day Service, March–April
- Service: Removed invasive plants on UUCB grounds, April 12, 2026
- Education: Tracked UUCB utility usage and solar energy production monthly;
- Calculated and reported savings from solar energy on April 12, 2026
- Advocacy: Submitted a perspectives article stressing the negative impacts of AI data centers on the environment and health, suggesting limiting the use of AI.
- Service: Co-sponsored 9th district forum on science, technology and the environment, at the downtown public library on April 14, 2026
- Service: Gave away 300 native tree and shrub saplings to members, April 26, 2026 · Education: Sponsored an Sassafras Audubon Society event at UUCB, May 20, 2026

2. Green Sanctuary Task Force members collaborated with the following organizations this fiscal year: · Earth Care Bloomington: convened monthly meetings of this local interfaith group. · Green Drinks Bloomington: organized & promoted talks on topics about the environment. · Citizens Climate Lobby: spoke & met with legislators in Indiana to promote legislation. · Center for Sustainable Living: promoted projects from SIREN to Trashion Refashion.

## Habitat for Humanity Task Force



Habitat for Humanity Task Force educates the congregation about local housing needs, including the purpose and accomplishments of Habitat for Humanity and other housing-related groups.

Barb Berggoetz, chair: 812-320-8422; [barbberg@bluemarble.net](mailto:barbberg@bluemarble.net)

Active task force members signing off on this annual report: Barb Berggoetz, Brian Springfield, Pearl Springfield, Kathleen Chmielewski

## Achievements

- Habitat build, May 31, 2024 – service. About 15 UU members volunteered to help build Habitat’s first fully handicapped accessible home for Samantha Walker (including this because it wasn’t part of previous report due to late timing). Task force donated \$10,000 in November 2024 for construction of this home.
- Women+ Build UU & Friends’ team, September 2025 – service, advocacy, community organizing. We recruited 35 team members from UU and the community and build on Sept. 17. Team members raised more than \$24,885, the second highest among all 12 teams. Individual church members financially support team members, and the UU Women’s Alliance donated \$300. Task force donated \$600 from proceeds of May 2025 brunch to team members who volunteered at or donated food to brunch.
- IU football parking fundraiser, fall season 2025 – service. Three members collected payment from football fans to park in our lot at a September game.
- Purchased food for a Pathways food basket, November 2025 – service. The task force supported this community-wide drive, organized by the Hunger Task Force’s effort to provide food baskets.
- UU Holiday Bazaar, Dec. 3-4, 2025 – service. We made craft, home décor, specialty foods, gift baskets,

and other items to sell, including soups-in-a-jar made as a group project. Our table helped improve visibility of Habitat, as many community members visited the bazaar.

- Chili & Soup take-home fundraiser, February 2026 – service. Task force members and supporters made 90 quarts of chili and soup sold after services to support the cost of building a Habitat home.
- Habitat More Than Houses event, February 2026 – community organizing, education. Barb Berggoetz recruited 10 people from UU to attend Habitat for Humanity's major community-wide fundraising and information event.
- Breaking Bread for Habitat Brunch, May 2026 – service, advocacy. Task force members and supporters from other task forces provided sandwiches, salads and desserts for this fundraiser, with a take-home option.
- Informational tabling on Sundays in May 2026 – education, advocacy. We offered information about Habitat's housing program and impact in the community; application process for families to apply; sign-up opportunities for task force's fundraisers, builds, and membership.
- Habitat build on May 16, 2026 – service. About 10 task force members and UU supporters and 10 UU parents participated in a build. Task force member Christine Banister organized UU parents and got child care at the RCA Park, near the build.
- UU social justice moment in May 2026 – education. Habitat advocate Kari Cantrell spoke at both services about her experiences with Habitat, and Barb Berggoetz described upcoming builds, including the Women+ Build, and our donation of \$10,000 for a Habitat build.
- New to UU meeting, May 2026 – education. A Habitat representative is speaking to new UU members to explain the breadth of social justice action at UU.
- Support Homelessness Task Force's benefit concert, June 12, 2026 – service. We set up a Meal Train site to elicit donations of food and volunteers for the Grant Peeples concert.
- Donation of \$10,000 to Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County, May 8, 2026 – service. The funds allow the task force to help sponsor a home this summer, which will give UU publicity on Habitat's website and in publications.

