

**Unitarian Universalist
Congregation
at
Willamette Falls**



**Annual Report
2023-2024**

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Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls

710 Sixth Street, Oregon City, OR 97045

2023-2024 Board of Trustees

Moderator	Brian Fassett
Treasurer	Hal Stanley
Clerk	Scott Matthew
Trustee	Sheila Sullivan
Trustee	Elaine Cozart
Trustee	Jenny Ostergard
Vice Moderator	Terry Larson

July 2023 – Jan 2024

Minister

Rev. Marcia Stanard

Executive Team

Rev. Marcia Stanard, Chuck Smith, Richard Powell, Kirsten Reimert

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Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls

ANNUAL REPORT

May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024

- CONTENTS -

Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Congregation.....	4
Reports from Minister and Staff	
Minister’s Report.....	9
Director of Religious Education’s Report.....	11
Intern Minister’s Report.....	13
Office Administrator’s Report.....	14
Officer’s Reports	
Moderator’s Report.....	15
Executive Team.....	18
Committee Reports	
Aesthetics Team.....	18
Affiliated Ministers.....	19
A-Men (UUCWF Men’s Group).....	19
Bring an Object.....	20
Chalice Circle.....	21
CHANGES.....	21
Choir.....	22
Committee on Ministry.....	22
Day Timers.....	22
End of Life Matters.....	23
Facilities.....	23
Feed the Hungry.....	25
Finance Committee.....	26
Forum.....	26
H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Eat).....	27
Internship Committee.....	27
Landscape Task Group.....	27
Pagan Learning and Exploration Group.....	28
Second Sunday Second Hour.....	28
SON (Sheltering/Supporting Our Neighbors).....	28
Stewardship Team.....	28
Women’s Book Group.....	29
Worship Associates.....	29
Statistical Report.....	30
Covenant of Right Relations, Mission Statement and Vision Statement.....	31
Vision Statement – Detailed.....	32

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls Annual Meeting 2023

Held via ZOOM and in person
May 21, 2023

Welcome

Moderator Kate Jaspers opened the meeting with brief comments that we've rebuilt many of our former activities (we've returned to in person Time for All Ages and weekly RE classes, started fellowship dinners, and held an auction) and much is the same (we support each other, we value community, we build our space around a shared covenant, and we support it through our time and energy).

Chalice Lighting

Gerry Brown lit the chalice and Rev. Marcia Stanard read the opening words.

Call to Order

Kate Jaspers called the meeting to order at 12:15 PM.

Appoint Parliamentarian

Joyce Tischler was appointed as the parliamentarian for the meeting.

Voting Protocols

Kate Jaspers explained that voting would be done in three ways: 1) Members in the Sanctuary would raise their hands. Kate Jaspers and Rev. Marcia Stanard would count those votes. 2) Members on ZOOM would vote by a show of hands either by raising a hand or using the hand icon. Clerk Linda Roberson and Amy O'Brien would count those votes. 3) Several members mailed in or recorded their votes on paper ballots.

Agenda Review

Kate Jaspers noted that the four items of business for voting are:

- 1) Approval of the Minutes
- 2) Approval of nominations for next year's Board of Trustees
- 3) Approval of nominations for next year's Nominating Committee
- 4) Approval of the 2023-2024 Budget

Confirm Quorum

Linda Roberson (Clerk) confirmed a quorum, (we needed 51 members) based on those attending in person, on ZOOM, and by absentee ballot.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting were read and overwhelmingly approved.

Acknowledgement of Milestones

Rev. Marcia Stanard shared that we have 14 new members:

Tom Crancer
Jo Cunningham
Sara Forrest
Taylor Forrest
Donna La Main
Jessi La Main
Yvonne Lyles
Erin Olsen
Rachel Sitler
Chris Plaisted
Jean Stewart
Robert Thornhill
Lisa Westapher
Tricia Wood

a birth: Ari Joseph Wolf,
and 4 deaths:

Richard Bellingham
Skyler Freeman
Jacqueline Griffith
Horace Nealey

Board Slate for 2023-2024

Jen Dadek presented the slate:

Brian Fassett, Moderator
Terry Larson, Vice-Moderator
Hal Stanley, Treasurer
Scott Matthew, Clerk
Sheila Sullivan, Trustee
Jenny Ostergard, Trustee
Elaine Cozart, Trustee

Chuck Smith moved to accept the slate and Joan Young seconded. There was no discussion. The slate was approved overwhelmingly.

Nominating Committee Slate

Carol Brownlow presented the slate:

Kate Jaspers (new 2-year term)
Carol Brownlow (continuing)
Jennifer Dadek (continuing)

Joe Dadek moved to accept the slate and Marina McIntire seconded. There was no discussion. The slate was approved overwhelmingly.

Presentation and Adoption of the Budget for 2023-2024

Chuck Smith presented the budget noting that we had a strong stewardship campaign resulting in 2 ½ % less than last year, but still above the prior year.

The overall budget is \$352,000 and stewardship is \$256,000.

There is an increased amount of fundraising in this budget to cover a music director and ¼ of the salary for a new Intern.

Kate Jaspers noted that one of the causes of the shortfall is the loss of rent from Folk Time, who closed their program at our location.

Kate noted that the budget does not fully cover reinstatement of a musical director and maintaining our full fair share of UUA dues. Only 90% of our fair share is covered. There is hope that the shortfall can be covered with additional fundraising.

Marina McIntire moved to accept the budget and Howard Nichols seconded.

Discussion ensued and included:

- 1) The proposed additional fundraiser is in addition to the auction and is not defined yet. Auction proceeds go to the general fund, except the paddle raise, which is a designated fund.
- 2) Concerns were expressed about not meeting UUA fair share. UUA supports services, minister credentialing, ministerial searches, congregational life support, and curriculum. Rev. Marcia explained what UUA dues are, how they are charged, and noted that we can still participate in programs and vote even if we are not full fair share. Rev. Marcia said we would take targeted donations for UUA dues, the Music Director, or the Intern.
- 3) We could make payments by quarter to target raising the additional funds by the fourth quarter in the fiscal year.
- 4) We could have another supplemental pledge drive in late summer or early fall to capture some of the new members/friends.
- 5) We could host music events.
- 6) Other historical fundraisers include rummage sale, holiday bazaar and special events.
- 7) There has been no response to prior job postings for a music director.
- 8) Could we get a grant from Chalice Lighters or NW Cascadia Growth Fund? Floyd

Roell and Sally Betzer are our liaison to Chalice Lighters, Marcia is on the Board of NW Cascadia Growth Fund and Richard Powell is their treasurer. They will research options and report to the Board.

