Annual Report 2025



FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF BURLINGTON

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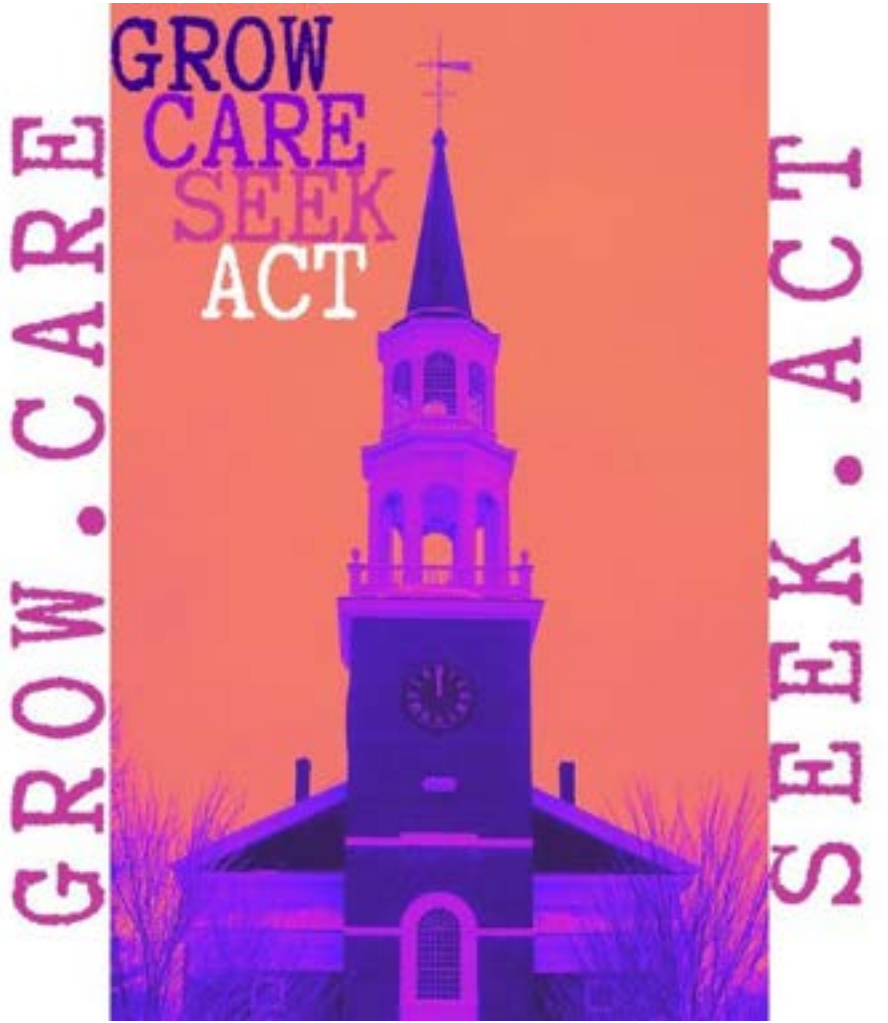
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Our Mission

To inspire spiritual growth, to care for each other and our community, to seek truth, and to act for justice.



Guided by Our Values

Love: Nourishing lives with love, caring and compassion.

Service: Building a community for justice, equity and empathetic action.

Openness: Celebrating the wonders of life and spiritual transformation with boldness, joy, courage and openness.

Respect: Engaging all with kindness, understanding and mutual respect as faithful democratic stewards of all we hold dear.

Visionary Ends

- FUUSB uses its power as an organization and faith community to work for social, economic and environmental justice.
- FUUSB's welcoming worship, supported by powerful and diverse music and art, acts as a magnet that fosters spiritual growth, compassion, introspection and impetus to action.
- FUUSB is a compassionate community, offering all who engage in its ministries a profound sense of welcome, belonging, and spiritual care through life's joys, struggles, and sacred passages.
- FUUSB provides diverse opportunities for transformational spiritual growth, faith development and personal discovery, promoting life-long learning for all ages and stages of life.
- FUUSB generously stewards our mission and strongly supports ministries, activities and an historic building and spaces.

FUUSB Covenant

We gather together with the intention of creating a vibrant, healthy, liberal religious community. To this end, we make the following promises to each other:

- To come with open minds and hearts so that we can welcome new ideas, new people and new possibilities.
- To listen carefully to each other, to speak openly and respectfully, and to assume good intentions, especially in times of disagreement.
- To participate actively in the life of the Society by being present, serving/volunteering, and providing financial support.

We recognize that there will be times when we will fall short of these ideals. We will be accountable to each other and forgiving of each other.

2025 FUUSB Board of Trustees



Rodney Lowe,
President



Eileen Blackwood,
Vice President



Jonathan Sands,
Secretary



Peter Clavelle



Susan Ogden

2025 FUUSB Board of Trustees (cont.)



Stephen Rainville



Kim Watkin



Christina Fulton,
Director of Operations & Finance,
ex-officio



Rev. Karen G. Johnston,
Settled Minister,
ex-officio

Reports

Report: Board President

The work of the board began in earnest at our August retreat. The retreat provided an opportunity for us to get to know one another better, especially the newer board members. We started to discuss the need for a vision and goals. Some of the discussion was focussed around input from other working groups in the congregation and we invited the Racial Justice Task Force to discuss the work they have done.

Throughout most of the year, the Board met once a month, usually in person at the Meetinghouse. This year we also held one additional meeting to provide more discussion time for the 2025/26 budget. The regular monthly meetings all had a similar format. The business would typically consist of: Consent Agenda, Monitoring Reports, Minister's Report, 23/24 Finances, 24/25 Budget, and Governance. We always ended with a quick check on how the meeting went, especially with respect to adherence to our board covenant and the 8th Principal.

I think it is fair to say that two constant focuses for our work were:

1. paying attention to the current year 2024/25 budget and planning for the 2025/26 budget,
2. taking seriously the need to provide a clear vision for the staff and identify goals for the board to work on in the future.

A consent agenda contained items that were voted on with no discussion so that we could be as efficient as possible. Typical consent agenda items included approving the prior meeting's minutes and other matters that had been distributed in writing to the board ahead of time so thoughtful consideration could be given before the meeting. If questions could not be answered ahead of time, then the item would be moved off the consent agenda into the meeting proper.

We adapted our long established, policy-based governance model to what we felt better met our needs and temporarily suspended the somewhat onerous tasks that required the Director of Operations and Finance (Christina Fulton) and/or Rev. Karen provide detailed written Monitoring Reports that include information relevant to topics specified in the Board Policy Manual. We decided to only require the staff to highlight any gross deviations. A more detailed review of our governance and these reports is being lined up as a board goal for next year with an aim to create a focus for monitoring reports that feels relevant to both executive staff and the board.

In the early part of the year we monitored the planning for Christina Fulton's sabbatical and then that the shared coverage was not putting overly onerous workloads on any of our staff. We also invited Brain Haas, the Treasurer, to attend each board meeting.

Although board meetings have always been open to any congregation member to attend as an observer, this year we explicitly pursued a strategy to make observer attendance at Board meetings more accessible. We communicated meeting times to the congregation, as well as Zoom links to attend remotely. On two occasions, we had congregants attend as observers. After each meeting, we also provided a short summary of each meeting in eNews. In conjunction with this we have improved our meeting procedures on how to respond to congregational requests. We also developed and approved a policy addressing how we respond to Requests for Public Statements.

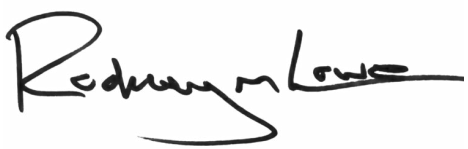
Establishing a clear vision that we could give to staff to drive their budgeting and operational focus and create a set of goals for the board ourselves was a major focus for us this year. To do this we took time out of each meeting, had two board retreats (August and January) and held several in person and online congregational listening sessions.

The results of this effort will be presented at the annual meeting. Some of this has already been implemented. For instance, the staff built a budget based on the vision developed. Much of this will drive our work next year, and into the future.

We had significant transition on the board this year. Three members resigned their positions over the course of the year: Mark Kuprych, Jeb Spaulding and Jill Stevens. Each was for different personal reasons. I would like to express gratitude to each of them for the work they have done, not only on the board, but in other roles in the congregation. I'd especially like to thank Susan Ogden and Stephen Rainville who were willing to have the board appoint them to fill two of those positions. All positions will be filled by people elected at the annual meeting.

Since my term as President is ending and I am stepping away from the board in July, I thought I'd share some thoughts about my two-year term. I was elected to the position at the annual meeting in June 2023. I had spent several years in an at-large position before but had not been an active member of the board for a couple of years. I was happy to be nominated, not least because it promised to be an exciting time working with a new Senior Minister and an impressive Board of Trustees.