## 2. Other UU task forces and groups outside of UU that we collaborated with:

- We collaborated most often with and supported Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County with financial contributions and volunteers.
- We financed and purchased a food basket for Pathways' holiday food drive in November 2025, in collaboration with the Hunger Task Force. Chair Barb Berggoetz also shopped for food for two additional Pathways baskets financed by a UU donor who couldn't shop.
- We co-sponsored a benefit concert with the Homelessness Task Force in fall 2025. We organized snacks/appetizers from members of Habitat, Homelessness and Hunger Task Force to offer to concert attendees for donations.
- We considered a financial contribution to Avalon Community Land Trust to support its local community home building project, but decided to re-consider donating to this non-profit at a later date to support housing costs.

## Hunger Task Force



Help Feed Our Hungry Neighbors Task Force(HFOHN) provides food to lessen food insecurity for low income and unhoused people in Bloomington.

Dee Morris, chair; cochair Lynn Struve; 812-361-6513 ddmorris2@gmail.com

Active task force members signing off on this annual report:Dee Morris, Lynn Struve, Barb Berggoetz and Judy Kelly

## Achievements

- Little Free Pantry filled with over 600 lbs of food per month-daily delivered.

- Pathways(MCUM) the congregation donated over 70 Holiday Food baskets and HTF donated two from their fund. November
- Center for Sustainable Living
- Community Kitchen, we purchase food for “cook’s choice” 6 time per year, 300.00 each time.
- Family Friday Night Fun-the children filled 200 snack bags for Shalom and Friends Place. October 2025
- A Sunday in November, we provided the food after both services as a “thank you” to the congregation. November 1, 2026
- Volunteer three times a month (two people per shift) at Community Kitchen yearly

## Collaborations

- HFOHN provided the food basket list from Pathways in November.
- We increased the hot breakfasts to be daily Monday-Friday at Shalom.
- Many of us monthly donate time, food and money to other task forces monthly.

## Homelessness Task Force



The Homelessness Task Force provides services to people experiencing homelessness in Bloomington and Monroe County, and educates the congregation and community of the struggles associated with homelessness and the way we can help.

Mary Blizzard, chair; Home 812-333-8957 Cell 812-325-0959 [maryblizzard6@gmail.com](mailto:maryblizzard6@gmail.com)  
Active task force members signing off on this annual report: Cecelia Murphy, Barb Backler, Christine Banister, Dennis Daveron. We have 13 registered members.

## Achievements

### SERVICE:

- Volunteering at Shalom - ongoing
- Water/milk for Shalom - ongoing
- Secure food Sunday evenings for Friends' Place - ongoing
- Winter Clothing and other drives - very successful
- Secure and deliver leftover vendor food from Taste of Bloomington for Shalom and Friends' Place - hopefully annually
- Winter Shelter volunteers - We as UUs MUST support this program more in the future!
- \$5000 to Friend's Place 2/24/26
- \$1500 to Beacon

### EDUCATION:

- Perspective articles
- Social Justice Moment
- Weekly Friday Updates ads
- Legislative issues
- Getting Involved Aug 17

### ADVOCACY:

- Visits with Matt Pierce, Shelley Yoder and multiple visits with Todd Young's assistants
- Continued letter writing/phone calls to reps concerning cuts to SNAP, Medicaid, criminalization of homelessness, etc

### COMMUNITY ORGANIZING:

- Working closely with Beacon: financial support, fundraising for Friend's Place, donation drives, volunteering

### COLLABORATIONS

- Beacon
- Hunger Task Force

- Democracy Task Force
- Habitat Task Force

## 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; 812-336-3696, [robertson.8@osu.edu](mailto:robertson.8@osu.edu)

Active task force members signing off on this annual report: Ed Robertson, Christine Banister, Carolyn Craig, Judy Kelly