- 9) Current assets are approximately 65K-70K in Vanguard, 20K in checking, and 20K in savings. Our goal is to always maintain three months of expenses in cashflow.

Marina McIntire called for the question. Joan Young seconded, and the budget passed overwhelmingly with some dissent.

Recognition of All Volunteers:

Richard Powell recognized volunteers including:

Landscape Crew

Auction Committee

2nd Sunday volunteers

Ushers

Worship Associates, special musicians, camera and Zoom assistants

RE Volunteers

Internship Committee

Facilities Committee

Pastoral Associates

Stewardship Team

HOPE, Feed the Hungry, and SON

Social and support group leaders

Nom Com, Board of Trustees and Executive Team

Unsung Heroes:

Rev. Marcia Stanard recognized:

- Jen Dadek, who made the UUCWF tote bags.
- Bev Koch, who works on the grounds every week and leads the 3rd Saturday grounds crew.
- Emily Booth and Michael Matsumura who started a preschool class when the nursery was over capacity.
- Cay Borduin who ran the software at the auction.
- Yvonne Lyles for leading the auction and coordinating the Ukrainian family program.
- Shelly Sage, who makes everyday a party and ran the auction party and dinner.
- Jim Ammeson for running the Monday pick-up for the HOPE food pantry
- Eini Lowell for being a long-time RE volunteer
- Jessie La Main for being helpful with the music program

Affiliated Ministers:

Rev. Marcia Stanard recognized:

- Rev. Emily Brault, the Chaplain at Coffee Creek Women's Correctional Facility
- Rev. Kate McGraw who works with Providence Elder Place

Outgoing Board and ET Members:

Rev. Marcia Stanard recognized outgoing board members:

- Ellen Stines, who has been a voice for the Music Program and Choir
- Maggie Reed, who moved to Sequim, WA
- Linda Roberson, Clerk
- Kate Jaspers, outgoing moderator, for being a champion for justice, equity and inclusion and for widening the circle.

Closing Words:

Kate Jaspers is grateful to have had the chance to work with this congregation on justice issues and is grateful to the leadership for the fun and friendship of working together.

Adjourn

Marina McIntire moved to close the meeting. Kate Jaspers adjourned the meeting at 1:16 PM.

Extinguish the Chalice

The chalice was extinguished.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Roberson, Clerk

Annual Minister's Report

Rev. Marcia Stanard

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls has been thriving this year in many ways. Our regular attendance is at our highest numbers in over 4 years, and we celebrate the incredible number of children and youth who attend our Religious Education classes each week—giving us the honor of having the best ratio of children & youth to members in a Unitarian Universalist Congregation in the state—and one of the best in the country! We are gearing up for our 100-year celebration of our beloved building in September, with work parties that are sprucing up our church home and grounds, and we are grateful to Michael and Linda Roberson, Bev Koch, and all who are showing up and helping!

Our board, led by Moderator Brian Fassett and including Scott Matthew, Hal Stanley, Sheila Sullivan, Jenny Ostergard and Elaine Cozart have been working this year on some complicated, long-term projects, including striking a balance between supporting our unhoused neighbors and supporting our renters, the Oregon City Cooperative Preschool, who have struggled with feeling safe. We've currently put up "no camping" signs at the entrances near the preschool so if the school calls the police non-emergency line, they can ask folks to move along. This has been a challenging conversation for many of us, but we are doing our best to balance competing needs.

Our Executive Team has also worked hard this year on several projects, including the budget and getting our Vanguard account under our control by updating our information and signers (way more complicated than one would expect. Thank you Kirsten who worked so hard on this.) Another enormous challenge this year has been our building insurance. Due to the age and valuation of our building, our current insurer refused to renew our building insurance, and the only bid we've received went from last year's \$13,000 to \$55,000. We've looked diligently for another company, and haven't been successful so far, though we continue to reach out to brokers. Despite these challenges, Chuck Smith, Richard Powell, and Kirsten Reimert have been a joy to work with and I'm so grateful for their faithful presence and creative ideas.

I continue to be profoundly grateful for our excellent staff. Mary Kroner-Ekstrand, our DRE has faithfully continued to guide a program that serves more children and youth as a percentage of membership than any other UU program in the state. This year, we've just hired our third nursery worker as we sometimes have 8 or 9 babies and toddlers in that class! We also offer classes for preschoolers, K-3rd graders and 4-6th graders. We offer OWL sexuality education class to our Junior High youth group and a separate high school youth group.

Vivian Brockett has served as our office administrator for nearly three years now, and that consistency has helped our systems tremendously. She's dedicated and talented

and we're lucky to have her. Barb Pitney, our long-time bookkeeper, keeps our bills paid and our finances in shape. Amy O'Brien and Sojourner Lang handle our tech needs and issues and make sure the experience of those watching both on Zoom and in the sanctuary is as good as possible. We began the year with Howard Ashley as our accompanist and John Paul Labno as our music director. Both enjoyed their time with us but left for other opportunities in January. We were so fortunate that Ashlee Brouillette was available to come back and play piano and direct the choir again. We've so enjoyed her lively and warm presence with us again.

We are grateful to have Mary Ellen Morgan serve as our Intern Minister this year. She brought lots of experience in Unitarian Universalism to her time with us, and greatly benefited from our healthy congregational culture. Mary Ellen traveled up to be with us about 5 days each month, and is going to do a different half-time internship next year, closer to her home, which should serve her learning needs better. We are grateful to her for being the driving force behind our new Chalice Circle, and for offering pastoral care by Zoom each Tuesday.

I am finishing my ninth year as your minister. I love this congregation and this ministry, but I am needing to take a break. Ministers accrue a month of Sabbatical time for each year we serve a congregation, and generally take a 4-7 month sabbatical sometime between year 4 and year 7. Unfortunately, year 5 coincided with a global pandemic, and so I've only taken two, single-month sabbaticals. I will be taking a four-month sabbatical next year, from January through April of 2025. This timing will have me here for our 100-year celebration and the anticipated bump in attendance after that. I am looking forward to rest and renewal, and returning to a re-energized congregation. I hope to be your minister for several more years, and this break will enable me to continue refreshed and re-inspired.

