First Unitarian Society of Westchester: The journey so far…

1853

Sunday services for those with Unitarian sympathies are held in a private home on South Broadway, Yonkers.

1856

Increased attendance forces move to a larger space--the Getty House Lyceum, alternating Sundays with the Universalists.

1857

First minister called.

1858

Board of Trustees formed. *Incorporation as* First Unitarian Church of Westchester. *Bylaws adopted. Fund raising. Purchase of property on North Broadway in Yonkers.*

1861

Gothic Revival-frame church building on North Broadway and Roberts Avenue is dedicated.

There follow periods of growing membership, increased activities and outreach, often with full-time minister in the pulpit, succeeded by years of contraction and austerity. E.g., during World War I, when coal shortages make it difficult to heat the church building, there is a return to the early practice of holding services in members' homes.

1947

New minister called.

Coffee Hour introduced! .

1952

Long Range Planning Committee is launched. *Consider options for enlarging or relocating the church to house a growing congregation.*

1965

Rev. J. Robert Smudski, full-time minister.

Congregation votes to sell church property and relocate.

1972

Move to 25 Old Jackson Ave. completed!

However, during and after the move, membership plunges—from 250 in the 1960s to 150 in 1972.

1973-1977

Financial woes! *Rev. Smudski downsizes to half-time.*
Program Groups are born!
Flooding! Rev. Smudski is rescued from 25 OJA in a rowboat.

1985

A new name: **"The First Unitarian Society of Westchester."** *Guided by Rev. Cynthia Ward, the congregation focuses on membership growth and fund raising.*

1992-2009

Rev. David Bryce, full-time minister.

Membership soars; RE expands; Building is expanded and upgraded. DRE joins staff. Increased musical program in and beyond services; gallery wall in sanctuary for art exhibits; Safe and Sacred Policy implemented; Welcoming Congregation designation; commitment to creating a green sanctuary. Monthly Midnight Run. Our Whole Lives offered: K-1: grades 4/5, and 7/8. Coming of Age and Youth Group.

2007 Nor'easter! Flooding at 25 OJA wipes out plans to enlarge the sanctuary and redirects energy and funds to rebuilding.

2010

Rev. Jef Gamblee, Interim minister.

2011–2019

Rev. Peggy Clarke, full-time minister.

August 2019

Rev. Viola Abbitt, shared interim minister.

March 2020

Covid 19 pandemic!

FUSW moves to remote services; all in-person activities canceled.

August 2020

Rev. Kristina Church, shared interim minister.

August 2021

Rev. Arlin Roy, half-time contract minister.

September 1, 2021

Tropical Storm Ida! Catastrophic damage to 25 OJA.

Hybrid services at Alan Murray's home, then at South Presbyterian Church, DF. Zoom-only services when Covid threat is high.

August 2022

25 Old Jackson Avenue sold to Steppe Education, Inc.