- Our first achievement was a trip to Kenya in June 2025. The trip was very productive- For instance, we met with a group of about 12 Kenyan Unitarians from around the country who explained to us how they got interested in Unitarianism, and a possible project they would like help with.
- Because of problems with the administration of Spurgeon's school, we are looking to change our beneficiaries perhaps. So far we have collected 2 proposals- one from the Kenyan Unitarians and one from the ex-principal of Spurgeon's school- Keyanito Dudi. He submitted a proposal to provide school fees for secondary students, who in Kenya are not government funded.
- We met twice with the Kenyan Unitarians and we are trying to formulate plans for future cooperation. They were attracted to Unitarianism by online sources, and we were the first Unitarians from someplace else to meet with them. We have learned that there are about 2,000 Unitarians in Kenya.
- We fundraise throughout the year by participating in benefit sales where we sell Kenyan goods that we acquired during our last trip, plus we host regular monthly bake sales in between each visit to Kenya. Each time we travel to Kenya (bi-annually), we aim to give 20,000 to Spurgeon's school. Additional funds are used to purchase jewelry and other items which are then sold at fundraiser sales back in the US. We continue this way in order to raise enough money to continue donating a large sum each time we visit. Over the past year, we have raised \$6,923 and our t-account balance is \$6,873.

## 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](mailto:keppel@sbcglobal.net).

This task force has become inactive due to health issues by leadership.

## 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](mailto:aydt@icloud.com)

Active task force members signing off on this annual report: Barb Schweigman, Connie Loftman, Doris Parlette, Sandy Churchill

Service: Not necessarily for people in distress, but for people/causes we believe in.

- Fundraise for the Resilience Productions 5-50 Club at UUCB Community Hour. [3 Sundays in Sept]
- Donate and serve refreshments for Resilience Productions' 4 performances of "A Contract in Color; Jane Elliott's Lasting Impression" at the Monroe County History Museum. [Oct]
- Donate the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet Ticket we received with our Bronze Sponsorship to

- allow a young person from the community to attend the banquet. [Nov]
- Education: To educate ourselves, UUCB members, and the wider community.
- Trip for UUCB members to Indianapolis, Indiana to visit a soul food restaurant and a tour / visit of the Crispus Attucks Museum. Task Force member Elizabeth Mitchell invited family members with deep ties to Crispus Attucks to join us, providing an opportunity to hear first-hand about the importance of the school to the Black community in Indianapolis. The museum contained information about the school's history and about Africa. 26 people from Bloomington made the trip. Museum entry fees were covered from TF funds. [July] The documentary "Attucks: The School that Opened a City", available to stream for free, was recommended to UUCB members.
- UUCB members were invited to a presentation/discussion by Alonzo Johnson, Sr., descendant of Coach Alonzo Watford Sr., renowned coach and athletic director at Crispus Attucks (whose football field was named in his honor). Mr. Johnson brought memorabilia and stories about Coach Watford, sharing some of what he overcame and the work he did to break racial barriers and support Black youth in Indianapolis. The descendants of Coach Watford carry on his work, through the CAW Inner City Youth Football League and other efforts. The TF made a donation to the CAW Inner City Youth Football League. [August 2025]
- Financial and promotional support for the SCCAP/Thriving Connections Poverty Simulation and Discussion Panel, which was offered in conjunction with Bloomington Multi-Faith Alliance, Faith for Racial Equity group (BMA-F4RE). [September 2025]
- Support (food, serving refreshments, promotions) for Resilience Productions' "A Contract in Color; Jane Elliott's Lasting Impression" at the Monroe County History Museum. [Oct]
- In conjunction with the Bloomington Multi-Faith Alliance, Faith for Racial Equity (BMA-F4RE), the TF chair offered an Adult RE class at UUCB to read and discuss "Cracking the Healer's Code: A Prescription for Healing Racism and Finding Wholeness" by Milagros Phillips (Sept-Dec). As part of this BMA-F4RE initiative, Ms. Phillips, the author and race equity educator, joined us and others from the Bloomington community for kick-off (Sept) and wrap-up (Jan) events. These events were held at UUCB, with support from UUCB staff and TF members, as well as BMA-F4RE, and were open to everyone, not just those participating in the book read.
- Hold and promote author talk with Dr. Audrey McCluskey at UUCB. Dr. McCluskey read from and discussed her memoir "GIRLCHILD – Growing up Between the Pines and Palms in Jim Crow Georgia and Florida". [Nov]
- Opportunities to share and discuss race-related issues at our TF meetings. [Aug, Sept, Mar, Apr, May]
- Witness: (some also appear in other categories) Our task force does this through our support of BIPOC-led and BIPOC-serving organizations. We bear witness to them and to the importance of their work. In some cases, we receive public recognition for our support, but not always.
- Our task force provides an organizational home for Resilience Productions, whose mission is to educate, enlighten and engage the public regarding many unknown and uncelebrated contributions of African Americans to our country's history. [ongoing]
- Crispus Attucks Museum [July], CAW Inner City Youth League [Aug], SCCAP/Thriving Connections [Sept], NAACP of Monroe County [various], Dr. Audrey McCluskey [Nov], Miami Nation of Indians of the State of Indiana [Feb], Shawnee Seed Sanctuary [Apr], African American Arts Institute at Indiana University [Apr].
- Advocacy and Community Organizing: Our task force does not engage in these directly. We do share information that may inform and motivate members to act on their own, for example some of the consequences of dismantling DEI initiatives at IU.