As always, I am so grateful to be your minister. I am happy to offer pastoral care, or help with discernment as to how you'd like to be involved. UUCWF needs all of us to thrive.

Warmly, Rev. Marcia Stanard

Annual Religious Education Report

Mary Kroener-Ekstrand

I am now completing my eighth year serving as your half-time Director of Religious Education. This church year, we were finally able to return to regular weekly RE programming for our children and youth after three years of COVID 19 related disruptions. Hooray! While we haven't quite returned to the pre-pandemic numbers of enrolled children and youth or volunteers, we have grown significantly, and I believe that there is a healthy engagement, energy, and vibrancy in our RE program and our congregation more generally.

This congregation really does seem to delight in our children and youth, and I believe that this warm welcome comes across to visiting families every Sunday and is a real driver of growth for UUCWF. In a recent presentation on "The State of UU Religious Education," Lauren Wyeth, a member of the UUA Congregational Life Staff, said that at this time, "Folks need places where their whole family is welcome and valued, where they can all show up authentically and bring their gifts; they are looking for nurturing, welcoming, relaxed spaces where community care and radical welcome are the focus." I believe that many new families are finding these things here in our congregation. Thank you to all of the members and friends of this congregation who contribute to this inclusive, multigenerational, nurturing atmosphere within our community!

Highlights of our RE Program offerings this year included...

Sunday Morning RE: Our 15 teacher volunteers and 3 nursery staff served 70 registered participants and many visitors in our RE groups for nursery-12th graders. Typical attendance on any given Sunday was about 30-35 in September and climbed to about 40-45 young people. According to our attendance records, about 100 individuals signed in to RE at least once, 93 came twice or more, and I would estimate that we have about 65 children and youth attending quite regularly.

Regional UU Events: We participated in 2 Willamette Valley cluster high school and middle school youth events this year. Sadly, our UU regional staff have announced that they will no longer be planning and running these CONs as they did in the past, so I am uncertain how many opportunities for these programs will be available to us in the coming year. I would be happy to discuss this in more detail with anyone who is interested in learning more about sustaining opportunities for youth connections to the larger UU movement in the face of this challenging environment. (Hint: we would need a lot more volunteer support).

OWL Program: We engaged 6 junior high youth in a comprehensive sexuality education class. This is an important and powerful ministry, and I am so proud that our congregation continues to support this offering. Our trained OWL facilitators and I are discussing the possibility of expanding our OWL offering next year to add another age level of this lifespan

curriculum. This has long been a goal of mine, and I sincerely hope we can bring it to fruition in the coming church year. Stay tuned for more information coming in the fall once we work out the details.

Special Worship Programs: I worked with Rev. Marcia and our ministerial intern Mary Ellen on several multigenerational services throughout the year including the Water Communion, Christmas Pageant, and the upcoming Transitions and Flower Communion Service. I also supported our Senior Youth team in planning their Youth Led worship service in April.

Social Events: While running family events is officially outside of the scope of my limited staff hours, our volunteers make a sincere effort to create opportunities for children and families to connect beyond Sunday morning RE. Most RE classes have had at least one social event during the church year, and parent volunteers Lisa Westapher, Emily Booth, and Cindy Metcalf have planned special events for children and families several times, which have really helped to build connections between and among children, parents, and our congregation.

Gratitudes

As always, I would like to offer deep thanks to our wonderful crew of volunteer RE leaders. They dedicate many hours and offer such loving and dedicated service to the children and families of our congregation. This year, the following folks served our community:

Teacher Council: Brenda Koehler, Brooke Scherlie

Nursery: Elli Dadek, Gwen Dadek, Brianna Grady

Orange Group: Michael Matsumura, Emily Booth, Margeve Horgan

Yellow Group: Erin Hughes, Brenda Koehler, Angie Koehler

Blue Group: Brooke Scherlie, Dan Tuggle

7-8th grade OWL: Greg Penner, Ron Skoletsky, Jen Dadek, Tammy Ashney

Senior Youth: Annie Pullar, Sara Forrest, Cliff Haithcock

In addition, I would like to offer appreciation to our paid staff Nursery Caregivers:

Nursery Supervisor: Fran Wicklin

Nursery Caregivers: Hanna Gorkovenko served throughout the church year, and I am happy to report that we hired Wendy Lee in April of 2024 to serve our growing nursery population.

In closing, I am grateful for the ongoing opportunity to serve this congregation as your Director of Religious Education. We have been through some challenging years together, and it is gratifying to reflect on the deep connections that we have made and the important work that we are doing together partnering with families to help live into our shared values and navigate this complicated world.

Respectfully Submitted, Mary Kroener-Ekstrand

Intern Minister's Report

Mary Ellen Morgan

Dear UU Congregation of Willamette Falls,

I am ending my year with you as your intern minister, a time for which I am profoundly grateful. You have been so gracious to me as I have learned to run a complete service, something I have never done before. I have been impressed with your hospitality, warmth and inclusion and can see why this congregation has survived and thrived since 1844. You are the recipients of a rich legacy, one that I am proudly watching you lovingly navigate.

I cannot leave you without extending personal thanks to Rev. Marcia Stanard for her thoughtful, loving supervision. She has probed my personal theology, challenged me to extend my theological scope and walked beside me all the way. You are blessed to have her as a minister.

The staff here is stellar! Thank you to Ashlee, Amy and Sojourner for setting a solid foundation for Sunday mornings. And your dedicated Worship Associates add so much to the Sunday service. It became a collaborative effort. I could relax on Sunday mornings because they do their jobs so well.

Vivian was right there every time I had a question or needed support for a class or project, she is so organized and will see things I've missed. Barb has so much institutional memory, you may need to download her brain if she ever decides to leave, not that you should ever let that happen. And Mary is the Director of Religious Education you dream of having when you someday have your own church. I have learned much watching them serve this church.

Thank you to the Board, Executive Team, Stewardship and Finance Committees for welcoming me into their circles. It's always questionable whether a new person will fit in, but everyone just assumed I would.

Let me thank my Internship Committee; Kate Grant, Wiley Swogger, Donna Rayne La Main, Diana Antoniskis and Marina McIntire. Their support and gentle guidance has been a blessing to me this year.