That proved to be the case working with Rev Karen, Director of Operations and many board members all of whom I have grown to respect greatly. There is a list of adjectives I can use to describe this group of people, past and present: deliberative, honest, willing, open, joyful, hard-working, flexible, fair-minded, collaborative, and last but not least, dedicated to the health and well being of this Society. Thank you for electing me two years ago. I know I am leaving you in good hands. Please talk to them when you can, they really do want to represent YOU as best they can.



Rodney Lowe, President
Board of Trustees, FUUSB

Report: Senior Minister

During the past congregational year, since we last convened for our Annual Meeting, we experienced the deaths of the following members of the congregation:

- Sylvia Holden - June 5, 2024
- Jeanne Parsley - December 18, 2024
- Ken Swearingen - January 26, 2025
- Brenda Balon - March 5, 2025
- Richard Cassidy - April 21, 2025
- Susan Alden - May 12, 2025
- Anne Nixon - May 13, 2025

During the past congregational year, since we last convened for our Annual Meeting, we dedicated the following children:

- Julian Sightberg
- Cosmo Randall
- Camille Clavelle

And we baptized the following children:

- Kimberly Lisbeth Bohorquez Andrade
- Nihir Isabella Bohorquez Andrade

We officiated the wedding of the following members:

- Bettie Barnes & Bill Paine (to each other)

Within This Place, Among This People

This year, we saw an approximately 10% increase in attendance on Sunday mornings, especially after the election in November and the inauguration in January. On a few Sundays - November 10 and April 20 (Easter), attendance was in the low-to-mid 200s. This year (Sept - mid May), our average adult attendance has been 151; our average all-ages attendance has been 177.

Community has always been important. And this increase comes at a time when finding and building community is a part of what helps us get through this global chaos, as well as will help us resist the authoritarianism in our midst. So this increase is great news!

It is worth noting that this has not (yet?) translated into an increase in membership, which has stayed pretty steady (around 400). Is there something we can do to help those individuals seeking a spiritual home not only find us, but stay long enough to root here? I believe now is the time to be tending to this in new or renewed ways. One of our responses was offering a Newcomer Meet & Greet with the Minister, which we held 4 times this congregational year, sponsored by the Membership Team.

Our Chalice Circles and Theme Circles continue to provide a way for new and long-attending folks to find connection in a smaller, more relational setting. Circle Coordination is now two people, not just one, allowing for increasing visibility to the congregation and keeping more accurate records, as well as increased collaboration with other congregational teams.. This year, in addition to long-established circles, two new circles (Pagan and Deepening Our Lives) with new facilitators were formed, helping to meet the need for connection and belonging.

This year we experienced renewed volunteer energies - one of our first Sunday services centered on the honey bees' waggle dance as a way we can communicate to each other where the sweet ministry work needs additional attention. Our lay-led Stewardship Team worked

wonders. We have developed a Pastoral Visiting Team that will be officially launched in the fall but is beginning some visiting this spring. After several fallow years, there are lay leaders who support Faith Development and support our FD staff. A new group of lay leaders took on the responsibility of organizing and holding our spring auction and it was quite a success and helped relieve the Board of a responsibility that truly belonged elsewhere.

There are still teams in the congregation that welcome (and need) more humans participating in them. While great work was done in inventorying the Archives, we need a team of people to oversee this undervalued asset that helps us know and tell our story. The Membership Team, which helps new folks get connected to the congregation, has a solid core and welcomes several more people to help ensure that everyone receives a warm welcome when they are exploring whether FUUSB might be their spiritual home.

The Faith Development program would benefit from two forms of additional lay participation and support. The newly-resurrected Support Team could use one or two more members, especially as we get ready for Erika’s sabbatical at the end of next congregational year.

And we could use a larger pool of lay folks who commit either to volunteering on Sundays, or to overseeing the assignment of volunteers on Sunday mornings; this would free up precious time for Erika to either not overwork (which she does, on the congregation's behalf) or to meet needs that get neglected. If you have said that you wished there were more young people in the congregation - well, there are - a 33% increase in the average children's attendance this year. So we need more volunteers to make this a positive experience for children, youth, and families, as well as the long-term health of the congregation.

I'd love more of the congregation comfortable with our internal communication system (Realm). Given our current administrative staffing (and that last year, we decreased significantly the staff hours here), we need a lay-led team, working in coordination with staff, that offers regular tutorial sessions and one-on-one support to help bring fellow congregants along. While life contains many mysteries, Realm should not be one of them.

I spent much time this year developing the infrastructure for our newest version of a Pastoral Visiting Team. Nine people were trained this year and have begun what will be our regularly

monthly meetings of support and learning. We have a Chair of the Team and will be rolling out this renewed ministry to the congregation in the fall. On a related subject, since my last Annual Report, I conducted seven memorial services, 5 of which were for FUUSB members. These rites of passage are only possible because of the team work of both staff and lay leaders who make these possible.

The Wider Community of Which We Are a Part

Last year, I spoke of Burlington's chang*ing* landscape. I think, for now at least, we should speak of Burlington's chang**ed** landscape when it comes to the increasing numbers of those who are unhoused and blocked from affordable housing; those who are struggling with addiction and its impact on our public, shared spaces; and the general unraveling that our beloved city is experiencing (which I understand as part of late-stage capitalism). We experience the direct impacts of this Unraveling and practice, on a daily basis, how to use pragmatism, our Unitarian Universalist values, and collaboration with community partners in a faith-based response that attempts to keep love at the center.

More and more people are directly impacted by the malicious and wanton dismantling of democracy; fewer and fewer can say it is happening “over there” because it is, in fact, happening “right here.” On the Sunday before the election, there were offerings for the congregation to focus on resilience. On the Tuesday of the election, we staffed a welcoming tent where Pearl and Church Street meet, handing out over 200 inspirational poems and engaged over 300 people. On the evening after the election, we rapidly put together a service open to the wider community to provide comfort and connection for those woefully in need of such after the outcome of the election was announced. On the day of the inauguration, we held the “Just Love Gospel Concert” to a sanctuary full of people who claimed community and joy (and also raised $12,000 for the Richard Kemp Center).

While always aware of our prominent location at the top of Church Street, in this context, this year has reminded us that we are directly across from the federal building. This has given us opportunities to use our physical location and space as an asset to community building and support for collective resistance. The use of our chain link fence for messaging became a hallmark while growing numbers of individuals have been arrested by ICE and unlawfully held in

detention, their hearing held here in Burlington This message fence was a vision that emerged from Erika and myself, then implemented by dozens in the congregation responding rapidly when the messaging needed repair or revision. We opened our restrooms, our lawn, and our front stairs for a series of mass demonstrations organized by a variety of community groups throughout the spring.

Last June, we hosted and co-sponsored an interfaith event with the Parents Circle, with speakers zooming in from Palestine and Israel to share about their experience of coming together after losing a loved one to the violence in that part of the world. Other interfaith activities include our ongoing support of Vermont Interfaith Action (their office is in our Clark Street building); my participation in the Burlington Interfaith Clergy Council, as well as conversations among faith leaders facilitated by Mayor Emma Mulvaney-Stanack.

Staff Team

We experienced a successful 3-month sabbatical of our Director of Operations and Finance. A team of lay leaders supported the planning and preparation, as well as provided support during

the sabbatical period. This experience places us in good shape as we anticipate the upcoming sabbatical of our Director of Lifespan Faith Development, Erika Reif, which will take shape as two 3-month periods in the spring of 2026 and winter of 2026/27.

We had far fewer staff transitions this year than last year (hallelujah!) - for more details, see the report from our Director of Operations and Finance.

I feel especially fortunate to work as part of the strong staff team here at FUUSB. I regularly feel appreciation (and hopefully express it) for my co-workers and for their support of both my ministry with FUUSB and our shared ministry together. We place a high value on tending to the needs of individual staff and on cultivating positive team dynamics. The collaborations between lay folx and staff are critical to a vibrant ministry - ensuring staff are experiencing the support they need means the partnerships between staff and congregants are more gratifying all around. There are times when you thank me for something and I accept the gratitude on behalf of the whole staff, without whom it would not be possible.

What excites me about the coming year?

- Continuing to grow our congregation's mortality literacy (including my workshop at General Assembly this year!)
- Establishing a strong and skilled lay Pastoral Visiting Team.
- Helping establish a consistent system of goals and feedback to staff that focuses on creating synergy with the congregation's mission and annual vision of ministry, as well as supports staff members' capacities and boundaries.
- My plans to attend a 9-day silent meditation retreat over the New Year - this will be the 3rd time in the past decade I have attended this particular retreat.
- Attending the week-long Institute for the Learning Ministry alongside Christina and Erika as we strengthen the synergy that flows in our staff team.