Collaborations: BMA-F4RE and Monroe County NAACP.

## Rainbow Rights Task Force



The Rainbow Rights Task Force The Rainbow Rights Task Force seeks to revive, document, and advance the knowledge, concerns, and rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, communities, and causes, advocating for spiritual wholeness in relation to gender and sexuality.

Jason Michálek, chair with assistance from Eleadora Maxwell; contact:

[RainbowRights@uubloomington.org](mailto:RainbowRights@uubloomington.org)

Active task force members signing off on this annual report: Sapphire Perez, Erica Whichello, Marshall Lynn, Sally McGuire

### 1. Achievements:

- Published an article in UUCB “Perspectives” – October 2025
- Coordinated Pride Festivals – Bloomington and Spencer – September/October 2025
- Collaborated on Trans 101 – November 2025
- Collaborated on community integration of the Trinity Haven Project – April 2026

### 2. Collaborations:

- Organized with pride festival organizers and Spencer Pride Center
- Established relationships with government representatives and other community members regarding legislation around LGBTQIA+ issues
- Corresponded with organizers of Gay Men’s Fellowship dinners • Planning and organizing politically and organizationally with the Trinity Haven Project, The Front Door, and Stonewall Democrats of Southcentral Indiana

## 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. Cindy Lonnberg/Nan McKinley, co-chairs; Nan: 812-929-4803, [fiddlernan@gmail.com](mailto:fiddlernan@gmail.com), Cindy: 812-322-0713 [clonnberg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:clonnberg@sbcglobal.net)

Active task force members signing off on this annual report: Melinda Swenson, Carol McCord, Martha Crossen, Pat Slabach

### Achievements:

- Service:
  - o Join the annual bakesale crew or bake items to donate,
  - o help with Football Pkg.
  - o We donated from those earnings to Tandem for the Hoosier Diaper Fund and to the Hoosier Abortion Fund.
  - o We formed a team to fundraise for the Hoosier Abortion Fund which is ongoing during the month of May, posting about it on the church Facebook page and in newsletters.
  - o We table during Community Hours twice in May to educate and encourage donations.
- Education:
  - o volunteer to table on Sunday’s Community Hour during our SJ month.
  - o We formed a book group and read and discussed 2 books this year: Shelley Sella’s 2025 Beyond Limits about her experience providing abortions later in pregnancy, and The Story of Jane: The Legendary Underground Feminist Abortion Service by Laura Kaplan (1997)
  - o We offered a ‘Mix & Mingle’ event in the fall auction and 7 people donated to UUCB to win tix to

attend. On April 19th we had a total of 16 guests at the home of our SJ leader, Jackie Hall. The attendees included task force members + auction tix holders and 2 special guests. We enjoyed refreshments and an open discussion with representatives from the Hoosier Abortion Fund and Tandem.