Lastly, let me say that I will carry you all with me as I go off into my own ministry. The people who let me sit with them in pastoral care, the widow who trusted me with her husband's memorial service, Tim and Kathy Collins who trusted me to create Chalice Circles here, Richard and Lisa Powell who invited me into their home and all of you who stopped to give me feedback after a sermon. Blessings on you all, and I look forward to visiting and maybe preaching here again someday!

-Mary Ellen Morgan

Annual Office Administration Report

Vivian Brockett

In June, I pass the milestone of serving this congregation as Office Administrator for three years. With that experience comes confidence beyond the simplest duties of my position. Much of my day-to-day work is still handling the basic functions of our office, such as tracking pledges, drafting announcements, maintaining our web presence and building calendar, and general correspondence. However, with some longevity under my belt I am contributing in new ways. Last summer, I designed a general UUCWF brochure, which turned out great and has already been a useful resource for new visitors. When committee and team leaders ask me for informed opinions regularly, I realize that I have developed institutional knowledge that would have been hard to fathom when hired in 2021. Our annual stewardship campaign, in particular, feels like second nature now. My working relationships with Rev. Marcia and the rest of the staff are broken-in, yet solid-as-ever. Time flies!

It will come as no surprise to any member that much of the staff's focus has been on our physical building. I correspond with Facilities Chair Michael Roberson regularly, often providing clerical support for our restoration efforts as the main "soft skills" person present during the week. I also work with the 100-year committee, hoping to both execute an apt celebration as well as to make use of the occasion to bolster our future. On that note, I am working hard to secure more wedding bookings, and improve on this year's total of three. More frequently, I book and coordinate memorial services, an aspect of my job I find deeply fulfilling. A more difficult part of my job this year has been finding a balance with our houseless neighbors. While I staunchly advocate that we do not criminalize houselessness, unfortunate and specific circumstances have demonstrated that we cannot approach this issue in a vacuum.

Looking to next year, I hope to continue to expand the scope of what I do for UUCWF. Particularly, I hope to centralize communication about our offerings beyond Sunday services for our newest members and visitors who seek purposeful community.

It continues to be a great honor to work for this community that is so generous and kind. I am deeply grateful to feel so ensconced in this position.

Respectfully submitted,
Vivian Brockett, Office Administrator

Annual Moderator's Report

Brian Fassett

2023-2024 Goals

During our board's annual planning retreat in August 2023, we reviewed last year's annual goals, reflected on our progress toward them, and decided to build on that momentum and work that has been done in the last year. We gratefully acknowledged all of the efforts of past board members, as well as the members and friends who volunteer, and our dedicated staff, for all the work that goes into keeping this congregation, and building going. We, as the board, decided to focus on three shared goals in the coming year, including:

1. Strengthening community connections
2. Celebrating 100 years in the building and 175 years in the community
3. Continuing to focus on accessibility and inclusivity

We recognized that communication would be an important part of achieving all three of these goals, so we committed to extra efforts focused on communication in the coming year. We also decided to read and discuss the book *Serving with Grace: Lay Leadership as a Spiritual Practice* by Erik Walker Wikstrom throughout the coming year for guidance and inspiration.

Board Goal 1: Strengthening Community Connections

Though our church and congregation have been in the community for decades, we are not as well-known as we would like to be. We reflected gratefully on the efforts in the last year to re-open and re-start many of the cherished activities and traditions we all enjoyed pre-pandemic, but acknowledged that our attendance was not yet back to pre-pandemic levels. So, our first goal focused on efforts we can undertake to become better known in the larger Oregon City area. Opportunities to do this included:

- a. Participating in local and regional community events like fairs and parades
- b. Direct outreach efforts
- c. Hosting events at the church
- d. Proactive communication plans

The board is grateful for the research and coordination efforts from Jenny Ostergard in identifying and outlining opportunities to get the word out about the church. We had a number of church members and staff participate in the Oregon City Pride event in September of 2023 that has resulted in many new visitors and guests attending the church. We identified parade opportunities in Oregon City and West Linn, fairs in West Linn and Gladstone, and holiday celebrations in Oregon City to participate in. We are also grateful to note that our regular attendance has come back to pre-pandemic numbers over the course of this last year.

Board Goal 2: Celebrating 100 years in the building

The cornerstone for the church building was laid in September of 1924, and the dedication of the building occurred in February of 1925. We see this as a unique opportunity to celebrate the 100th year of our building, the 180th year of our presence in Oregon City, and increase awareness and support in the community. To do this, a dedicated committee led by Richard Powell was formed to generate ideas, lead activities, and prepare for the celebration. The committee has:

- a. Designed a logo, poster and t-shirts
- b. Planned a week of celebratory activities
- c. Held fundraising events
- d. Coordinated with the facilities volunteers to spruce up the building

Special thanks to Richard Powell and Dolores Heard for all the efforts put in thus far. Thanks to Michael Roberson and the facilities volunteers for all the work that has gone into repairing the building to prepare for the celebration. We will be counting on everyone to continue helping us prepare and help us celebrate this momentous milestone in September.

Board Goal 3: Continuing to focus on accessibility and inclusivity

The goal for accessibility and inclusivity was meant to complement the efforts started last year, as well as the efforts of the 100 Year Committee, and the Facilities volunteers to ensure we have an accessible and welcoming space for members and guests. But, we faced a number of unexpected challenges in the last year that took more time, attention, and financial resources than anticipated. Those included:

- A budget shortfall and the loss of our largest renter
- Recurring issues with our houseless neighbors
- The loss of both of the music staff at the same time
- The loss of the Intern Minister partly due to lack of funding
- A board seat vacancy, and a lack of a Nominating Committee to fill it
- Ongoing and urgent facilities needs including multiple roof leaks and electrical issues

So, we have not made as much progress as we would have liked to in this third goal area. Even with these challenges, Reverend Marcia continues to remind us that the number of weekly attendees at the Sunday service is at, or above pre-pandemic numbers, and we have one of the largest Religious Education (RE) programs in the area, both of which bode well for our congregation.