In case you were not present on March 2nd, or would like to revisit it, here is the sermon I gave in which I shared my vision for the congregation: "All Flourishing is Mutual."

True last year, still true this year: There isn't a day that goes by that I don't say, often out loud, **how thankful I am for us having found us** and for the chance to be associated with you all.

I am blessed to be on this journey with you ~



Rev. Karen G. Johnston
Senior Minister, FUUSB

Report: Director of Operations & Finance

The biggest stand out for this year has been my sabbatical. I am extremely grateful to work for a congregation that appreciates my work and recognises it with some extended time away for rest and renewal. Taking a sabbatical is no small thing. I am so very grateful for the time and effort put in by Rev. Karen, my Sabbatical Team, and the staff and volunteers who took on pieces of my job so that I could be away. I am so blessed.

Human Resources - While last year was a never ending turnover in staff, this year has been quite calm in comparison. After the budget was passed, a decision was made to combine the Administrative Assistant and the Faith Development Assistant positions. After a one year trial of this combined job, we have all agreed to move back to having two separate positions. There were also changes in the Childcare Coordinator and the Custodian positions.

I am very pleased to announce that FUUSB will be providing an Employee Assistance Program. This program provides counseling and resources to our entire staff and their households.

We are using a local non-profit, Invest EAP, who also offers supervisor consultations, online stress reduction and resiliency-building modules, 24 hour hotline answered by local therapists, legal and financial referrals, and so much more.

Facilities Management - Devin, our full-time Facilities Manager, has been a huge asset to our staff and our congregation as a whole. As our Meeting House still struggles with public drug use on the property, Devin has done an excellent job keeping our grounds safe and also supervising our Caretaker staff. Our Caretakers both prepare space and welcome those who are using our building, and they also ensure our grounds are safe, welcoming and clean, interacting with the public in a way that conveys our boundaries, handling each interaction with courtesy and empathy.

Last summer we had our slate roof repaired using funding from a State Historic Preservation Grant as well as the painting of the trim on the north side of the building. We owe Bob, our former Facilities Manager, gratitude for writing the historic preservation grant and managing both projects from bid to completion.

Devin has worked closely with the Property Team planning large projects, and with the Sunday Morning Breakfast Team planning their weekly event. I couldn't be more proud of the work he and his team do for FUUSB.

In case you missed it, Erin has been our Events and Scheduling Coordinator for several years now. In the past two years, Erin has worked extremely hard to increase the number of outside rentals. Outside rentals include weddings, memorial services, concerts, large meetings, etc. This has been a huge help to the income side of our budget. She also schedules all of your team/committee meetings and sets up your Zoom links for you. She brings an amazing level of professionalism to this job. We are so fortunate to have her on our team.

Finance - We went into this fiscal year with a budget that had an approximate $42,000 deficit, even after we had cut a staff position and staff hours. Additionally, we had been struggling with cash flow since the pandemic.

I am happy to report that this year has seen giving and other income rise above what was budgeted. As of this writing, and as shared at our April 28, Meet the Budget meeting, I am expecting the deficit to be much smaller than budgeted. Cash flow has not been an issue this year. I feel that we are finally getting our financial house in order since the pandemic.

Thanks in no small part to Louis deRosset and the Stewardship Team, our pledge income for the 25/26 fiscal year is up 7%, an increase of more than $30,000. We came in just shy of our $478,000 goal. Since the pandemic, this congregation has not had a Stewardship Team. The campaigns were run with just the Minister and myself. I am so grateful for Louis's leadership and all the work that everyone put into this campaign. Many hands make light work . . . or at least lighter work. Thank you all for your generosity.

The budget that we are presenting this year is a balanced budget. To be transparent, it does include a distribution of what we project to be approximately $18,0000 from the First UU Trust Fund to achieve that balance.

Given that over the past two years the First UU Trust Fund has increased by 151%, it seemed like a prudent way to invest in ourselves. This is a far cry from last year's $42K deficit. All staff are receiving a Cost of Living Increase, and we are not cutting any staff hours. As I am sure you are aware, the increase in all kinds of insurance premiums is crippling. The congregation experienced a 23% increase in our property/liability insurance, and health insurance is slated to have double digit increases again this year. Please take the time to look at the proposed budget and its supporting documents, and feel free to talk to me anytime about our finances.

Administration - This is the catch-all phrase for all the other stuff included in my job, both in my job description and not. Throughout the year I regularly attend the Board meetings, the Finance Team meetings, the Board Planning meetings, the Stewardship Team meetings, the Endowment Team meetings, and supervision meetings. In addition I also attend meetings as needed. As one of the holders of historic memory, I'm often invited to help folks remember why we did something or when we did something or how we did something. I love attending these extra meetings because it gives me an opportunity to see you all doing the work of the congregation. It's what keeps this job exciting and meaningful.

This winter we've had some volunteers working together to create an electronic catalog of our Archives materials. A huge thank you, to Joe Cook, Laura Cook, and Mary Gade, for putting in hours and hours of work on this project. Stay tuned for next steps in making our archives more accessible. And if you have an interest in helping to maintain our Archives, please reach out.

My partner in all of this administrative work is Töve. She works tirelessly to keep communication flowing, whether by publications like the eNews or announcements in Realm. She answers your questions, creates the Order of Service, and the slides that are projected during the Sunday Service. My gratitude for her hard work and commitment overflows.

Summary - It has been a busy and exciting year. I'm looking forward to the slightly slower pace of summer before we ramp up again in the fall. As always, it is an honor to serve this congregation.



Christina Fulton
Director of Operations and Finance

	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY 2024-2025	FY 2025-2026	
	Actual Income & Expenses	Total Approved Annual Budget	Projected Year End as of 04/30/2025	Total Proposed Annual Budget	Increase/ (Decrease) vs. Prior Yr. Budgeted %
			INCOME		
Pledges & Other Contributions	$438,337	$444,320	$475,200	$478,050	8%
Share the Plate Collections	$30,414	$30,000	$28,000	$28,000	-7%
Subtotal Congregational Income	**$468,751**	**$474,320**	**$503,200**	**$506,050**	**7%**
Rental Income	$163,470	$164,668	$173,953	$175,496	7%
Trust Income/Distributions	$209,284	$227,052	$224,121	$251,843	11%
First UU Trust Distribution & Other Income	$57,692	$32,300	$30,920	$44,803	39%
Subtotal Non-Congregational Income	**$430,446**	**$424,020**	**$428,994**	**$472,142**	**11%**
General Fund Income	**$899,197**	**$898,340**	**$932,194**	**$978,192**	**9%**
			EXPENSES		
Payroll/Benefits	$706,400	$656,244	$660,076	$683,354	4%
Operating Expenses	$114,186	$150,436	$150,808	$156,328	4%
Buildings & Site	$72,349	$80,070	$90,020	$82,900	4%
Governance & Ministry	$44,368	$53,410	$40,879	$55,610	4%
General Fund Expense	**$937,303**	**$940,160**	**$941,783**	**$978,192**	**4%**
Net Increase / (Decrease) to General Fund	**($38,106)**	**-$41,820**	**-$9,589**	**0**	**-100%**
General Fund Balance, End of Year	**$84,481**	**$191,305**	**$181,716**	**$181,716**	**-5%**