- Witness:

- o Volunteer at Tandem or train for the All-Options Talkline service, join our 4th Trimester Team;
- o We provided info cards on Middle Way House and Hoosier Abortion Fund to a store downtown that sponsors a free vending machine which contains condoms, morning after pills and other options.

- Advocacy:

- o attend rallies and marches, participate in Lobby Days UPDATE:
- o In June 2024, the co-chairs were 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. The case was brought by Hoosier Jews for Choice from Bloomington and a private party. We were contacted by the Columbia University Law, Rights and Religion Project to sign on. The court rejected the case and an ACLU appeal brought the case to a Marion County court. As of 3/2026, there is now a permanent injunction for those with serious religious objections to the current ban, citing RFRA (religious freedom). This makes abortion legal in IN based on one's religious beliefs.

- Community Organizing:

- o Table at community events, participate in planning an educational event;
- o We planned for Shelley Sella, author of Beyond Limits about abortions later in pregnancy, to speak at UUCB this spring but her book tour schedule changed
- o We hope to have a community presentation this fall.

Collaboration: Tandem, Hoosier Diaper Program, All-Options, and the Hoosier Abortion Fund.

## 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: 812-797-5231, [vesselsjm@gmail.com](mailto:vesselsjm@gmail.com)

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Additional Members Signing Off on Application: Mary Blizzard, Debbie Fish, Sylvia McNair, Barb

### Annual report questions:

Accomplishment for the UU-RISE task force was the assistance they provided to the formation and growth of a local coalition of organizations that serve the needs of immigrants in Monroe County. Community Care Coalition (CCC) fosters communication and cooperative support efforts across multiple organizations that serve similar populations. CCC membership includes representatives from Iglesia Hispana, First United Church, Friends, UUCB, RSN, The Crew, Exodus Refugee, El Centro, BloomAIR, DSA, RRN. UU-RISE was a sponsor of a CCC fundraiser. For the cost of sponsorship (\$275) the RISE task force made it possible to donate over \$3000 to three local nonprofits. (El Centro, RSN, Exodus Refugee). A big shout out to Amanda and Jo who helped with processing e-payments! Infrastructure is so important to a successful fundraiser these days. So in the last year the task force has grown their community influence and broadened their support to include El Centro and Exodus Refugee.

Collaborate with Hunger TF to provide a donation to offset some costs that the Zaiter family had to cover after the loss of almost \$1000 a month in SNAP benefits. RISE members donated items for the Homelessness TF table at the Holiday Bizarre. One of the Chalice Circle service projects was a pie sale and they donated the profits to UU-RISE.

## Social Justice Funds Committee (SJFC)

### 2025 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 UUCB. Funds are available from interest on the Lundin SJ Endowment Fund. The following grant was awarded:



- Hunger and Homelessness Task Forces: \$1000 to provide pizza for the residents of Friend's Place on Sunday evenings throughout the winter.

### Spring 25% Sunday Plate Fund Campaign

Last June 2025 the Tandem Community Birth Center and Postpartum House, Inc was selected to be the recipient of the 25% of Sunday plate for the fiscal year 2025-26. Revenue given to Tandem for the first three quarters is \$7703.11

This year three nominees for the 25% non-pledge plate funds were selected and are:

- Farm to Family, nominated by Marcia Veldman
- Friend's Place, nominated by Mary Blizzard
- Shawnee Seed Sanctuary, nominated by the Indigenous Studies Planning Group (Zach Ammerman, Barbara Backler, Judy Berkshire, and Stuart Yoak)

Voting will take place on June 7 at the congregational meeting.

SJFC Members: Sarah Kopper (chair), Steve Mascari, Scott Sanders, MJ Wallaker, and Paul Banister; Advisor: Jackie Hall

Sunday Social Justice Film Series Annual Report  
Program suspended due to pandemic