Financial status

Our board, with the expert guidance from our Treasurer Hal Stanley, the Finance Committee, and the Executive Team (ET) keep a very close eye on our financial health as a congregation. Hal Stanley has also started a reserve study for us, to help us better

manage the long-term financial health of the congregation. Despite all their great guidance, it has been a challenging year for a number of reasons:

- Last year's budget was based on some fundraising activities that didn't come to fruition
- Multiple roof leaks and urgent/emergency roof inspections and repairs
- Our dish sanitizer quit, requiring us to use disposable dishes and flatware
- A significant floor repair in the basement
- Electrical repairs after a power outage
- Roof and heater issues at the parsonage (preschool)
- A property insurance increase of 400 percent
- The loss of our largest renter (Folk Time)

The board endeavors to meet the urgent/emergent needs of a 100-year-old building and a lively congregation while staying financially sound. Not an easy task. These challenges were met with great generosity and grace by the congregation. So far, in the last year, we received a very generous dedicated donation to replace the roof. We also received a donation to replace the dish sanitizer. We have received hundreds of in-kind hours of donated labor by the facilities volunteers – Michael and Linda Roberson, Tom Crancer, and others as well as the landscape volunteers led by Bev Koch. Our stewardship drive exceeded expectations, and we have some new renters that are making up part of the lost rental income – Folk Time has returned in a limited capacity, and we host new sobriety groups. While Folk Time is applying for grant funding to return in full, attracting more renting groups is still an important priority.

The board conducted a visioning activity this year at the suggestion of a member of the church who casually asked a board member what our vision for the church was in the future. Left without an immediate answer, the board came together to discuss this, and to share goals, ideas, and dreams. That led to the realization that the board and staff, and surely the larger congregation, has lofty and diverse goals for this congregation. More on this in the coming year, as we want to involve the congregation in this process too.

Gratitude

I want to close with some gratitude for this wonderful community that I get to be part of. As the moderator of the board, I have a different vantage point than I did before and want to appreciate the 100 year committee – Richard Powell leading the effort while also serving on the ET, and Dolores Heard for loving this building and congregation for so many decades. For Bev Koch for leading monthly landscaping, cleaning up after our houseless neighbors, and constantly watching the church. For Michael and Linda Roberson taking over the daunting task of facilities, leading work crews, giving countless hours, soliciting lots of bids, being constantly on-call, addressing a power outage, and generating a punch list with over 100 items needing attention. For Hal Stanley for

starting reserve study, serving as the treasurer, helping with the auction committee and coffee hour, and being on-call for houseless neighbor issues. For all the RE teachers led by Mary Kroner-Ekstrand for creating such a great religious education program for our kids. For Reverend Marcia who, among other things, led a cleaning party where many church members and friends cleaned the church. For the anonymous donor gave money for the roof replacement, and a different anonymous donor gave money to replace the dish sanitizer, and donors who stepped up to support our fair share pledge to the UUA and funding our music program. Thank you all.

Brian Fassett, UUCWF Board Moderator

Annual UUCWF Executive Team Report

Dear Fellow Congregants,

This year, the Executive Team (ET) comprised Chuck Smith, Kirsten Reimert, Richard Powell, and Rev. Marcia Stanard. Meeting twice a month, the ET delved into various board matters and diligently crafted a budget for the upcoming year. Discussions ranged from overseeing stewardship and fundraising to addressing challenges such as homelessness on church premises, a huge increase in our property insurance, and commemorating the 100th anniversary of our building.

Overall, the ET effectively executed the directives of the board, adhering to budgetary constraints and timelines. We extend our gratitude to the congregation for their trust and express our deep satisfaction in serving the UUCWF community.

Sincerely,

Richard Powell, Kirsten Reimert, Chuck Smith, Rev. Marcia Stanard

Aesthetics Team

A motley crew of UUCWF folks gathers every 2nd & 4th Wednesday morning to work on projects focused on making the church facility more functional and good-looking. Group members keep sharp eyes out for issues and needs, both immediate and for future planning, within the facility. This last year, restrooms were painted, toilet paper, paper towel and soap dispensers were mounted. The kitchen has been deep-cleaned and organized. The Rainbow Room was reclaimed, cleaned and painted, with the intention of it being used to store table linens and other event supplies. We are looking at options for the seat cushions in the Sanctuary. Many closets and cubbies have items that need to be gone through and organized. And the list goes on! This is a big year for cleaning and organizing the church for the 100th Anniversary. If anyone is interested in assisting

with projects identified for the Aesthetics Group, you are welcome! We would love to have your assistance!

-Joan Young

Affiliated Community Ministers

This fall I will complete my 20th year as a Chaplain at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Has it really been that long? Yes, yes it has. I stick around for the conversations.

Today I was talking with a woman in my office and I asked her, "how do you decipher when God is speaking to you?" And she said "That's a really good question" (I pull one out once in a while) and she got real thoughtful about it and shared some of her experiences with navigating life in that way. Then she turned back to me and asked me "How do you hear God?" (And I thought 'that's tricky of her.')

And I said "That's a really good question" and I had to think really fast because it's not something I experience every day. But the words showed up for me anyway, surprising me, as I reflected out loud, and I think I said something like this:

"In the rare times when I can get really quiet inside, I hear God then. But it's more like a sense, though, like a feeling of okay-ness, or like a comfy blanket has been draped over my shoulders. And it doesn't last too long. More often, though, I notice it when I'm active, and it feels like this vibration or connection or sensation just shows up and impresses me with a feeling in my body of being connected, of being part of something so much larger than me, and an assurance that I am in this moment exactly where I am supposed to be, doing exactly what I am meant to be doing, and it is Good. And it feels Good. And it doesn't last very long but I am, every time, so grateful it was there at all."

May we all be pleasantly surprised by the things that come out of our mouths sometimes.

-Affiliated Minister Rev. Dr. Emily Brault

Rev. Kate McGraw is also an Affiliated Community Minister of UUCWF

A-Men!

(Also known as: UUC Men's Group at Willamette Falls)

The congregation's men's group enjoys each other's company three times a month. Twice is by Zoom, on the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:00 pm, and a third in-person at 10:30 am on the first Saturday before the first Zoom meeting. We share our thoughts and life experiences in a spirit of camaraderie that never fails

to make us all chuckle and smile. Our covenant with each other includes these points:

- Listen to each other
- Respect each other and ourselves
- No fixing, no saving, no advising, no setting each other straight
- Honor confidentiality
- Be a friend
- Have fun!