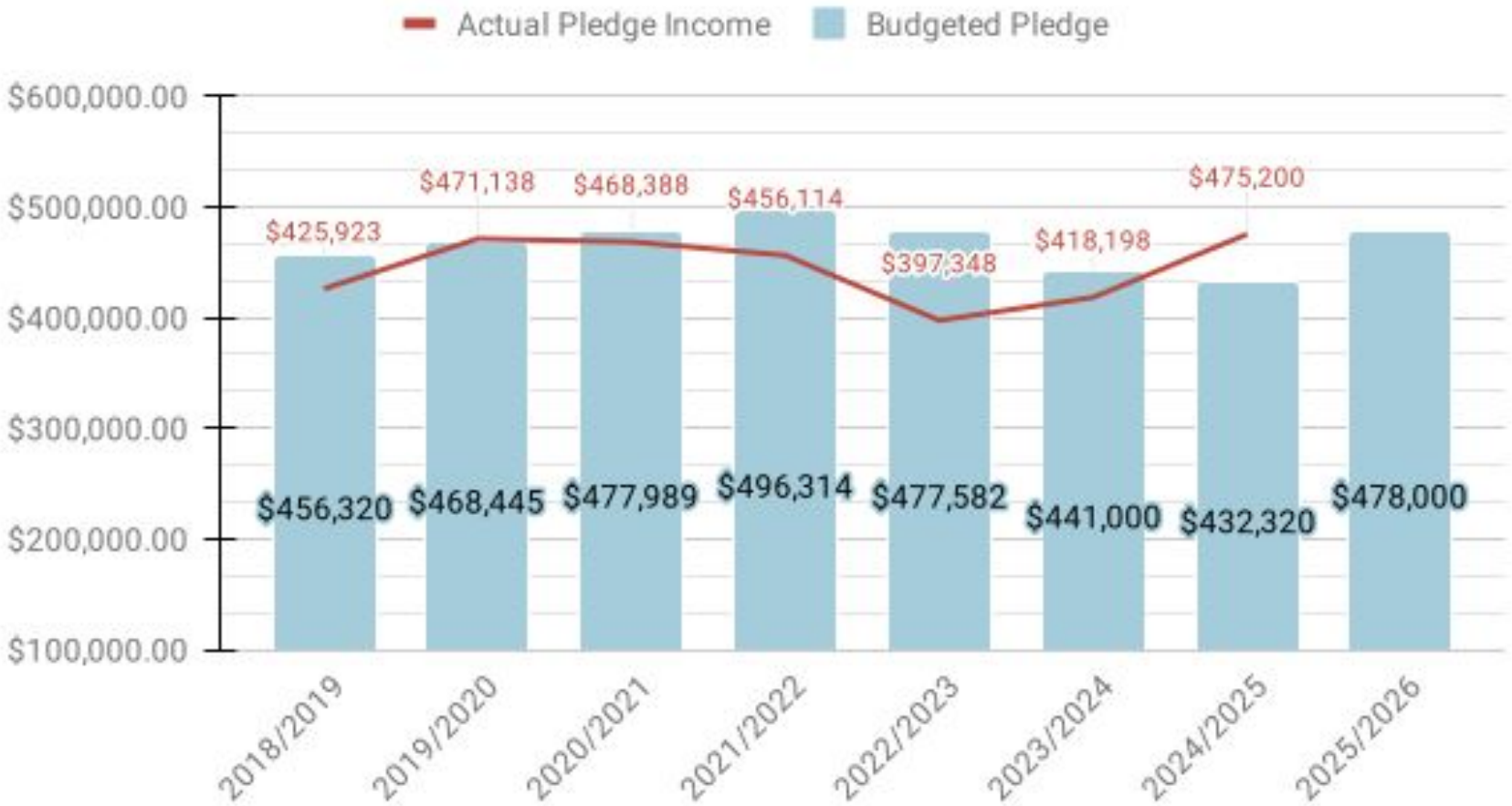
Budget Assumptions- 2025/2026- Board Proposed April

Income
Pledge Income of $478,000 (we are currently $11,686 short of this number)
Estimate of Unpaid Pledges at 2.5%
Share the Plate $2,000 less than last year
Rent Increases for both Elmwood Bldgs
$6,000 increase in Space Rentals - We are increasing rates and more rentals
First UU Trust Income - Now taking 5% instead of 4% of a much high balance
Fundraiser Income - Bazaar $5K, Auction $12K, Homestay $3K, Year End Appeal $1.5K
Distribution from First UU Trust Fund - amount needed to balance the budget ($17,953 or 1.8% of total budget)
Total Income Increase of 9%
Expense
Payroll & Benefits
2.5% COLA for all staff
Health Insurance 16% increase for 6 months
Director of Lifespan Faith Dev. increase $2,000 to move toward midpoint
Director of Operations & Finance increase $2,000 to move toward midpoint
Professional Development - Director level positions increased to 7% of salary from 6% - UUA Recommends 10%
Events & Scheduling Coordinator reduced hours based on hours worked in current year
Total Payroll & Benefits - 4% increase

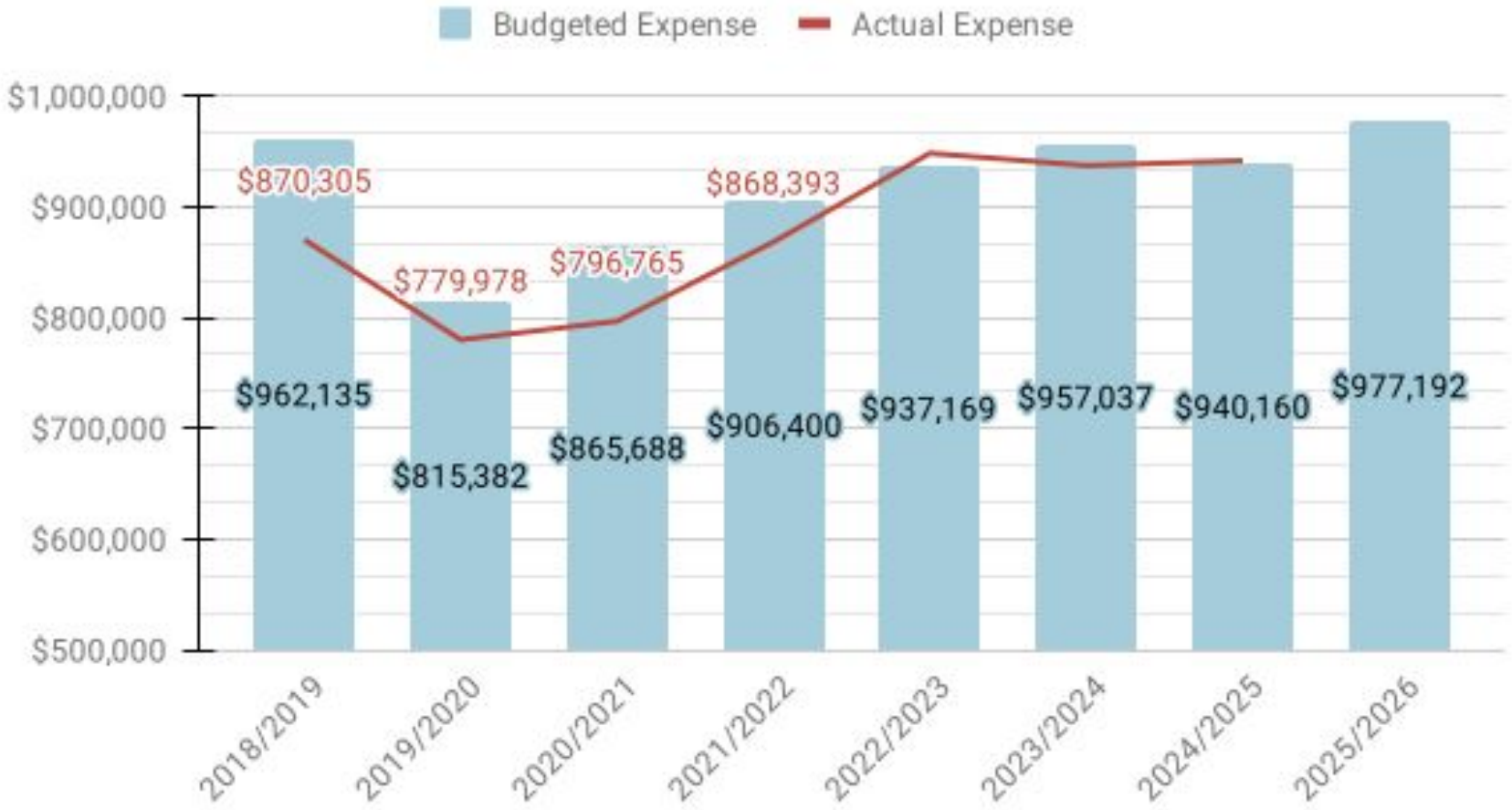
Budget Assumptions- 2025-26 (cont.)

Operating Expenses
Professional Assistance (computer systems)- 10% Decrease - Negotiated lower contract
Increase of 4% in Property Taxes
UUA Dues - UUA Request is $56,184 - budget is 53.4% of that or $30,000
Property & Liability Insurance Increase - 23%
Umbrella Insurance Increase 114% - first increase in over 20 years
Workers Comp Insurance Increase - 7%
Charge Card Fees Increase - 6%
Sabbatical Savings Line Item $5,000
Employee Assistance Program - $1,000
Total Operating Expenses - increase 7%
Building & Site Expenses
Total Utilities Increase of 9%
Total Meeting House Maintenance Increase of 2%
Parking Lot - increase 10% - Snow removal increase
Total Building & Site - increase 4%
Governance & Ministry
New line item - Music Costs to include licensing and virtual hymnal
Guest Worship Leaders - Decrease 19%, had added extra last year due to sabbatical
Share the Plate Expense decrease - 3%
New line item - Pastoral Visitors
Total Governance & Ministry increase - 4%
Total Expenses Increase of 4%

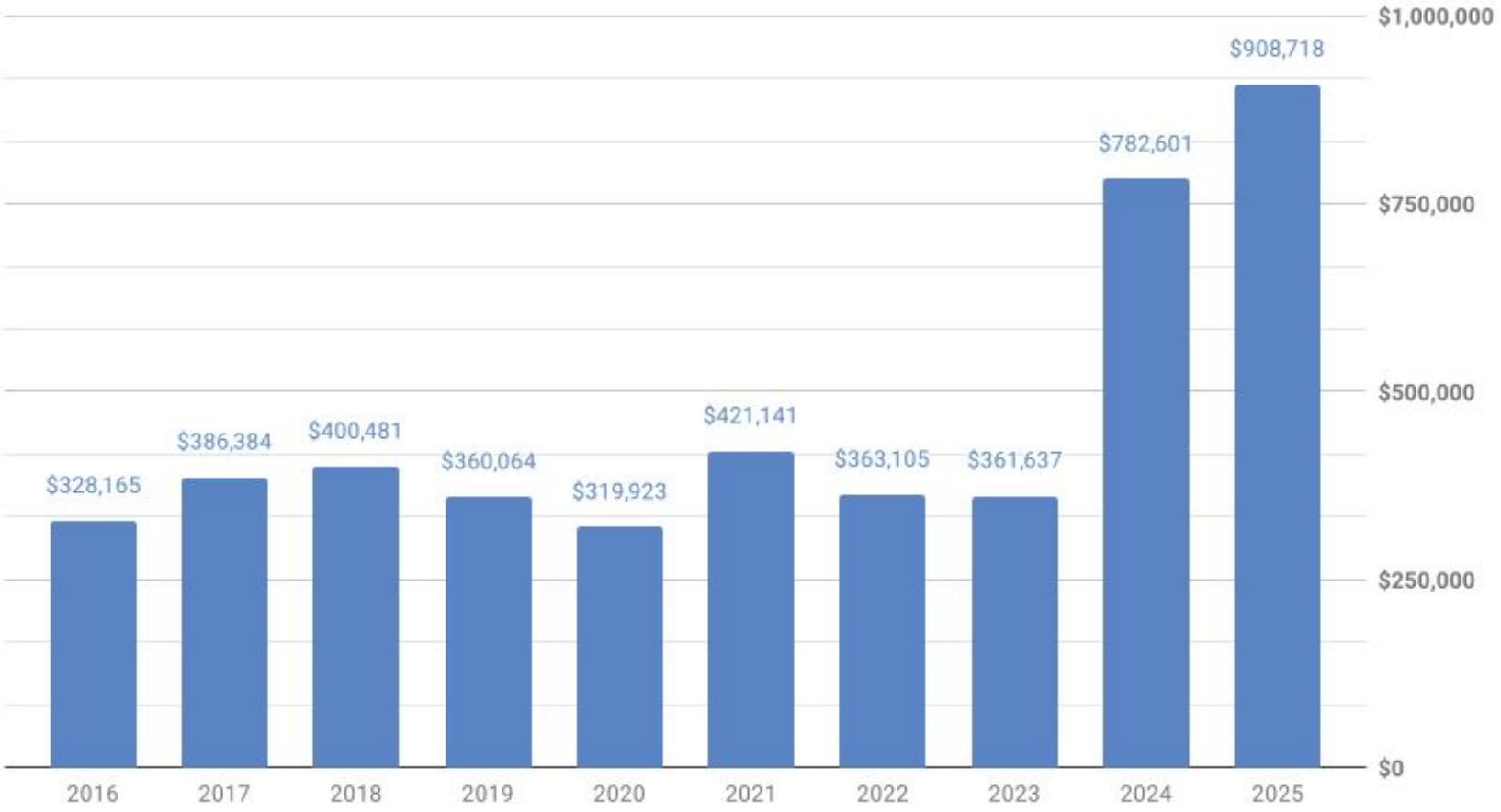
FUUSB Pledges - Budgeted vs Actual Pledge Income



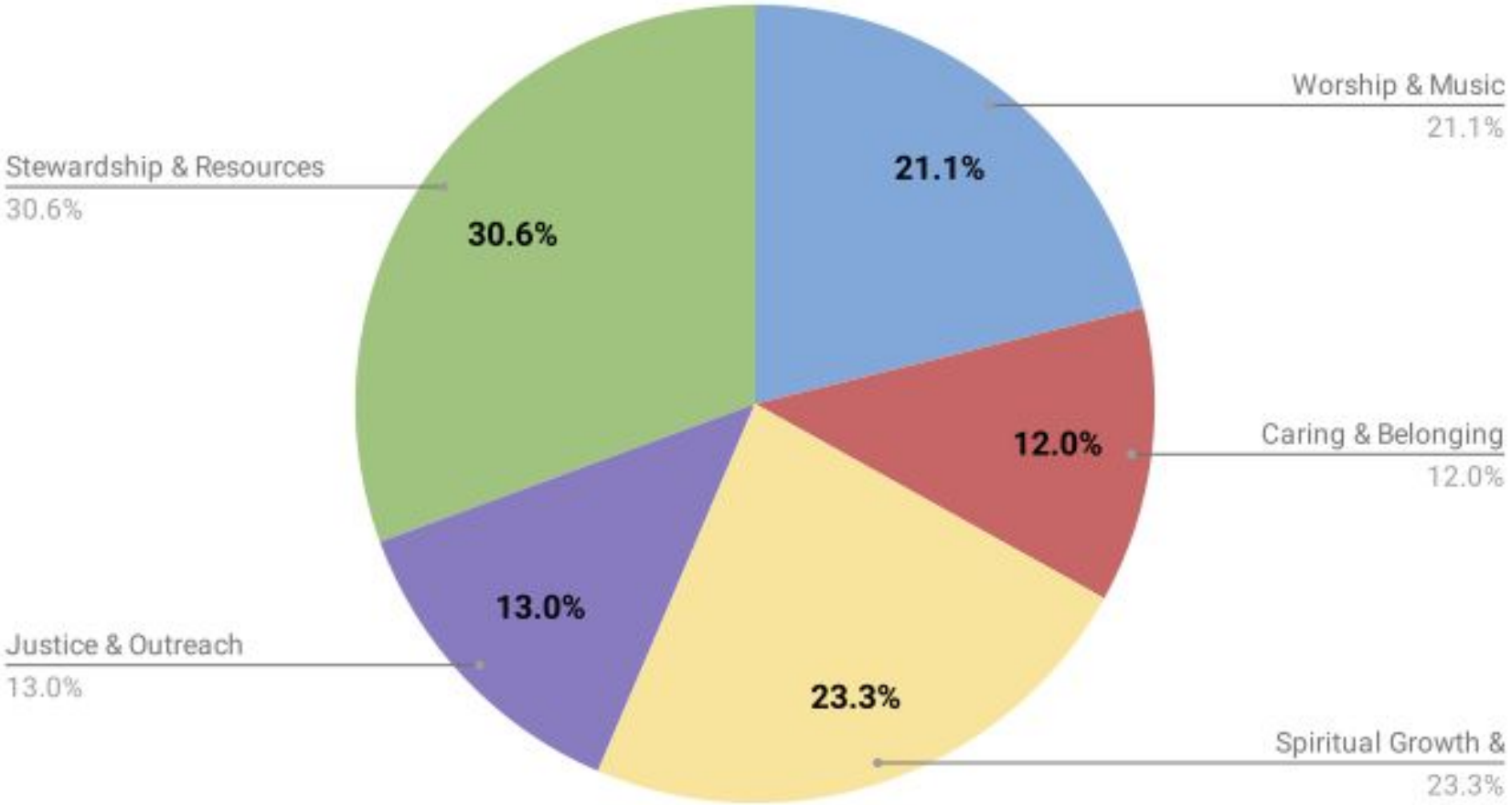
FUUSB Expenses - Budgeted vs Acutal



First UU Trust Balance



Program Budget 2025/2026



Report: Director of Lifespan Faith Development

The 2024-25 program year has been a vibrant one, marked by an increase in participation, successful experimentation with new types of programming, and responsiveness to the changing needs of our families. The overarching theme for children's programming was UU Identity and the core UU Values of Justice, Empathy, Transformation, Pluralism, Interdependence, and Generosity.

Highlights:

- **Growing Attendance:** Despite societal trends (fewer children as a proportion of the population, more competition from Sunday morning sports and extracurriculars, overscheduled families) average Sunday morning participation by children and youth in Faith Development programs increased by 33%: to 28 from 21 last year. Altogether, 76 children and youth were registered.