We discuss a topic in every session. Sometimes it's serious – many times it's not. Whichever direction our discussions takes (and there are often many directions), there's much to learn about the topic and each other. This past year we have considered the following:

- Religion
- Propaganda
- Biodiversity
- College
- Narcissism
- Human Nature
- Expectations
- Water
- Books
- Ego
- Movies

Religion, Nature, Television and Free Will are the four topics identified for May and June 2024.

If you're a guy and want to weigh in with your point-of-view, or simply listen to others, log into our Zoom sessions! If anyone has any questions, contact Jerry Spriggs at jspriggs5@comcast.net or text 503-913-2213 (iPhone).

-Jerry Spriggs

Bring an Object

Bring an Object is a group that started as a spinoff of the Sun Magazine discussion group. We started the group about four years ago around the time that COVID was getting a grip on the nation. We met on the stage at the End of the Oregon Trail Center in Oregon City. As the weather changed towards Fall, we started meeting on Zoom and

continue to do so. As the weather improves again, we may meet at members' home backyards.

We get together once a month, on the last Thursday at 6:30pm, and bring an object from our lives to the meeting. This object can be a book, a photo, a piece of art, a piece of jewelry, just about anything that can be carried to the meeting. We begin with a brief check in, and then each person has time to talk about their object and share a personal story about it. This is a fun and easy way for people to get to know each other better.

The nature of our group means that we need to limit its growth, but at this time, we have space for more participants. Please contact Eric Griswold at griswold@nwlinc.com if you would like to join.

-Eric Griswold and Julia Marie

Chalice Circle

Kathryn Collins and I (along with Intern Minister Mary Ellen Morgan) have established a Chalice Circle Group that meets every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm (formerly we met at 7 pm) in Room 1 in the Education Wing of the UUCWF church. We have been meeting since mid-February of 2024 for about 2 hours each time and have met 5 times. We currently have 7 people that meet at the church unless we dedicate a special meeting place (like our home) to cover a particular chapter in the book "Heart to Heart".

We have had successful Chalice Circle gatherings in which we have covered 5 chapters in the book "Heart to Heart". The topics we have covered are: Listening, Gratitude, Balance, God, and Loss/Grief. We are a group that listens to each other's thoughts on the topic with respect and without judgment, which fosters trust and spiritual growth. We take turns around the table to make sure everyone has a chance to be heard; asking respectful, clarifying questions, and giving encouraging feedback on a third time around the table if time permits.

-Tim Collins

CHANGES

CHANGES, true to its name, has been evolving. We meet on the 4th Sunday after the church service. Presentations so far this year include: Indigenous Peoples, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Gardening with Native Plants, Climate Change and the Next Generation, Preparing for Fire Season, and more.

CHANGES also meets on Zoom, on the 3rd Tuesday at 7 PM for open discussion.

The goal of CHANGES is greater understanding and resilience through sharing information and social connection.

-Eric Griswold

Choir

The UUCWF Choir is a small four-part, SATB community choir that consists of approximately 20 members. The choir runs from September to early June, with weekly rehearsals and 2-3 Sunday performances a month. A transition period in the beginning of the season with a new choir director and new accompanist led to another transition mid-season (February) with the return of the previous choir director/pianist.

Since February, the choir has challenged itself with pieces that required musicality, technique, and range. They are always up for a challenge and take great joy in both the rehearsals and performances. There has been great growth over the past few months in regards to their musicality, especially for a community choir of this size. Recruiting efforts during the summer months and beginning of the season could help the choir grow in numbers.

The main goals for the UUCWF choir are to make music fun, sing music together in community, and make music a part of the spiritual connection for the congregation.

-Ashlee Brouillette

Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry's main purpose is to strengthen the quality of ministry within the Congregation. It serves as a support group for the Minister and as a communication channel between the Minister and members of the Congregation. The committee typically meets by Zoom with Rev. Marcia the first Thursday of each month.

During the past year, the committee completed an evaluation of Rev. Marcia, which is required by her contract every 2-3 years. Survey questions were sent out to a sample of church and staff members, and a report was presented to the board.

-Michelle Stanley

Day Timers

Day Timers is a group that meets monthly to share stories from our lives. The purpose of Day Timers is to foster a sense of community. It has been meeting for around fourteen years with a core group of twelve.

Any adult church member is invited. We meet at the church on second Fridays from noon until 1:30. As the host, I publicize a topic in advance and send out an invitation to Tidings.

Attendance at Day Timers has risen this year and meetings are respectful, interesting, and congenial.

-Kelly Wigmore

ELM - End of Life Matters

This group of 10-14 men and women meet regularly to discuss all things related to grief, death and end of life issues. In the past, the group organized speakers, classes, films, workshops, and discussion groups. Some of the topics were: Advanced Directives, Hospice & Palliative Care, Death with Dignity, Home Funerals, Green Burial, Water Cremation and more. We get together monthly to provide education and discussion on death related topics in a caring and supportive environment. The group is available to help with funerals and memorial services and works with Rev. Marcia Stanard to provide families with reception services. We are an open group and welcome all those who are interested in joining us. Currently, we meet at the church on the second Monday of each month.

Sally Betser & Bev Koch, Co-facilitators

Facilities

The Facilities Committee had a very active year and there is still much to do!

The Facilities organization that previously included 1) facilities maintenance and improvements, 2) landscaping, 3) interiors team, 4) audio/visual, 5) IT support and 6) management of houseless concerns under Scott Silver has been reorganized. We want to thank Scott for all he has done for UUCWF over many years. He has moved out of our area and resigned from his role. The current groups include:

Facilities:

- Facilities Maintenance/Improvements - Michael Roberson, chair, Tom Crancer, co-chair and Linda Roberson, coordinator
- Landscaping - Bev Koch
- Aesthetics Team (previously called Interiors) - Joan Young and JoAnne Forsythe

Other functions have been moved:

- Audio/Visual is staff – led by Amy O'Brien, with support from Sojourner Lang and Vivian Brockett

- IT Support is provided by Ron Skoletsky
- Houseless concerns are being managed by the Board, Executive Team, and Rev. Marcia

The initial focus this year was to stop the rain coming through the roof and that has been *accomplished!* Roofing repairs occurred above both stairwells and the choir loft and there have been no additional roof leaks during the Spring rains. A drone evaluation of the roof was conducted confirming there are a few additional sections of roof maintenance that are required which will be addressed this summer.