- **Family Chapel:** We continued the tradition of having children, youth, guides*, and parents begin the first Sunday of every month with child-centered worship in the Community Room. Our largest session had more than 70 people in attendance! This year's addition of a volunteer musician (thank you, Bill Barbot!) greatly enhanced the worship experience.
- **Chalice Choice Sundays** (12 Sessions): As a way to remain flexible when numbers and ages of participants were hard to predict, and in order to honor all ways of learning, not just those that happen while sitting quietly in a circle, we introduced these multi-aged sessions, which allowed participants to choose among several activity "choices" centered on the same overall theme.
- **Age-Based Exploration Groups** (18 Sessions): We started in the fall with adaptations of two newly-released curricula that center on the Core UU values. Children in mid-elementary and below continued with *Building UU Values* (original: *Lego ValUUes*) throughout the year while the older group completed the 8 sessions of *UU Values Challenge*. The older elementary children then began a multi-year focus on religious literacy with the *Bible Stories Plus* curriculum, while those in seventh grade and above became the YUUth group.

* "Guides" is the general term we use to refer to the adults who work with children and youth; it includes youth advisors, OWL facilitators, exploration group leaders and assistants and Chalice Choice guides.

- **YUUth Group** (10 sessions): Unlike other FUUSB YUUth groups of recent years, this group includes both middle and high school age youth and meets during the worship service. Because many of our older high school youth are employed by the congregation as tech or childcare staff during the service, in the spring, we added the “All-YUUth Lunch”, a monthly gathering well attended by 7th through 12th graders.
- **Our Whole Lives (OWL):** We offered two levels of the OWL comprehensive lifespan sexuality education curriculum this year. The younger section for 5th and 6th grades had 11 total sessions on Sunday mornings, 5 with simultaneous parent circles and supervised activities for siblings. The older section, for 7th and 8th grades met 28 times, mostly on Wednesday evenings.
- **Multigenerational Opportunities:**
    - Chalice Choice activities were frequently planned such that some of the stations would remain in the Community Room for multigenerational use during coffee hour. The most regular of these were the ongoing jigsaw puzzles and the UU Values collaborative coloring mosaic project, but people across the ages also participated in sand mandala making, musical circles and other one-time offerings.

    - Our only Game Night of the year was a hit,attended by more than two dozen congregants who included children, youth, young adults, middle-aged adults and elders.
    - 18 congregants attended the UU Weekend at Silver Bay, many of whom are already signed up for next fall, including as workshop leaders.
    - Last June's annual campout included more than 70 campers, and more than 30 are signed up for this year's so far.

- **Volunteers**: 28 core volunteers, some of whom have been serving in this capacity for five or ten years or more, made these programs a success. You know who you are!
- **Faith Development Support Team**: After several years without any team or committee involved in the work of children's faith development, we now have a small but mighty team of individuals supporting its programs.

Looking to 2025-26:

- We plan to continue the focus on core UU Values in the *Building UU Values* exploration group for our younger children. Older elementary aged children will continue the focus on religious literacy, moving from the *Bible Stories Plus* curriculum into the *Crossing Paths*, neighboring faiths curriculum, which places Unitarian Universalism within a broader context of world faith traditions and involves visiting other places of worship.
- We continue to track the now mostly middle school age youth who are attending, hoping to form a high school youth group for them that suits their needs and those of their families, rather than sticking to old models that may not. Current YUUth are hoping to work towards a Boston Heritage or similar trip in the future.
- We came close to deciding to stop providing childcare in the Nursery for infants and toddlers after years of very sporadic use, but a sudden increase in use this spring has led us to reconsider and plan to start the fall with nursery care, while continuing to assess whether it makes sense to continue.

- We are currently searching for a half time Faith Development Assistant and one or more adults as childcare providers.
- We hope to recruit more members of the Faith Development Support Team, while broadening the current members' knowledge of the programs so that they might eventually be able to advise as well as support the Faith Development Staff.

I am excited to continue learning and growing with the families we have now and welcoming new ones in the coming year!



Erika K. Reif
Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Report from FUUSB Responsible Behaviors Committee (RBC)

Our committee, which reports to the FUUSB Board, is drafting a Responsible Behaviors Policy for the FUUSB. Committee Members include Rev. Karen, Russ Charif, Jana Porter, Charlie Rathbone, Nancy Hellen and Kathy Stamper. We meet monthly. Our activities, thus far, have included reviewing RB policies adopted by other congregations to tease out resonant language while striving to craft a policy that is relevant to our unique congregation. We are pleased to share our *draft* Preamble.

Preamble

As a large congregation that works purposefully to maintain a healthy tension between freedom and responsibility, we aspire to help one another, yet are bound to sometimes hurt one another. Because we value free speech and self-expression in balance with community care; because we welcome all who are welcoming in all their beautiful diversity; and because we are human, we occasionally bend our covenant, even to the point of breaking it. This policy provides protocols and guidelines for how FUUSB leaders respond to incidents of harmful behavior within our community.

We write this policy in order to nurture congregational health. We aspire to provide a consistency of response that emphasizes fairness, not favoritism; that removes bias and personality from the response; that is grounded in our covenant and values; and that can provide guidance to our decision-makers. As a Unitarian Universalist community, we elevate our congregational covenant as a guide for all our choices and behaviors towards each other. Although we assume each other's good intentions, we also recognize that responsible behavior includes being accountable for the unintended impacts of our speech and actions. In the spirit of fostering responsible behavior within our shared community, this policy addresses various kinds of harmful behaviors.

Such behaviors include, but are not limited to, behaviors that are contrary to the 8th Principle that our community adopted in 2022 and the Shared Values of the Unitarian Universalist Association adopted in 2024. This policy provides ways to support our commitment to dismantling oppressive systems of which we may not be aware. Pain, fear, blame, guilt and resistance can arise when that oppression is brought to our attention. This policy is our rudder in these troubled waters, reestablishing both equilibrium and direction, reminding us that healthy change and growth are often preceded by discomfort. We hope it will help open us all to the opportunities of transformational spiritual growth, faith development, personal discovery, and the joy that such discomfort can portend.

Snapshot of UUA Certification 2025

- Members: 394
- Weekly Participation: 176-200
- Percentage of participation that is virtual: 55%
- Faith Development Enrollment: 26-50
- Percentage of Children & Youth Participation is Virtual: 2%

- Total pledge income: $418,198
- Total Number Pledging Units: 265
- UUA Annual Program Fund Contribution: $14,500
- Percentage of FUUSB Members & Friends who are
  - BIPOC: 1-4%
  - LGBTQI+: 10-24%
- Percentage of BIPOC
  - Staff: 6.4%
  - Board: 0%

Window Into Mission

Share the Plate: A Year in Review 2024/2025

Each Sunday we share half of our cash collection. Here are the organizations/programs and amounts that we shared our collection with in the past year.

May 2024	Diverse & Revolutionary Multicultural Ministries	$ 763.88
June	Chittenden Asylum Seekers Assistance Network (CASAN)	$1,274.08
July	Sheet Music Fund	$ 829.50
August	Outright Vermont	$ 830.00
September	Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)	$1,191.09
September 29th	UUA Disaster Relief Fund	$ 150.00
October 6th	UUA Disaster Relief Fund	$ 598.53
October	Northeast Farmers of Color Network (NEFOC)	$ 825.93
November	Chittenden Asylum Seekers Assistance Network (CASAN)	$1,594.00
December	Socially Responsible Santa	$5,307.00
December 24th	JUMP & Discretionary Fund	$6,188.02
January 2025	Intervale Center	$1,152.51
February	Richard Kemp Center - Sankofa Trip	$1,008.00
March	Migrant Justice	$1,265.07
March 23rd	Pink Haven Coalition	$ 316.27
April	350VT	$1,441.00
	Total	**$24,734.88**

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF BURLINGTON

May 20, 2025

Declaring that every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love and compassion, and following our congregation's visionary end to use for a Greater Good our power as a faith community in the Burlington, and living into our mission to care for each other and our community, we, the Board of the First Unitarian Universalist Society Burlington, enthusiastically endorse the establishment of an Overdose Prevention Center in Burlington, Vermont and urge those responsible to make haste in doing so.

The establishment of an Overdose Prevention Center is an asset to our home, our neighbors, ourselves, and our shared community. The establishment of such an asset aligns with our core values, declaring that

- we are all sacred beings, regardless of our relationship with addiction and recovery;
- the provision of this kind of intervention is medically-sound and evidence-based; and is a form of beneficial adaptation to a changing world; and
- the access to safety, treatment, and recovery that an Overdose Prevention Center offers affirms the interdependent nature of our existence: that the health of our community is strengthened by the presence of an Overdose Prevention Center in our midst.

FUUSB Board of Trustees

Sunday Morning Breakfast ~ Annual Report 2025

[content created by representatives of the Sunday Morning Breakfast Team]

Sunday Morning Breakfast is a weekly community meal shared 8-9 a.m. at the Meeting House. It is a practice inspired by the recognition of our shared humanity and our mission to care for each other and our community.

- As part of our intentional recognition of our shared humanity and the quality of relationship we want to cultivate, we use the term “neighbor” to refer to those who participate in the breakfast.
- At the first breakfast in October 2022, there were 6 volunteers and 20 neighbors.
- In 2025, we regularly have 20 volunteers and serve 45-100 neighbors!
- Range of attendance over the last year is 35-105

- Over the last year, an estimated 15 people were drawn to FUUSB through volunteering at Sunday Morning Breakfast. Several of them are becoming involved in FUUSB in other ways.

- Our efforts are being supported by local businesses who offer food donations. Regular donors include Poorhouse Pies, who regularly donate quiches, Black Cap Coffee on Church St, and the Shelburne Fieldhouse, who donates unused bagels and fruit after their events.

- We are thrilled that our neighbors have expressed gratitude for assistance in meeting their needs for food and clothing, and for the sense of community we work to cultivate as we provide seating and companionship along with the meal.

The Warning

Annual Meeting Warning

The congregation is warned that the **Annual Meeting** of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington will be held **Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 11:20 p.m.** The meeting will be held both in-person at the Meeting House and remotely via Zoom at this link: https://bit.ly/3GXjy6j . More information on how to participate will be emailed before the meeting date.

The following items of business will be voted on by the membership:

1. Accept the minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting, available online at uusociety.org/members/meeting-minutes.
2. Elect candidates for openings on the Board of Trustees, the Officers of the Society, the Nominating Team, and the Endowment Fund Team.
3. Vote on the proposed 2025/26 budget. A summary of the proposed budget is included with this warning and is also available online at uusociety.org/members/meeting-minutes.

People who signed the membership book as of 5/11/2025 and made a pledge and contribution of record in the last year are eligible to vote.

The following members have been nominated by the Nominating Team to be Officers:
Eileen Blackwood - President (2 year term, ending 2027)
Alana Shaw - Vice President (2 year term, ending 2027)
Susan Ogden - Secretary (currently an At Large Member, 2 year term ending 2026)

The following members currently on the Board of Trustees and approved by the Nominating Team:
Christine Hallquist - Trustee at large (3 year term, expiring in 2028)
Avery Hamill – Trustee at large (3 year term, expiring in 2028)
Stephen Rainville - Trustee at large (completing vacated term ending 2026)
Kim Watkin - Trustee at large (completing vacated term ending 2026)

Three nominees to serve on the Nominating Team:
Kameron McConnell (3 year term, ending in 2028)
Mark Power Freeman (3 year term, ending in 2028)

One nominee to serve on the Endowment Fund Team:
Jeb Spaulding (5 year term, expiring in 2030)

Nominees can be nominated from the floor with the prior consent of the nominee.

FUUSB Annual Meeting Agenda:
Sunday June 8, 2025

Call to order

Chalice Lighting - Gene Ashley

Confirm Quorum

Nomination and Election of Moderator

Recognise Major Milestones

FUUSB 2024/25 Slideshow

Approve Annual Meeting 2024 Minutes

Approve Slate

Approve 2025-2026 Budget

Presentation of Vision of Ministry and Board Goals

Recognition of Legacy Gifts

Justice Banner Unfurling

Chalice Extinguishing - Avery Hamill

Draft Annual Meeting Minutes from 2024

FUUSB 2024 Annual Meeting
10 June 2024 at 7pm
Via Zoom

Quorum present: A quorum of 49 members was reached and exceeded.

The Society Director of Operations and Finance, Christina Fulton started the meeting at 7:03, giving instructions on how to vote online.

Decisions made:

- 2023 Annual Meeting minutes approved.
- 2024-25 slate of nominees approved.

Opening: Rodney Lowe, the board president gave an introduction and welcome. Jeanne Parsley, as an elder of the congregation, lit a chalice and led us in speaking the opening words. Rodney authorized board vice president Eileen Blackwood to be the moderator. She immediately called on Rodney to give the president's report.

President's Report: Rodney cited his written report which had been made available earlier, highlighting certain items. He noted that the board had worked on governance practices with a consultant, and put much effort into preparing a budget for 2024-25, with love as a guide. Rodney thanked Susan Warner-Mills for her service on the board as she completed her term.

Draft Annual Meeting Minutes from 2024 (cont'd)

Jeb Spaulding MOVED to approve the minutes of the annual meeting from 12 June 2023. Andrew Douglas seconded the motion. The motion PASSED unanimously.

Minister's Report: Reverend Karen G. Johnson referred to her written report and provided highlights. She mentioned the many staff transitions this year, and the fact that staff were overstretched due to various challenges, chief among them being addiction and housing issues within our neighborhood. She noted that Christina will be taking a well-earned sabbatical, and a plan is in place to cover her responsibilities. Although we are facing a deficit budget, we are not alone. Many UU congregations and indeed congregations in other denominations are experiencing deficit budgets. Volunteers have also been stretched. Stewardship and the online auction should ideally be led by teams from the congregation, not the staff and board as was the case this year.

On a final note, Reverend Karen mentioned that Ohavi Zedek will be sponsoring an interfaith event to be held in our meetinghouse on June 23. It focuses on seeking peace in the Middle East.

Election of the Slate of nominees: The slate of nominees for the board and teams had been included with the warning for the meeting.

Jeb Spaulding MOVED and Wendy Coe seconded the approval of the slate. Beth Howard asked for some clarification, which Nina Dahlstead of the nominating team provided. It was also noted that Kim Watkin should have been listed as a new member of the Board, as Susan Warner-Mills was completing her term.

Draft Annual Meeting Minutes from 2024 (cont'd)

With that, the slate approved by the nominating team was as follows:

- New Member of the Board of Trustees: Kim Watkin for a 3 year term.
- Members of the Board of Trustees continuing for a 3 year term: Peter Clavelle, Kathy Stamper
- Treasurer for a 2 year term: Brian Haas
- Members of the Nominating Team: Nina Dahlstead (1 year term), Mark Power Freeman (1 year term), Sara Gold (2 year term), Marilyn Brill (3 year term), Bill Barbot (3 year term)
- Members of the Endowment Fund Team: Jason Cadwell (5 year term), Diana Kyser (2 year term)The MOTION to approve the slate of nominees PASSED unanimously.

Eileen welcomed the new officers.

Budget Approval: Christina Fulton shared her screen showing a list of budget assumptions. This compared the proposed 2024-25 budget that we would be voting on with the current year's budget. She gave a brief explanation of each line. There were a few notable changes. Income from church use is increasing thanks to the efforts of Erin Barbot. Trust fund income is increasing. A bequest of $450,000 was received recently. Caretaker hours are increasing due to the greater presence of folks with various issues using the property. The Employee Retention Tax Credit (ETRC) does not appear in the budget as we are still waiting for news
on our application. If received, we will discuss options for its use, such as augmenting the general fund. Christina then presented the proposed budget for 2024-25 that had been recommended by the board for consideration by the congregation. A spreadsheet detailing this budget had been included with the warning for the current meeting. The budget has a deficit of $29,000.

Rodney MOVED to adopt the budget as presented. Wendy Coe seconded the motion.

Draft Annual Meeting Minutes from 2024 (cont'd)

Kate Bove appreciated the clarity of the budget presentation. Tony Stamper expressed surprise at the high cost of credit card fees for folks donating that way. Christina responded that automatic payment can help with that. Dan York recommended that members be encouraged to pay the fees. Asked about plans to deal with the deficit, Christina mentioned that the expected ETRC funds would also help with that.

The MOTION to approve the budget PASSED unanimously.

Eileen Blackwood thanked everyone for their successful efforts to arrive at this budget.

Presentation on The Legacy Society: Jeb Spaulding noted the passing of three members of the Legacy Society during the past 12 months: Debbie Bergh, Jan Abbott and Sylvia Holden. We recently received the benefit of a bequest from the estate of Maggie Hayes. Membership in the Legacy Society is open to anyone who provides for FUUSB in their planned giving. The bequests we receive play a critical role in our long term budgeting, while our annual pledges serve the more immediate needs of the Society. The Legacy Committee currently consists of Jeb Spaulding, Woody Fulton, Nick Nixon, Janice Lang and Alex Hsieh. New members of the committee are welcome! Jeb thanked all Legacy Society members for helping the congregation to thrive, and noted that many were present at this meeting. He had sent thanks by email earlier, and asked for any Legacy Society members to let him know if they had not received this message.