Projects completed:

- Stopped immediate roof leak!
- Cleaned out and repaired gutters
- Repaired tower structure
- Replaced storm covers on the John Adams side stained glass windows
- Remediated “spikes” in the parking lot and installed new bumpers (thanks to Dolores Heard)
- Repaired a section of the Sunrise room flooring and repainted the room. (thanks John and Joan Young)
- Multiple immediate problems including overflowing toilets, door closure repairs, alarm response and resolution, lighting repairs and/or new bulbs, and other repairs, etc.
- Landscaping clean-up and maintenance (thanks Bev Koch and landscape volunteers)
- Aesthetics projects to improve the welcoming and functioning of our church (thanks Joan Young, Joanna Forsythe, Shelia Sullivan, Louisa Gonyou, Sally Betser)
- Build a gate for the garbage can alley (thanks Bev Koch, Louisa Gonyou and Tom Crancer)

Projects in progress:

- Replace the floor outside the downstairs all-gender bathroom
- Repair window leaks and restore walls in the South room
- Repair ceiling above the stairway (John Adams side)
- Refurbish historic doors in the Kitchen/Bachelor room
- Replicate balcony block-offs on the 6th street side for safety
- Repair wall and historical benches in the history room
- Replace the dish sanitizer that is no longer viable for repair

Projects planned:

- There are many more projects ahead and a list that will be sent via Tidings when updated. All skilled workers and other volunteers are welcome on any workday – always!

Our Gratitude:

We are especially thankful for our volunteers: Rae Hastings, Tim Sylvester, Michael Matsumura, Eric and Heather Loechle, Jeanette Richoux, Dave Hiebert, Joan and John Young, Bev Koch, Hal Stanley, Helen Sherman-Wentz, Phil Wentz, JoAnne Forsyth, Floyd Roell, Sally Betser, Louisa Gonyou, Shelia Sullivan, and others we have missed here. Your contributions are so appreciated.

We are delighted to have more of the congregation engaged in work parties or special projects to help with many of the restoration and repairs required, which is also building community. We have benefitted from special financial contributions for defined projects. Thank you to all who help fund our immediate needs with special donations, and those who show up and help us do the facilities work. We will need ongoing support to be ready for our Centennial Celebration.

In Community,

Michael Roberson (Facilities Chair), Tom Crancer (Facilities Co-Chair) and Linda Roberson (Facilities Coordinator)

Feed the Hungry

UUCWF is responsible for providing prep, cooking, set up, portion division, serving, delivering, and clean up, to approximately 60-80 persons in need, 4 to 5 times a year. We meet every 5th Sunday afternoon at St. John's Episcopal Church kitchen and dining room. This church is located in Milwaukie, at 2036 SE Jefferson. Volunteers from our congregation sign up to assist in this 2 1/2 hour gathering, often including young people over 12, with the adult volunteers, numbering about a dozen.

This participation is part of the social justice program of UUCWF. Volunteers have a chance to give to the community, expose our youth to good examples, open our eyes to empathy and gratitude, and get better acquainted with our community and fellow congregation members. We are happy to report that our congregation has been very generous with their time and efforts, and we have always had the needed support for our commitment.

We want to thank everyone who has volunteered to help with the preparation and serving of food and helping ensure that this valuable program continues.

-Eric Griswold and Julia Marie (griswold@nwlinc.com, 503-232-7010)

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee monitors UUCWF's financial health and meets each month to review trends and recent activity. This coming year we have a number of challenges to watch -- building insurance, roof repairs, preschool tenant infrastructure, and 100th anniversary prep.

Through the heroic efforts of Kirsten Reimert, we have resolved the years-long effort to convert our long-term investment accounts from AMC to UUCWF. We approach the end of our 2023-2024 fiscal year financially stable at present, but with close attention to the resources needed for the pending fiscal year.

The Forum

At 9:00 every Sunday morning, 15 or more people gather in the Martha White Room by the south ramp door for lively free-ranging presentation and discussion. Since the COVID lockdown, sessions have been hybrid with participants joining from out of state, throughout the metropolitan area, and at other sites thanks to William Gifford supplying his laptop, omnidirectional mic, and expertise.

Regular participants include old-timers and new people, women and men of various background, experience and ages, church members and non-members. All are welcome. Discussion touches on such topics as: ethics and comparative religion; local and national politics and social issues; international concerns; technology; the environment and global climate change; animal rights; equity; representative and direct democracy; capitalism; the stock market; gratitude; civility; and personal spiritual development and practice. Our "tea walla", Dave Hiebert, usually serves a Taiwan tea with a brief comment thereon. Other regulars often bring cookies and other sweets. Sometimes there are suggested areas to explore, recommended readings and formal presentations. The atmosphere is congenial, accepting, and friendly. Everyone is encouraged to speak, listen, and be listened to.

The FORUM began many decades ago as the adult Sunday school class of the First Congregational Church of Oregon City. Its content and method have always been shaped by the participants. For example, there has been active exploration of utopian models, bible study and exegesis and discussion of separation of church and state.

-Gerry Brown

H.O.P.E. Food Pantry

HOPE Food Pantry at Oregon City First Baptist Church is UUCWF's longest social justice commitment. It takes 2 teams of volunteers to serve our food insecure neighbors in Clackamas County.

The first team is 5-6 volunteers who meet at the food bank truck every other Monday morning from 7am-9am, and transport about 2,000 pounds of food into First Baptist Church.

The second team of 20-25 volunteers serves 2-4 hours each third and fifth Friday. They pick up and prep food in the morning and then help our neighbors in need shop at the pantry in the evening.

It is such a pleasure to work with these positive, caring people and to help about 60 families each week stretch their SNAP budget with fresh meat, dairy, produce and canned options. We have as much fun as possible working together to help others! We would welcome more volunteers – the need for this program is actively increasing this year.

-Ellen Stines

Internship Committee

Under the leadership of Kate Grant, the Internship Committee provided guidance and support to our Intern Minister, Mary Ellen Morgan, during the past church year.

Landscape Task Group

The Landscape Task Group continues to meet the 3rd Saturday of each month, in addition to any other requests I may put on Tidings. Big THANKS to all who have contributed time and energy to maintaining our church grounds! We are continuing to clear out leaves and weeds in preparation for a layer of mulch this summer before the anniversary celebration. Anyone looking to contribute even an hour of time, please contact me and I can direct you to an area or project.