Draft Annual Meeting Minutes from 2024 (cont'd)

Recognition of Delegates to the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly: Rodney reminded us that the General Assembly (GA) would be taking place virtually during June 20-23. Reverend Karen, Erika Reif, and Rowan Van Ness will attend as religious professional delegates. Our lay delegates so far are Geoffrey Duke, Woody Fulton, Roseanne Greco, and Rodney Lowe. There is room for more delegates and attendees. Christina Fulton, Zoe Hart and Kathleen Voight-Walsh will attend as non-delegates. Some events are available online to everyone without charge. Beth Howard asked how delegates consult the congregation concerning issues that they are voting on. Reverend Karen mentioned that she had joined Sarah Russell and Sami McRae in leading an online session about the upcoming GA.

Christina Fulton mentioned that we have also let our delegates vote their own conscience. Caitlin Waddick asked how she could get the list of names of our delegates. Rodney replied that they would be in the draft minutes of this meeting. Roseanne Greco mentioned that she aims to represent the congregation based on her knowledge and experience with us. Zoe Hart expressed willingness to listen to input from folks in the congregation, recognizing that it is a big job to follow all of the issues and try to reach everyone. Kate Bove expressed enthusiasm about looking into the delegate process. Christina replied that the number of delegates we have is based on the size of our congregation. More information is available at UUA.Org/GA. We have a scholarship fund that folks can apply to if that would help them to attend. Rodney expressed willingness to share his experience as a delegate. Sara Gold reported that she belongs to two congregations and her other congregation has sometimes taken a paper vote to inform their representatives.

Draft Annual Meeting Minutes from 2024 (cont'd)

Nina Dahlstead recommended that we could offer a presentation on the basics of attending GA. She and Wendy Coe described attending GA in person as a moving experience. Beth Howard felt the need for better communication within the congregation, especially so that newcomers feel included. She offered to help with this. Rodney agreed that we could do better and he would like to work on this; financial issues took precedence this year. David Call expressed thanks for the sessions he attended regarding GA and article 2.

Closing Prayer: Reverend Karen provided a brief prayer.

Extinguishing of Chalice: New member Raya Lele said the closing words.

The Year in Pictures


Surprise Postlude in Flannel Shirts & Bespoke Lyrics







UVM Interfaith Center: New Year Welcome



Board Retreat







Water Ingathering



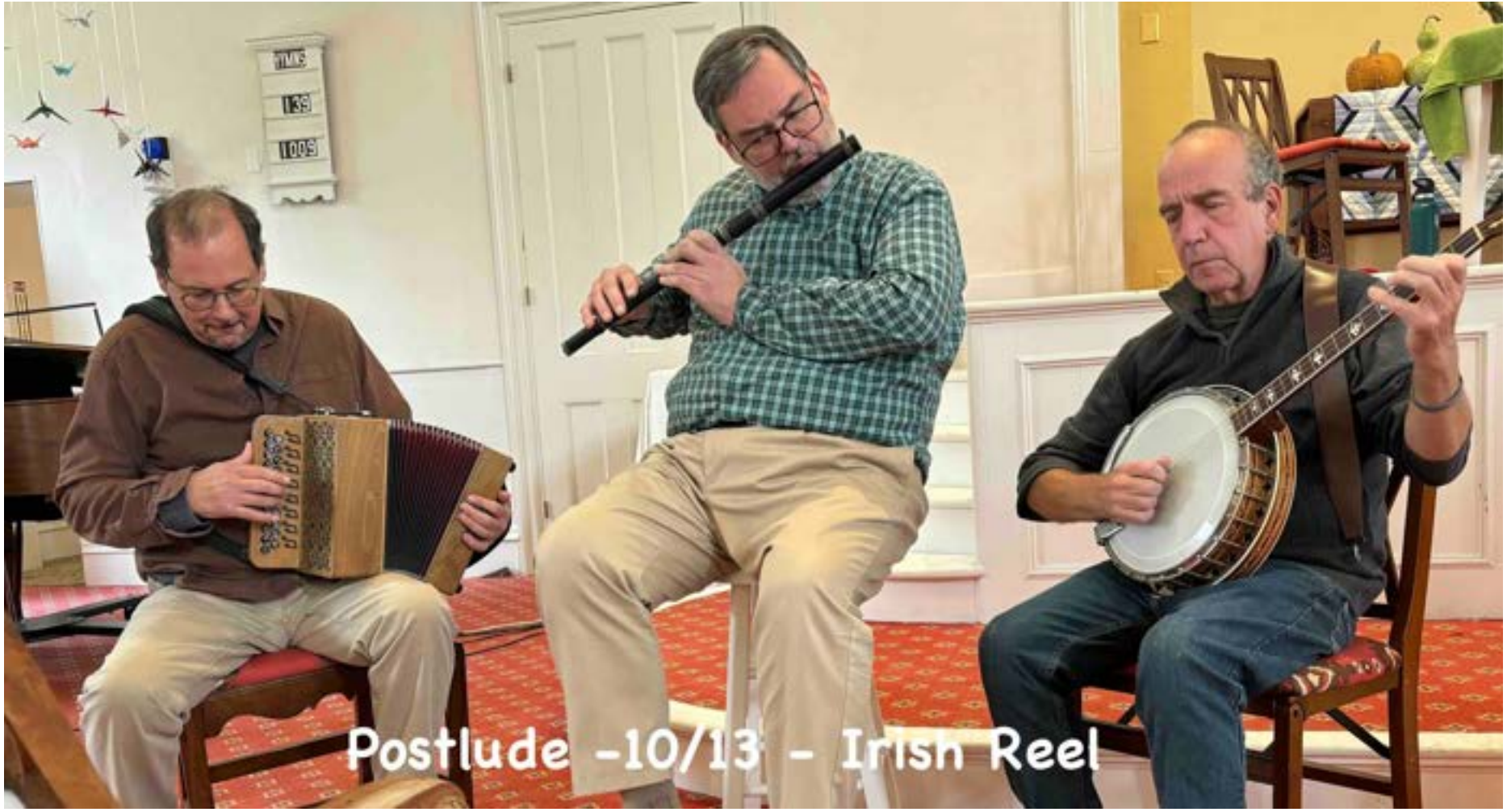




“A Waggle Dance of Invitation”


Christina is going on Sabbatical
HARRY CA
CHICAGO


HARRY CA
CHICAGO


Postlude -10/13 - Irish Reel





Q & A about Overdose Prevention Centers
with Ed Baker - 10/13/24



Guest Speaker, Ed Baker



BREAD
"COMMUNION"

TEAR
SOUP

OCT 27, 2024







Reimagine Together From An Extractive Age To A New Era

UU Climate Justice Revival | September 28-29, 2024




Joy Gems -
given out on
Sunday to help
remind us that joy
of community is
available


First Unitarian Universalist
Faith
TRust
Society Burlington



Election Day

Community Vigil









Solstice Celebration



FUUSB Staff Holiday Party Jan 2025

not everybody, but lots of us




Board Listening Session
JANUARY 2025
EXIT

Racial Justice Team Skit
January 19th



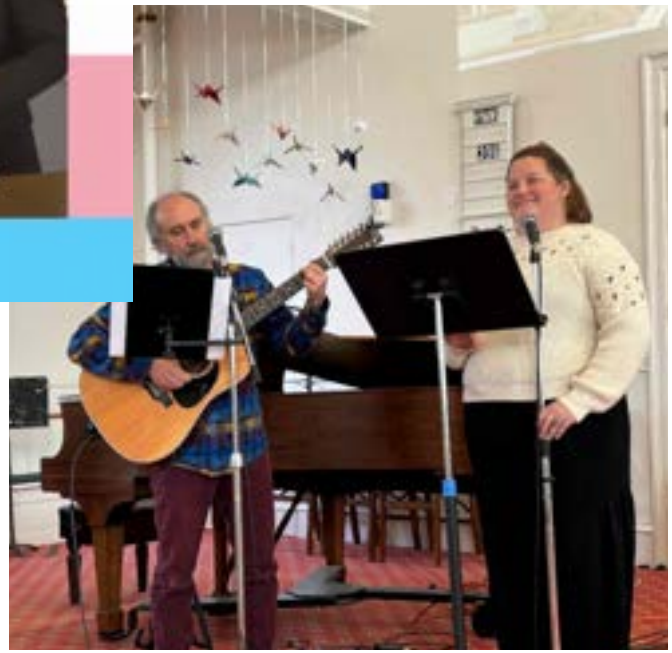




Just Love Gospel Concert







"Joy & Visibility of our Transgender Selves"









Faith Development


GOOD
Amplifying Good:
Telling Our Do Good Stories

Celebration Sunday


















Spring Auction Team
inviting folks to donate experiences & items
Auction Theme: NIGHT OUT AT THE RANCH
April 12, 2025


Full House on Easter
April 20, 2025