Thanks,
Bev Koch (503) 467-6796

Pagan Learning and Exploration Group

The Pagan Learning and Exploration Group began as an offering for Second Sunday Second Hour, but began meeting independently afterwards under leadership from Amy O'Brien.

Second Sunday Second Hour

On the second Sunday of each month, Second Sunday Second Hour offered additional programming for education, community building, and fun after the service. We enjoyed a presentation from a local wildlife expert, a garden sale, yoga, and many more exciting activities over the course of the 2023-2024 church year. This program is coordinated by Jenny Ostergard.

SON (Sheltering/Supporting Our Neighbors)

The SON group at UUCWF works with the Northwest Housing Authority to provide home-cooked meals to families experiencing homelessness. We participated for three 2-week opportunities during the church year.

Over twenty volunteers from UUCWF generously gave of their time to prepare and/or deliver meals to the families.

We received universally positive reviews from the families we served, and we look forward to more chances to serve during the next church year!

-Diana Antoniskis and Kate Grant

Stewardship Team

We received a total of \$274,000 in pledges, falling \$18,000 short of our goal, yet still enabling us to continue the church's positive endeavors. We're thankful that 41% of congregants increased their pledges, and we're thrilled to welcome 11 new pledgers who will contribute to our future. The Stewardship Team is comprised of Joyce Tischler, Kirsten Reimert, Greg Penner, Richard Powell and Vivian Brockett.

-Richard Powell

Women's Book Club

The UUCWF Women's Book Group is a fun and thoughtful group that loves to read. This year we changed up our meeting schedule to be more inclusive for our women congregants of all ages. We always meet on the 1st Tuesday of the month. We met on Zoom during the winter months; November thru March at 6:30 pm, and we met in person at the church September, October, April, May and June at 1:00 pm.

We had a fun July picnic to kick off our 2023-2024 book club year by discussing and voting on our book selections. We all contribute by submitting book titles.

Below is the list of our book selections this past year:

Klara and the Sun, by Kazuo Ishiguro
The Dictionary of Lost Words, by Pip Williams
A Long Petal of the Sea, by Isabel Allende
Horse, by Geraldine Brooks
Tales of a Female Nomad, by Rita Goldman Gelman
Fencing with the King, by Diana Abu Jaber
Lessons in Chemistry, by Bonnie Garmus
Remarkably Bright Creatures, by Shelby Van Pelt
Demon Copperhead, by Barbara Kingsolver
Pomegranate, by Helen Elaine Lee

Come join us!

Jane Spriggs

ianespriggs@comcast.net

Worship Associates

The Worship Associates prepare and present reflections that support the theme of the sermon and meet as a group on a quarterly basis. The meetings cover worship themes, scheduling, how to create reflections and sermons, and supporting one another. During the service, the WA also provides support to Reverent Marcia and Intern Minister Mary Ellen, like requesting the offering and extinguishing the chalice. Each person serves – on average - every four to six weeks. In the absence of a minister, a Worship Associate will organize the full service, including music, readings, and delivering the sermon, and be supported by another Worship Associate. This will be the case for several services this summer and during Reverend Marcia's sabbatical next year. It is a great opportunity for Marcia to get a break and for the congregation to hear a variety of perspectives.

-Elaine Cozart

STATISTICAL REPORT

May 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024

Deaths:

Tom Neff

New Members:

Paul Boisvert

Pam Corley

Tam Corley

Janice Feaman

Allison Fredette

Richard Jones

Jenn Kaley

Megan Kaley

Rick Marshall

Chris Young

Sonja Young

Births:

Bea Scaresen

COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

Summary of Key Principles:

As the community of Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls, we do covenant together to:

- Honor the fact that the work of the church involves a significant investment of time and energy.
- Pledge time, wealth and talent to the best of our ability.
- Be respectful, friendly and welcoming to all members, visitors, and staff. Avoid gossip and speak directly with church members regarding issues or concerns.
- Resolve conflicts in a positive way.

MISSION STATEMENT

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls
is a welcoming community whose mission is to:

INVITE connection
INSPIRE spiritual growth
IGNITE action

VISION STATEMENT

We, the members of Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls, envision that in our church:

1. We nurture spiritual growth.
2. Our personal behavior reflects the seven principles
3. We engage with communities outside our church
4. We are active in the church and have many strong volunteer leaders
5. We have vibrant and diverse programs
6. We have a beautiful and functional building

VISION STATEMENT - DETAILED

1. We nurture spiritual growth.

We have programs for all ages that provide ongoing sustenance for spiritual growth. We celebrate the joys of our community. We stimulate thinking in church services, through classes, and in all community activities. We are not afraid of differences and relish the splendor of variety. We are a collage of wonder, in all stages of growth and development, ready to help each other climb the next obstacle.

2. Our personal behavior reflects the seven principles.

We live with and by the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism. We are truly a community of loving people; acting out our beliefs as individuals and as a community. We reach out to members in need and help them through difficult times. We support, respect and celebrate children and adults alike through all stages of life. We welcome newcomers. We support social action and give time and money to sustain and improve our church community.

3. We engage with communities outside our church.

We reach out to diverse groups of people outside our membership through social action and visible church activities. We provide both voice and action representing our liberal religious views. We seek out new members to join in our community. We have a strong presence in the southern Portland suburbs through our landmark Oregon City building and by aiding local non-profit groups with financial and volunteer support.

4. We are active in the church and have many strong volunteer leaders. Because we have congregational polity and the freedom it implies, we also shoulder the burden and responsibility to make the church work. Church members give their time, expertise and financial support to create a place we can call home. We identify and encourage church members to take on leadership roles. The congregation both supports and challenges the leadership in a spirit of shared purpose and commitment.

5. We have vibrant and diverse programs.

The programs of our church range from small groups meeting for spiritual nurturing to church-wide social events. Programs are the reason that all types of people join our church, find meaning and stay involved. We create new programs as new interests and needs grow and end programs that no longer have a constituency.

6. We have a beautiful and functional building.

We exist in a building whose beauty helps our spirits soar during worship. The building also provides comfortable and flexible spaces for small to large groups in support of the many activities our church members enjoy.